

LSC



RESOURCE GUIDE

Child Care Center Equipment & Furnishings

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“A meaningful environment has spaces with assigned purposes. In childcare, space plays many different roles - it is a place to play, eat and sleep. It is also a place for children to belong and learn.”

*Quoted from “Early Childhood Environments that Work”
by Rebecca T. Isbell and Betty Exelby, Gryphon House, Inc., 2001.*

INTRODUCTION

The careful selection and arrangement of furnishings is an essential step in transforming an empty space into an early childhood environment.

The Equipment and Furnishings Resource Guide will help with selecting furnishings and equipment that make the space usable and comfortable, child-safe and child-friendly, and attractive and functional for the adults who share the environment. The guide focuses on programs serving children from infancy through preschool, so it will emphasize equipment and layout of space to support the development of young children.

This guide is organized to help you plan your space, beginning with an unfurnished room. The information has been shaped by years of experience, the accreditation guidelines of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), wisdom shared by longtime early childhood educators, and the publications described in the section on Resources, including the Environmental Rating Scale (ERS) tools.

Many state and local regulations govern the use of child care space. At a minimum these regulations include child care licensing and building and fire codes. Before you begin to arrange and equip your space, familiarize yourself with these regulations and how they may affect your equipment choices and classroom design. It is equally important to remember that these regulations serve as minimum standards. While every center must comply with all relevant codes and regulations, most early childhood programs will aspire to achieve a higher level of quality.

This guide focuses on equipping and furnishing children's classrooms – the most critical component of a child care center. However, when building or upgrading a center, it is important to plan and budget for all of the equipment and furnishings needed for the variety of support spaces that most centers have. These spaces may include:

- Reception area
- Indoor gross motor space
- Offices
- Staff room
- Meeting rooms
- Parent resource room
- Kitchen

There are a number of general guidelines to keep in mind when planning all of your center's equipment and furnishings purchases:

- Focus on quality and durability, not on immediate cost savings.
- Purchase items that will help you create a warm and inviting environment in your center and classrooms.
- Select items that will inspire, and not inhibit, children's creativity and learning.
- Look for furnishings and equipment in colors and textures that blend harmoniously with other features of the space.
- Work with vendors known for high-quality and long-lasting products, and who provide warranties and replacement parts.
- Ask vendors about upcoming sales or discounts.

The physical environment of your center is the most visible aspect of program quality. Careful planning of your space will help you create an environment where teachers can provide the best possible care and education for young children.

PLANNING A CLASSROOM

Begin your planning by examining the size and shape of the room.

Note the locations of:

- *Windows and doors*
- *Closets and built-in counters*
- *Electrical outlets*
- *Plumbing fixtures and heating units*
- *Any other fixed features*

These existing features in the room will influence the placement of furniture and layout of activity areas.

MAKING A SCALE DRAWING

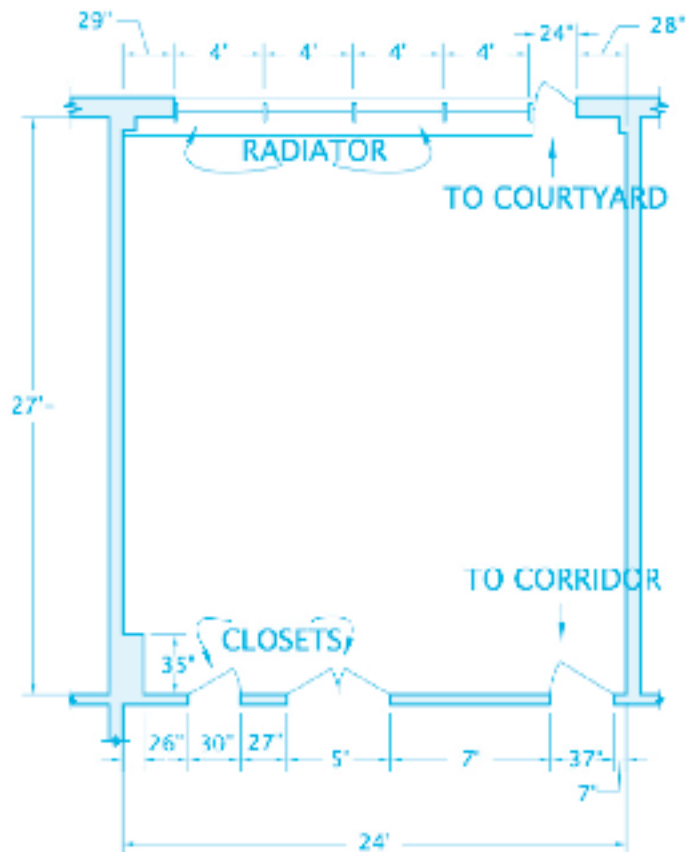
It is helpful to develop a simple scale drawing of each room you are planning. Refer to the Room Layout Activity on page 34 for additional guidance. Assemble the following supplies:

- A 25-foot retractable steel tape measure.
- A pencil, eraser, and ruler for drawing straight lines.
- 1/4-inch graph paper. Using that scale means that each 1/4-inch square represents 1 square foot of your space.

Measure the length and width of the room and make a preliminary sketch of the space, noting those dimensions. Next, plot the dimensions and the location of the fixed features mentioned earlier. Note whether the doors open into or out of the space and indicate the direction on your sketch.

When you have all the measurements on your rough sketch, take a clean piece of graph paper and draw your room to scale (1/4 inch = 1 foot). Measure the windows and doors and draw them in the appropriate locations. Leave doorways open and draw a curved line showing the direction in which the door opens. Indicate the location of windows. On the drawing on this page, four windows are shown at the top of the drawing, separated by narrow woodwork. It is helpful to show the locations of electric outlets, plumbing, and other features that will help you make effective use of the scale drawing.

After completing an accurate scale drawing, make several photocopies and scan for your records. Using the photocopies, you can experiment with laying out activity areas without having to re-create the basic floor plan each time.



Sample Scale Drawing

DEVELOPING ROOM LAYOUTS

Once you have multiple copies of the floor plan, you can begin planning the space on paper.

1. Consider circulation and pathways through the space first. Look at the location of doors into and out of the space. At a minimum, you should have two doors – the main classroom door and your emergency exit. In some cases, you will also have a door to the children’s lavatory, a storage closet, and a door leading to an adjacent classroom or to the playground. Draw a 3-foot-wide pathway from the main door to all other doors, since they should be preserved as you begin to lay out interest areas.

Your goal is to create circulation patterns that allow children and adults to move comfortably through the room. The pathways will be further defined when you lay out equipment, but sketching them on the drawing will remind you to arrange furniture in a way that maintains circulation routes.

Avoid creating a straight path down the center of the room, with interest areas laid out on both sides. That path is likely to become a runway for young children. Instead, consider laying out the activity

areas as destinations for children, with different kinds of paths – short and straight, gentle curves, T shapes. If your room is large, think about whether some circulation among interest areas can be established around the perimeter of the room.

2. Visualize how the fixed features of the space will affect the location of various activities. For example, look for the location of water or plumbing to determine where to place wet or messy activities.
3. Note the location of electrical outlets to determine where to place activities that require electricity – a lamp for the reading area, a surge protector for the computer equipment, or a connection for the aquarium.
4. Identify what the renowned child care facility designer Anita Olds, author of the *Child Care Design Guide*, called the “protected corner” – most often the corner furthest from the entry door. That may be the most desirable location for a book corner or another activity where you want children to engage in activities requiring quiet concentration.



5 THE FIVE ATTRIBUTES OF AN ACTIVITY AREA

1. A specific physical location suited to the activity
2. Visible boundaries
3. Play and sitting surfaces
4. Provision for storage and display specific to the area’s function
5. A mood that distinguishes it from contiguous spaces

– Anita Olds, *Child Care Design Guide*

5. Once you have identified the fixed features, you can begin planning where to locate compatible activities, making best use of those features.
 - The messy or wet zone should be near a sink. The main classroom door and the playground door also qualify as messy zones, since there are likely to be wet shoes worn and dirt tracked into those areas. The messy zones should have a tile or linoleum floor.
 - The quiet zone works well near the “protected corner.” This zone should have a warmer, softer floor surface such as carpeting or area rugs.
 - The active zone should be laid out so that it can accommodate free-flowing activities like block play, dramatic play, music and movement, and gross motor activities. Depending on the size of your room, the active zone may overflow into the circulation paths. Carpeting or rugs are good choices for the active zone because they help manage noise and provide a warmer floor surface. If the active zone includes a slide or climbing structure, the National Program for Playground Safety recommends that you provide a resilient safety surface under indoor equipment. More information on safety surfaces is provided in the description of the Active Play activity area.
6. Next, create furniture templates to move around the scale drawing as you try out locations for activity areas. Using another sheet of 1/4-inch graph paper, cut out rectangles, squares, and circles that indicate the shape and approximate dimensions of the furnishings you plan to use. Dimensions are noted in the equipment catalogs. Use the same scale of 1/4-inch to equal 1 foot to make templates that represent the size and shape of the furniture. You can use a low-sticking spray glue that is sold in office or art supply stores to place the pieces on the template and move them around to try out different arrangements.

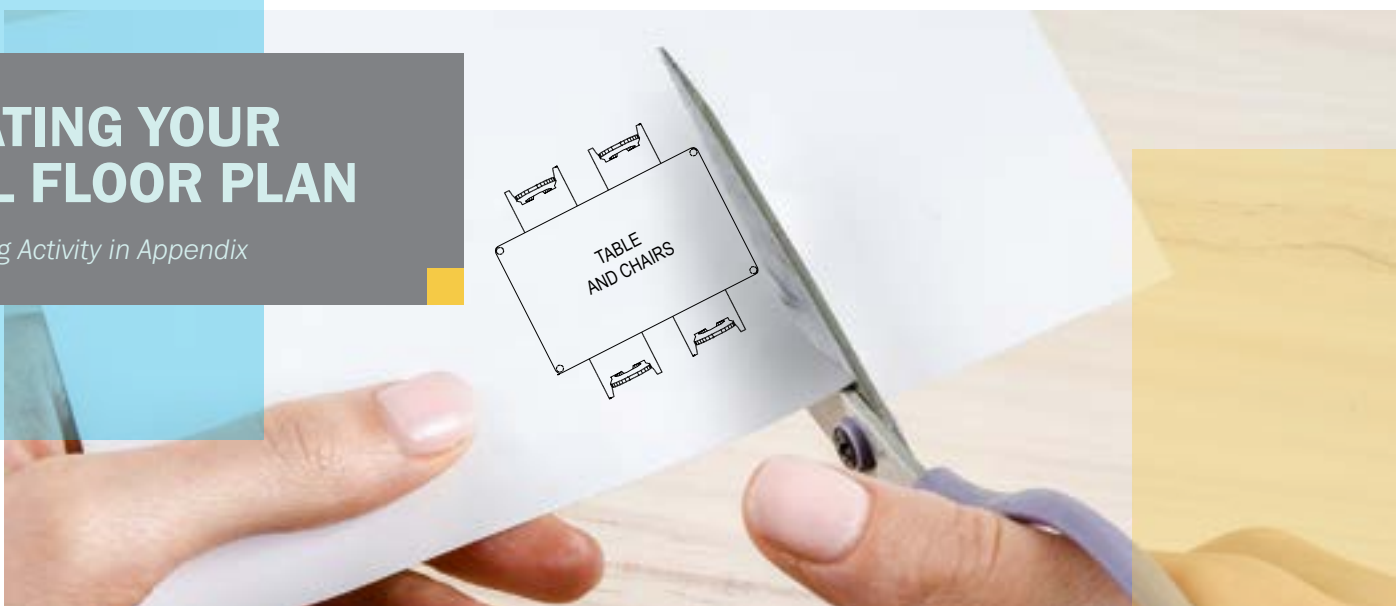
An alternative to making templates is to sketch different layouts in pencil on the photocopies of the floor plan, maintaining the approximate scale of the different types of furniture.

Several early childhood equipment companies offer help in planning classroom space, so be sure to ask about that service or additional resources when you contact them for catalogs.

Activities are identified as belonging in either the active, quiet, or messy zone. The discussion of each area describes fixed features (plumbing, access to natural light, etc.) that support the activity as well as the furnishings for that area.

CREATING YOUR IDEAL FLOOR PLAN

See *Drawing Activity* in Appendix



DEVELOPING ACTIVITY AREAS OR LEARNING CENTERS

High-quality early childhood education requires a stimulating environment that offers choices to children, invites them to engage in a number of activities, and encourages them to explore a wide range of materials. The terms “activity area” and “learning center” are used interchangeably in this guide. As you develop activity areas, try to develop a classroom environment in which every part of the room has a purpose, with all of the necessary resources on hand, displayed and organized to facilitate children’s work. The preschools of Reggio–Emilia, Italy, refer to a well-designed environment as “the third teacher” in the classroom.

This section describes methods for organizing activity areas for preschool- aged children, although reference is made to infants and toddlers in several places. Furnishings for younger children are described in “Planning for Infant and Toddler Care,” which begins on page 17.

ACTIVE ZONE	QUIET ZONE	MESSY ZONE
Block Play	Reading Area	Art
Dramatic Play	Computer	Nature and Science
Indoor Active Play	Fine Motor	Sand and Water
Music Movement	Math	Snack and Meal Time
		Woodworking



Many of the learning centers in an early childhood classroom have more than one possible name, depending on the program philosophy. We reference several names in the introduction to each area. Classroom planning and purchasing worksheets, organized by age group and activity area, can be found in Appendix I.

PLAN FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Given the ages of children attending early childhood programs, teachers are often involved in referring children for diagnosis of disabilities. In that case, it is likely that the program has already made some modifications to the environment and program to help the child function within the classroom. Once a diagnosis is made and more information is available, staff can further adapt the space with the help of therapists working with the child.

When a child with a diagnosed disability enters the program, the most effective strategy for working with the child is to consult with his/her parents about his/her needs, and to spend time with the parent in the classroom to identify modifications that may be necessary in each area. Consult with specialists working with the child as well, since they will have specific guidance on teaching methods, adaptive equipment, and modifications to the space.

Several examples of how to adapt the learning centers to serve the needs of children with disabilities are noted in the descriptions of each area. The actual modifications cannot be made until you know the child, have information about his/her abilities, and have consulted with his/her parents and therapists. The examples that follow are based on interviews with teachers in therapeutic and inclusion classrooms, and a fine book called the *Inclusive Early Childhood Classroom* by Patti Gould and Joyce Sullivan, which is listed in the Resources section of this manual. They offer a range of strategies for working with children with mental handicaps and developmental delays; orthopedic impairments; Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and behavioral issues; Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD) or autism; motor planning problems; and visual impairments. Gould and Sullivan have organized their book by describing modifications to typical learning centers based on a child's disability. Some require adaptive

equipment, but many are thoughtful, small changes to the environment that make the space more suitable for all young children.

THE CLASSROOM ENTRY

The entry is a crucial point in the layout of any classroom: it's a transition area that helps children enter into their day at school. For some children, it plays an important role by allowing them to observe the activity in the classroom before separating from their parents and joining the group of children. It is often the most important point of daily interaction with parents as well. In fact, the entry is the only part of the classroom that serves parents as much as children and staff.

A distinct entry area – even if it is 12 or 15 square feet just inside the classroom door – sets the tone for the environment. Personalize the entry with things such as photos of children and their families, staff photos and short staff “bios,” and other inviting displays. If you serve multilingual families, include a welcome message in each family's native language. An effective entry might also contain a special element that will attract children – an aquarium, a small fountain, or a table that displays something new every week – seashells, pretty stones, colored leaves, or a special activity planned for the day.

CUBBIES



Cubbies take up a lot of space but serve an important storage function for children's outerwear and other belongings, so plan their placement carefully. There are a number of options for locating cubbies:

- *In a vestibule or mudroom immediately adjacent to the classroom. This is one of the best cubby locations if this type of space exists.*
- *As part of the entry area within the classroom. This works well if there is sufficient space inside the doorway or if you can create an enclosed area using the cubbies as low walls.*

- *The messy nature of cubbies and their contents may detract from the aesthetics of the entry area, however.*
- *At the doorway leading to the playground if the classroom has direct access to the outdoors. This puts the cubbies at the point of use for children going out to play and also helps ensure that parents come into the classroom on a regular basis.*
- *In one or two areas of the classroom, in a manner that maintains convenient access.*
- *In the hallway outside the classroom. It is important to note that this is an option only where hallways are wide enough to still allow for all appropriate occupancy, egress, fire, and ADA clearances. In some jurisdictions this option may be prohibited by specific local regulations, or fire/building codes. However, where allowed, it can provide a way to free up valuable square footage within a classroom. Again, cubbies can be rather messy, so decide whether that is the “look” you want for the hall. Also, some children and parents may worry about the security of their belongings stored outside the classroom, so consider that as well. Finally, placing cubbies outside the classroom will require that teachers observe while children go to and from their cubbies.*



FURNISHINGS FOR THE ENTRY AND CUBBY AREAS:

- Seating for adults and children
- Parent mailboxes
- Bulletin board for notices and display
- Counter or other surface for the daily sign-in sheet
- Child-height table or pedestal
- Cubbies
- Storage for car seats and/or strollers
- Optional: Good-bye window or mirror for easing separation for children

Alotting one cubby per child is preferable to having two children share a cubby. It cuts down on clutter and cubby overflow, and also helps limit the transmission of head lice if the program has an outbreak. The best cubbies have three sections: a boot locker at the bottom with a shelf a child can sit on to remove shoes, a main section for coats and backpacks, and a top section for a lunch or other personal items. Ideally cubbies will be deep enough to contain children’s items so that there is not spill-over into adjacent cubbies. It is also worth noting that some furnishings companies now sell child lockers, which can be an effective way to better contain children’s belongings but can be potentially more challenging for young children to access and use. Cubbies should be securely fastened to the wall or floor so that they are not a tipping hazard. Placement of cubbies should take this into account.

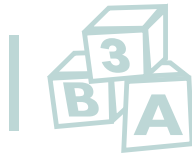
For Inclusion
 The child may need more time observing before entering an activity. Be sure there is a range of seating options in the entry and elsewhere in the classroom that includes chairs with arms, soft seating, and options for sitting on the floor that offer support for weak trunk and back muscles. In a display at the entry, include images of children and adults with disabilities.

LEARNING CENTERS AND ACTIVITY AREAS

In the following descriptions of the typical learning centers in an early childhood classroom, we focus on furnishings and large equipment that are often selected and purchased during planning and construction. In addition to the furnishings described, there are toys, classroom materials, and supplies that will be needed to implement the curriculum in each area. A per child cost for stocking the classroom with those materials is included in the Cost of Equipment section in Appendix I.

1. ACTIVITY AREAS WITHIN THE ACTIVE ZONE

BLOCK CENTER



The block area requires a protected space, enclosed on three sides with walls or low shelves. Be sure to purchase unit blocks to increase the educational value of the activity. Unit blocks are small, modular, plain wooden blocks that come in a variety of geometric shapes. The dimensions of the blocks allow children to experiment with spatial relations by using the lengths, widths, and heights of the blocks in creating complex block structures. The floor surface should be carpet or a low-pile area rug. Avoid using highly patterned rugs, often called “educational” carpets, since they are distracting and can inhibit rather than enhance children’s block play. Sturdy, 24-inch square or round acrylic mirrors can be placed on the floor of accessories that will help to enhance block play. These might include things such as wooden vehicles, wooden or plastic people, animals and trees, stop signs, and other props.



FURNISHINGS FOR THE BLOCK CENTER:

Two multi-unit storage shelves, 30 inches high

Initial unit block set with approximately 225 pieces in 20 shapes

A second set of blocks that are hollow, plastic, or cardboard

For Inclusion

Provide a basket of blocks and a defined block building space (a plastic tray, a carpet square taped in place, or even an empty plastic wading pool that the child can sit in). Foam blocks or plastic blocks may be preferable to wood for some children. Provide places where children can play with blocks in a variety of body positions to develop strength and stability.

DRAMATIC PLAY



The dramatic play area can be located adjacent to blocks because both areas are active and somewhat noisy. Children frequently move back and forth between the areas. The richness of play that evolves in the dramatic play area depends on the location and care with which the area is laid out. If there is a loft in the classroom, some teachers like to locate dramatic play there because the sense of enclosure adds to the appeal of the space. If the classroom does not have a loft built in to the space you might consider purchasing one of the many pre-built loft units available. These provide many great play and storage possibilities. Several equipment vendors sell interesting wooden arches that help to create a cave or enclosure. The arches can be enhanced with fabric or hanging baskets with props.

Another effective placement for dramatic play is on a low (4 to 6 inches high) carpeted platform in a corner of the room. Stepping up into the area seems to encourage children to use the area. In any case, the area should be enclosed on three sides using existing perimeter walls, dividers, or shelves. The dramatic play area is substantially enriched with the inclusion of materials and tools that represent many cultures: Guatemalan fabric for a tablecloth or curtains, bamboo

steamers or a small wok, African prints for dress up clothes. Ask families to bring in props for the area that will help make it more culturally diverse.



Resist the temptation to purchase one or two-piece plastic kitchen sets as a cost-saving strategy for the dramatic play area. Wooden kitchen sets are more durable and most useful when purchased as three or four individual pieces, even if the budget requires purchasing those pieces over 2 years.



While the most obvious dramatic play is “playing house,” it’s equally important to have props from at least two different themes for role play opportunities, often developed around familiar places in the community – a grocery store with the addition of a cash register and shopping carts, a post office with envelopes, a mailbox and stickers, or a doctor’s office with stethoscopes, bandages, and other medical props. The wooden equipment can be easily incorporated into all those activities with minor modifications.

Make sure that the equipment is age appropriate:

TODDLERS:	Stove and counter at 20 inches, table at 16 inches, chairs at 8 inches
PRESCHOOL:	Stove and counter at 24 inches, table at 20 inches, chairs at 12 inches

FURNISHINGS FOR DRAMATIC PLAY AREAS:

- Wooden stove, refrigerator, sink
- Wooden cupboard or bureau for dress up clothes
- Small table with two stools or chairs
- Sturdy doll bed, preferably one that will hold a child
- Doll high chair
- Doll stroller or buggy
- Child-size rocking chair
- Double wide, full-length acrylic mirror, wall mounted or in a stand

STORAGE FOR DRAMATIC PLAY AREAS:

- Two small shelves with bins or baskets
- Wall-mounted pegs or a chest of drawers

For Inclusion

Include dolls, images, and books about children with disabilities; look for adaptive equipment (crutches, braces, glasses, etc.) to include as props. Place a small secure rug in the area and encourage peers to play with the child on the rug. Provide appropriate supportive seating for a child with disabilities who wants to observe from a short distance. Add weights to kitchen equipment or doll furniture so they don’t tip if a child leans on them.

INDOOR GROSS MOTOR PLAY



Young children learn by moving and using their bodies. Active play (gross motor or large muscle play) is an important part of the classroom. If classrooms are too small to accommodate this type of activity, it is important to provide a separate indoor gross motor area. The area dedicated to active play can be developed as simply or as elaborately as space and budget permit. Think first about activities that you want to encourage, and then select equipment that supports those activities:

ACTIVITY	EQUIPMENT
Balancing	Balance balls or balance ball stools Balance beam in wood, foam, or plastic Balance boards Slanting hexagonal foam blocks Hula hoops laid on the floor
Climbing	Free-standing climbing structure Stairs/ladder/etc. to get up to the loft Wall-mounted ladder in front of an acrylic mirror
Crawling	Foam, plastic, or fabric tunnels Ramps
Riding	Wooden transportation toys Plastic or wooden ride-on toys
Rocking	Wooden rocking boat Round plastic and foam rocker Rocking horse
Rolling	Foam logs, rolls, or tunnels
Sliding	Slide mounted on climbing structure or loft Small free-standing platform slide
Throwing & Catching	Soft balls of various sizes Bean bags, other soft toys Basketball hoops

The floor surface for the active play area should be carpet or an area rug over good carpet padding. If you are using a climbing structure or a slide, you should have the appropriate safety surface below the structures. According to the National Program for Playground Safety there are two options:

1. Use several 4-inch deep gym-quality landing mats secured so they will not move when children land on them.
2. Use surfacing tiles or mats permanently secured to the floor and of a depth proportionate to the height of the equipment.

For Inclusion

Add scooter boards, therapy balls, a ball pit, prone standers, small wagons, or specialized adaptive equipment depending on the child's disability. Get recommendations from the child's parent or therapist regarding appropriate equipment. Two catalogs with adaptive equipment are included on the list of catalogs in Appendix IV.



MUSIC AND MOVEMENT



These activities can take place in the most open area in the classroom, which may be the area designated for circle/whole group time or the active play area. Music and movement can also make use of the pathways through the space if it is a large group activity involving most of the children at one time. This can help conserve space for other dedicated activities. For listening to music or books on tape individually or in a small group, the cassette or CD player and storage can be maintained in the whole group space.

FURNISHINGS FOR MUSIC AND MOVEMENT:

A tape cassette, MP3 player, CD player, or iPod-like device, including speaker for any digital device

Storage shelf for tapes, CDs, musical instruments, scarves, and other props

Optional: large wall-mounted acrylic mirror

For Inclusion

Some children will need to have music and movement in a smaller space and with a small number of children. Children with motor planning problems may respond well to the use of a weighted vest for music and movement.

WOODWORKING



Woodworking can be an exciting component of the preschool classroom. Many children take pleasure in just handling the tools and learning to use them. As their skills develop, children may find it very satisfying to make products that can be used in other learning centers. For example, children can make boats for the water table or platforms for birdseed to place outside the classroom window. This area requires very close supervision, so placement of the workbench and tools, and rules about wearing safety glasses and appropriate use of tools, are important. This is generally an area that is only “open” at certain times of the day when teachers are able to provide adequate supervision for the activities.

FURNISHINGS FOR WOODWORKING AREA:

Workbench with vise and storage area underneath

Real child-scale tools in a toolbox with a cover

Safety glasses

Scrap wood and other supplies

For Inclusion

Check with the child’s parents and specialists about whether this is an appropriate activity, and if so, about appropriate modifications.



2. ACTIVITY AREAS WITHIN THE QUIET ZONE

READING AREA



The reading area (or library/literacy center) should be one of the warmest and most welcoming spaces in the classroom. It should be separate from the noisier activities, but works well near the table, toy, and computer areas. Try to place it near a window so there is abundant natural light. Even if it has bright natural light, the addition of a well-secured table light or stable floor lamp will enhance the area, and create softer indirect light, especially if the primary classroom lighting is fluorescent. The book corner often includes writing and listening activities as well as books.

FURNISHINGS FOR READING AREA:

Carpet or area rug

Lamp or wall-mounted spotlight

Comfortable soft seating: beanbag chairs, cushions and bolsters, a mattress covered with bright fabric

A child-sized table and two chairs

Simple and sturdy tape cassette or CD player with headphones

Storage for children's tapes or CDs

Book display racks with bookshelves behind

Flannel board

Storage for big books – some book display racks are designed for big books on one side and regular books on the other

Shelf unit for storing books and bins/baskets of writing supplies

Display: posters or book covers of popular children's literature, images of all kinds of families and children with books

For Inclusion

Modifications to the environment should be worked out based on the needs of the child, but common adjustments include seating that provides appropriate

back support; creating a book box with the child's favorite books, accessible in the book corner; making time to read one-on-one with the child, with an opportunity to stop and ask questions; and using picture-word cards and sequencing cards to tell stories.

COMPUTER AREA



The computer area is generally a smaller area, with each computer serving one child at a time. It is best located in the quiet zone, well separated from art, sand and water, or other activities that could damage the equipment. The area should be next to a wall with convenient electrical outlets. The computer can be placed against the wall, with the cords wrapped and secured out of children's reach. Locate the monitor so that it's clearly visible to the children, without glare. Computer equipment can fit in a space that has less depth than most other activity areas.

FURNISHINGS FOR COMPUTER AREA:

Adjustable height children's computer desk or table

Appropriately sized, enclosed CPU holder

Child-sized chair

Stable printer cart or table

Computer monitor, keyboard, and mouse

Printer

Child-friendly CD storage unit (that children can manage on their own)

Stability and safety are very important in this area. Computer equipment is heavy and children can be injured if a table or monitor falls over.

For Inclusion

For preschool children, computer play is largely a social activity, so pairing a child with disabilities with a peer can increase interaction. A child's therapist should be able to suggest whether computer activities are appropriate for the child's education plan, and propose equipment modifications that will enable the child to use the computer effectively.

FINE MOTOR



Children should have ready access to many developmentally appropriate fine motor materials:

- *Self-correcting structured toys: puzzles and nesting toys that go together one way*
- *Open-ended toys that support eye-hand coordination and fine motor control: stringing beads or lacing toys, gears, and snap-together toys*
- *Small building toys such as Legos and Lincoln Logs*
- *Art supplies such as crayons and scissors*

Display and storage of these materials at child-height is a key element in setting up the fine motor area. Use picture and word labels on both the storage containers for the toys and on the shelf, so that children will learn where items belong. Rotate the number of toys displayed so that the shelves are clutter-free and children can choose from an appealing but limited group of toys. Provide multiple sets of the more popular toys.

FURNISHINGS FOR TABLE FINE MOTOR:

Two multi-unit low storage shelves

Attractive unbreakable containers and clear bins for multi-piece toys

Puzzle racks and other purpose-built storage

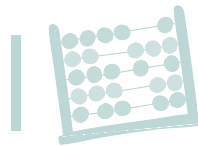
One square or rectangular table

Two to four chairs, depending on the size of the area

For Inclusion

Some children may need tabletop dividers or trays to define their work area. Work with therapists to determine modifications – perhaps a pegboard should be taped to the wall or a vertical support instead of placing it on a flat surface. Puzzles might need knob handles to make them easier to grasp. Allow children to work with some fine motor toys on the floor on trays or carpet squares. Allow children to watch peers when trying a new toy, but put them side by side so that the child with a disability isn't looking at the activity upside down.

MATH



Developmentally appropriate math/number materials allow children to use concrete objects to experiment with quantity, shape, and size as they develop the concepts they need for the more abstract tasks later in school. The activities range from:

- *Counting*
- *Measuring*
- *Comparing quantities*
- *Recognizing shapes*
- *Writing numbers*

For these activities provide a variety of small objects to count, balance scales, rulers, number puzzles, magnetic numbers, dominoes, and geometric shapes like parquetry blocks.

You can display and store these materials in a separate area or combine them with fine motor materials.

FURNISHINGS FOR MATH:

Two multi-unit low storage shelves

Attractive unbreakable containers and clear bins for multi-piece toys

One square or rectangular table

Two to four chairs, depending on the size of the area

For Inclusion

Some children may need tabletop dividers or trays to define their work area. Allow children to work with some fine motor toys on the floor on trays or carpet squares. Allow children to watch peers when trying a new toy, but put them side by side so that the child with a disability isn't looking at the activity upside down.



3. ACTIVITY AREAS WITHIN THE MESSY ZONE



The art area should be located next to a sink for mixing paints and ease of cleaning up after the activities. It requires good natural light and sufficient space so that children can work comfortably. There should be a range of art media available to children every day that includes drawing materials, paints, 3-D and collage materials, and tools, and an opportunity to work at easels, at a table, and – if space allows – on the floor. Wall-mounted easels are another option and can be located in areas with less depth.

FURNISHINGS FOR ART AREA:

- One rectangular table
- Two chairs
- One multi-unit storage shelf for children's use
- Easels – decide on easel type based on your space
- Drying rack
- Hooks or pegs for smocks
- Display space for two-dimensional and three-dimensional art at children's eye level

For Inclusion

Have a range of writing and painting implements (thin, stubby, big, and small) so that children can use tools appropriate to their dexterity level. Experiment with tabletop easels, large pieces of paper on the floor, and paper inside a shirt-size box to find a comfortable work surface for every child.

NATURE/SCIENCE AREA



The science area in an early childhood program is often organized around sensory exploration to introduce children to the “scientific method.” Children observe and interpret the world around them. They ask questions or identify a problem, make predictions, observe, and discuss. Setting up the science area involves creating a place where those processes can take place. It ideally incorporates plants and other organic materials and may be a place where “green practices” such as recycling, composting, etc. are introduced. Good natural lighting is important. Storage and display, access to tools, and a comfortable workspace complete the area. If an aquarium will be used, the area needs access to electricity.

FURNISHINGS FOR NATURE/SCIENCE AREA:

- Storage and multi-unit display shelves
- Bins or baskets for supplies and materials
- Table and four chairs
- Bulletin board for display at children's eye level

For Inclusion

Most nature and science activities can be adapted for the needs of children with disabilities. Teachers will need to break down the tasks in an activity to determine where a child may need extra time or support, or another approach.

SAND AND WATER



Sand and water play are favorites for many children. The area should have a waterproof and easily cleaned floor and enough space so that the sand and water tables can be approached from several sides, since this type of play can be very sociable. Pathways should not pass through the area since wet floors can be slippery. Since water should be drained and the tub sanitized daily, it's important to be close to a sink. Sand and water tables come in a range of dimensions, so if space is tight, you can buy the smaller tables. Make sure the height of the tables is appropriate for the age and size of the children. Most manufacturers offer toddler tables with a height of 20 inches and preschool tables at 22 to 24 inches.

FURNISHINGS FOR SAND AND WATER AREA:

Sand table with cover

Water table with cover

A multi-unit shelf with waterproof bins to hold sand and water toys

An alternative to shelves is to hang the toys in a mesh bag over the sink until dry, or to purchase sand and water tables with a built-in storage shelf

Hooks or pegs for smocks



For Inclusion

Be sure the tables are very stable in an inclusion classroom – some tables have wheels or casters on one end and those should be locked in position. Provide toys at the child's skill level and introduce more advanced toys as he masters the easier ones.

4. STORAGE

There is never enough storage in an early childhood program. Plan for storage both inside and outside the classroom in central storage areas. Too often storage is an afterthought – the space has been filled and the budget exhausted before plans are made for storing materials and personal belongings. There are several categories of storage needed in most programs. The areas described below suggest the amount of floor area required for each type of storage. The actual storage units will range in height, depending on the choice of equipment for each function. It is important to note that adult-only storage (closed and inaccessible to the children), is not part of your “usable square footage” as calculated in determining licensed capacity.

CHILD PERSONAL STORAGE

Allow a minimum of 1 square foot of floor area per child in each classroom for their personal storage needs, including outerwear, diaper bags or backpacks, extra clothing, and special items from home. Most often this storage is provided in cubbies or using a combination of coat hooks and cubbies.

STAFF PERSONAL STORAGE

It is important to provide a secure location for each staff member's personal belongings, including outerwear, pocketbooks, files, and personal items. Allow 6 to 8 square feet per staff member in closets, tall cabinets, and file drawers. Staff should be able to lock their personal storage

POINT-OF-USE STORAGE FOR CLASSROOM MATERIALS

Each individual classroom needs two different types of storage for the children's learning materials. The first type is the low, open shelving units on which materials are displayed and made accessible to children throughout the day. While this is often referred to as storage, it could more accurately be described as display. Teachers rotate materials on and off of these low display shelves as themes and seasons change from week to week or month to month, allowing different experiences for the children in the room. Caution should be used to not overly crowd these shelves with materials or children may have a difficult time seeing what they want or putting things away. Thus, it is important to have a second type of storage available in classrooms for learning materials. This is considered closed storage and is accessed by the classroom teachers only. This can be provided through a combination of closets, high shelving, and closed cabinetry. This storage can then be used to store surplus and off-season materials as well as those materials that are used for special classroom projects. Wall-hung shelves or cabinets with doors can be purchased at a modest cost at Home Depot-type stores and professionally installed over activity areas so that they do not take up valuable floor space. Because space in classrooms is often tight, it is important to reiterate that accessible (open/display) storage is typically calculated in your classroom "usable square footage," however, closed (teacher) storage units are typically subtracted from your "usable square footage." Thus, if square footage in your space is tight you may want to focus on wall-mounted shelves along with teacher storage outside of the immediate classroom space.

STORAGE FOR COTS AND BEDDING

One of the most space-consuming storage needs of preschool or toddler classrooms is for children's cots for rest time. Ten stacked cots require about 8 square feet of floor space. One creative idea to use, which is becoming more common in early childhood classrooms, is to use the area under a built-in loft for storage. This otherwise unused area makes a great space for cot storage, especially if cots are stacked on a low cart that can be wheeled in and out from under the loft.

CENTRAL STORAGE OF BULKY EQUIPMENT AND BULK SUPPLIES

It is critical to allow for a substantial amount of out-of-classroom storage in the center. For this type of storage, more is better, and there is no such thing as too much. Ordering things such as art supplies in bulk saves considerable cost, but it is important to have a place to store these supplies. In infant and toddler programs, bulk storage of diapers requires careful planning since parents tend to bring in packs of 48 to 60 diapers at a time. These can be labeled and stored in a central area. Teachers can then take each child's daily or weekly supply of diapers into the classroom. Centers also often have seasonal supplies and bulky equipment that needs to be stored outside of classrooms. A large, well organized walk-in closet will provide space to store these surplus materials and large equipment that is not currently in use.

When planning a new center, consider incorporating a basement or attic space to allow for even more flexibility in storage.

SPECIAL-PURPOSE STORAGE

Keep in mind your center's special storage needs. Plan for storage of family-owned car seats and folding strollers near the entry, outdoor toys and vehicles near the door to the playground, seasonal equipment, and center-owned transport such as wagons for six and double strollers. For strollers and car seats belonging to children, allow 1 square foot per item and assume that 10-15% of your enrollment will need that type of storage on a regular basis. For storage of outdoor equipment, a closet or outdoor storage structure should offer at least 40 square feet of floor space and shelves and hooks installed to fit the equipment and make efficient use of the space. Multi-child strollers and wagons for six require 12 - 24 square feet of storage per vehicle.

PLANNING FOR INFANT AND TODDLER CARE

Many children enter child care by the age of 6 months, with some as young as 12 weeks. Very young children grow and develop so quickly that planning the environment must take that developmental momentum into account. In their first year infants change rapidly, going from spending most of the time sleeping to rolling over, reaching, crawling, sitting upright, pulling to stand, and eventually walking. And they don't rest at that point. In the second year they learn to run, climb, talk, ask questions, and manipulate materials, always expanding their understanding of their surroundings, and testing their own abilities.

Infant and toddler environments must serve young children as they change and grow, and help teachers offer the individualized care that is so critical to children's optimal development. This section discusses the various elements in an infant or toddler space.

1. THE ENTRY TO THE INFANT OR TODDLER ROOM

Parents using infant care need support. They are often sleep-deprived, rushed, and stressed. They worry about how their baby does in child care – is she safe, is she happy, do the caregivers really know her personality and needs, and often unspoken – will she forget who her parents are while she's in care?



Create an entry that helps ease those concerns. Make it comfortable and convenient with a clear and understandable layout.

FURNISHINGS FOR THE ENTRY TO THE INFANT OR TODDLER ROOM:

Cubbies and hooks for outerwear, backpacks, or diaper bags

A counter on which to rest a baby while taking off outerwear

Comfortable seating

A bulletin board, with photos of children and their families

Daily sign-in sheets

Parent mailboxes

Car seat or stroller storage

Many infant rooms are “shoeless environments” requiring that adults remove their shoes before entering the children’s space. This rule helps to maintain a more sanitary environment for children who are spending lots of time crawling on the floor during the day. Be sure that adults can sit down to remove their shoes, and that there is a shoe tray or other identifiable location for their shoes.

2. CAREGIVING FUNCTIONS

Infants require individualized care, modified frequently as they grow and develop. They should eat and sleep on their own schedules, be held often, and have diapering and other needs taken care of promptly. While this depends mostly on the teachers in the program, there are environmental considerations as well.

SLEEPING

Infants will sleep in cribs which are ideally located in an area of the classroom that is somewhat sheltered from very active areas. The following things are important considerations:

- Each crib must be in compliance with the current U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and ASTM standards.
- Proof that each crib used in the program meets the CPSC standards should be maintained onsite.
- A firm mattress that is fitted so that no more than two fingers can fit between the mattress and the crib side at the lowest position should be used.
- The minimum height from the top of the mattress to the top of the crib rail should be 20 inches in the highest position.
- Cribs should be placed at least 3 feet apart when in use to prevent airborne contamination from one child to another and to ensure good supervision.
- For convenience, changes of clothing and bedding should be stored below the cribs. Some manufacturers offer crib storage drawers that attach below the crib, but covered plastic bins on the floor work well also. If under-crib storage is not available, provide a chest of drawers, individual labeled bins, or large plastic tote bags on a shelf.
- Licensing regulations require one evacuation crib with rolling casters or wheels for every five children under the age of 2.

Toddlers move out of cribs and onto cots. There are toddler-sized plastic stacking cots that are about 43 x 21 inches and 5 inches high. Provide storage for bedding, either where the cots are stored or near children's cubbies.



FEEDING

Bottle-fed babies younger than 4 months should be held for feeding. If children enjoy that contact with a teacher, it should be continued as long as possible. When children begin solid food – the timing of which varies by culture and parental preference – children can be moved to “low highchairs” (low chairs with individual trays), or to a small table with chairs with arms and seat belts/straps to keep children in place. Many programs avoid using traditional high chairs because they serve only one purpose and are hard to store. The low highchairs can be used for classroom seating with the trays removed and many manufacturers offer low high chairs that can be stacked for storage.

Be sure that the teacher feeding the children has a comfortable seat of the appropriate height. The floor in the infant feeding area should be tile or linoleum, and adjacent walls should have a washable surface.

To support individual feeding schedules, it's important to have a food prep area in the infant room with a sink, refrigerator, and method for warming foods. Most centers use slow cookers for warming baby food and bottles. Storage for dry foods should be convenient to the food prep area.

Support breast-feeding mothers by creating a comfortable and private area near the infant classroom. This requires a glider-rocker or other comfortable seating, a small table for a glass of water, and a low level of lighting so that the mother and child can relax during nursing.



Toddlers are able to feed themselves, so they can sit at 16-inch tables with 8-inch chairs or stools. Be sure that children's feet can touch the ground while seated.

DIAPERING

If a diaper-changing area is not built into your space, create one that contains an adult-height changing table, preferably one with steps that older infants and toddlers can climb with the help of a teacher. The changing table should be placed as close as possible to the diaper-changing sink and located in a way that allows you to maintain supervision. This area should include the following equipment as well:

- *Individual shelves and bins for storing diapering supplies.*
- *Storage for materials needed for sanitizing the diapering area and handling soiled clothing: bleach solution, paper towels, plastic gloves, plastic bags for soiled clothing, and a roll of medical exam paper or other disposable covering for the diapering area. Soiled clothing should be placed in plastic bags and sent home for laundering.*
- *A foot-operated, covered diaper pail that can be lined with plastic bags. Don't choose diaper pails that require an adult to touch the cover or stuff the soiled diaper into a narrow opening. Those are not suitable for child care use because of the risk of spreading germs or bacteria.*

- *Separate task lighting for the diapering area for good visibility and for changing children during naptime when the room is darkened. Be sure the light does not shine directly in the child's eyes.*

3. PLAY AREAS

Relationships and people are the core elements in an environment that supports infant and toddler development. Infants have an inborn drive toward learning and mastery, and a remarkable amount of development takes place every month. The space should be laid out to keep children close to their teachers and to support teachers in their critically important role. The space should allow infants to freely explore the environment in a safe way. Use of "confinement" equipment such as playpens, walkers, bouncy chairs, and swings is highly discouraged in quality infant environments. Rather, the equipment should support children's natural need to explore and interact with the adults and world around them.

In choosing furnishings, pay scrupulous attention to health and safety. All furnishings should be easy to clean and sanitize. Corners should be rounded and cabinets and drawers should have child-safe closures. Create a space where teachers do not have to constantly say no or pull children away from hazards. This can be done with furnishings, low walls, or various types of contained play areas. The floor surface is important because so much time is spent crawling, sitting, and playing on the floor. Carpeted risers, low platforms, and ramps make the floor more useful and more stimulating. If these types of features were not built in to the original space or if you do not want something permanently fixed in the room, several manufacturers make furnishings such as the foam blocks shown above that can be easily moved throughout the room or center and provide variation and challenge in the environment.



Provide a number of soft, safe places to rest non-mobile infants where they can watch other children playing. A wide range of manufactured furnishings are available for this purpose. The snuggle nest shown below is a good example of durable equipment that can be easily cleaned and provides a soft, safe space for young infants.

Separate the space with low dividers or a small loft, creating areas for quiet, active, and messy play. One company offers foam activity walls with a number of inserts (switches, lenses, light box, mirror, spinning cylinders) that both divide the space and offer different types of stimulating play. An infant loft offers a change of level for the babies on top, but also a tunnel and hiding place underneath. For older infants, provide a pull-up bar or sturdy box at 14 to 16 inches above floor level for children to practice standing and cruising.

Display materials at the point of use, and display only a limited number of toys at a time. Use acrylic mirrors and colorful displays at infant eye level (the bottom 24 to 36 inches of a wall or door). According to some research, infants notice and respond to the colors red, blue, and green first. They also recognize high contrast patterns before other combinations of color. Some people believe that because infants respond to the human face, they also show a preference for colors in skin tone ranges from pink to various shades of brown. Provide several types of comfortable seating for an adult seated with one or more babies. An easy chair or small couch is a great place to play, read books, or even nap once in awhile.



Toddler classrooms more closely mirror the layout of preschool classrooms with separate interest areas, but with more room to move around. Also, the areas can be simpler and more basic, adding new materials and furnishings as the children develop. In considering colors for the toddler area, maintain the neutral background palette, but introduce green, blue-green, yellow, and purple.

BOOK AREA



Toddlers love miniatures of adult furniture, so small, soft chairs or sofas make the book area very appealing. Display board books on a book display rack, and in small baskets or bins that can be carried around. Stuffed animals are also popular in toddler book areas, especially if they are characters from favorite books.

DRAMATIC PLAY



Toddlers need an enclosed dramatic play area, so set up the equipment to form a room, with two ways in and out. Window-level openings that allow toddlers to see in and out of the area will enhance the play. The props can be simple, but be sure there are duplicates of popular items. Try to have kitchen sets with a door and oven that open and close, and knobs and faucets that turn. The realistic detail is important for this age group.

ACTIVE PLAY



Toddlers want to practice their skills and learn new ones. Make the environment both challenging and safe with stairs to climb, tunnels, low climbers, and slides. Toddlers tend to travel in a group, so be sure that steps, platforms, and ramps can hold several children at a time. There should be an open space available for children to practice their gross motor skills. There should also be ample, appropriate materials and equipment that they can use daily that is generally in good repair.

ART



Toddler art is very much about the process rather than the product. Let them play with finger paint or shaving cream on acrylic mirrors, transparent easels, or plastic trays. Let them paint on a chalkboard with water and short chubby brushes.

SAND AND WATER



Activities involving sand and water are essential for children 18 months and older. Be sure the tables are 20 inches high and provide duplicates of the popular props.

FINE MOTOR



When playing with materials or toys, toddlers are more likely to stand or sit on the floor, so chairs may not be needed in the area. Their fine motor toys have fewer parts and larger pieces.

NATURE/SCIENCE



Some pictures, books, or toys that represent nature realistically and are developmentally appropriate should be accessible to infants and toddlers. There should also be some opportunities for the children to experience the natural world daily, either indoors or outdoors.

BLOCKS



For children over the age of 12 months, blocks and accessories should be accessible daily and for much of the day. Soft, lightweight blocks of various shapes, sizes, and colors should be provided as well as accessories like containers to fill and dump, toy trucks, cars, and animals.

MUSIC



Some musical materials, toys, or instruments should be accessible to children for free play daily and for much of the day. Staff should initiate at least one music activity, which can include singing and dancing, daily. Staff should encourage the children to dance, clap, or sing along.



Worksheets to help with planning and purchasing furnishings are included in Appendix I.

GUIDELINES FOR PURCHASING FURNISHINGS

There are important considerations in purchasing furnishings, whether purchasing all of the equipment for a new program or replacements for existing classrooms.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Taking care of children in groups is inherently more complex than taking care of one or two children, since there is more risk of injury and spread of illness.

Evaluate every piece of furniture for safety and stability:

- Does it have rounded corners and child-safe hardware?
- Is it stable and will it resist tipping?
- Will it splinter or shatter?
- Does it have protrusions, pinch hazards, or hard edges?

Look for furnishings with smooth, nonporous surfaces or washable fabrics. If surfaces cannot be easily cleaned and sanitized, the piece should have a disposable cover.

AESTHETICS

Aesthetics are a large part of interior design, including classroom design. Look for colors, materials, and textures that contribute to balance and harmony. The furnishings and finishes should provide a backdrop for the materials, so avoid using bright primary colors for furniture. Many toys and materials are in the bold primary color palette, and too much color leads to chaos and a visually over-stimulating environment for young children. The most appealing classrooms tend to have a mix of old and new pieces, the inclusion of some unusual or beautiful items, thoughtful and attractive displays, and carefully arranged furnishings. In considering furnishings, ask the following questions:

- Does the piece of furniture appeal to your sense of design and beauty?
- Do you like the colors and materials?
- Have you included some furnishings with curved or rounded lines and furnishings made of natural materials?

DURABILITY AND QUALITY

Look for furniture that will age gracefully, since early childhood budgets rarely have sufficient reserves for replacing worn items. When you are faced with equipping an entirely new center it is often tempting to try to cut corners and look only for the best deal, but it is critical that you also think about the quality of construction and materials, and the availability of replacement parts. You want to be sure that the furniture will last 5 years or more with daily use by young children. For more expensive pieces (cubbies, shelves, changing tables, tables and chairs) you should purchase with the expectation of their lasting 10-15 years.



SCALE AND SUITABILITY

Does the furniture fit the space and is it the correct size for children? Does it support their developing skills and independence? Is it appropriate for its intended use?

ECONOMICS

Evaluate the initial cost versus the “lifetime” cost of the piece. Too often, the initial cost is the only consideration. Consider what it will cost to maintain or repair a cheaper piece of furniture, and how often will you need to replace it. It is usually most cost-effective to invest in high-quality pieces of furniture that get constant hard use – changing tables, cubbies, tables and chairs – and economize on pieces that are used less often.

ERGONOMICS

Comfort and functionality are important, both in the scale and design of children’s furniture and in planning the space as a work environment for adults.

- **For children:** *The height of tables and chairs matters. Tables should be approximately waist high for the children using them, and every child’s feet should reach the floor when seated in a chair. Children’s chairs should have shallow seats and slanted backs to help them position themselves in the chair.*
- **For adults:** *The classroom should be comfortable for adult use. Furnishings and equipment should allow teachers to hold and comfort children and help with their activities while minimizing the need for bending, lifting, and carrying heavy children and objects. Teachers should be provided with adult chairs in several places around the classroom.*



Back strain is the leading cause of worker-compensation claims for child care teachers. There are several approaches to reducing risk:

1. Use adult-height changing tables with steps that enable children to climb up to the changing surface rather than being lifted.
2. Use strollers and wagons for six during “walks” outdoors so that teachers don’t have to carry tired children.
3. Use adult furniture to eliminate awkward sitting or working positions for teachers.

RESOURCES

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APPENDIX I

Cost of Equipment

WORKSHEETS FOR
PLANNING ROOM FURNISHINGS

COST OF EQUIPMENT



The initial purchases for an early childhood classroom can be estimated at between \$700 and \$1000 per child for preschool classrooms and between \$1000 and \$1500 per child for infant and toddler classrooms. These estimates include all furnishings for the children, including adult seating and storage. These figures do not include office furnishings, a staff lounge, or conference areas. In addition to the furnishings budget, new programs should plan to spend \$125 to \$150 per child for toys, books, and curriculum materials, with a similar allowance for replacement and new purchases each year.

The costs above are based on purchasing good quality products from the vendors included on the list following the purchasing worksheets. It assumes the purchase of wooden rather than plastic furniture, and an emphasis on quality construction and materials, and safety.

WORKSHEET FOR PLANNING INFANT ROOM FURNISHINGS

TO SERVE 8 INFANTS AND 2-3 TEACHERS

**BASIC COST
FOR FURNISHING
A ROOM OF
8 INFANTS
\$8,500 - \$11,500**

SUMMARY OF FURNISHINGS

ITEM	QTY	UNIT COST	TOTAL
child-size table	1+		
area rugs	2		
soft furnishings	3		
adult-size chair	2		

STORAGE

ITEM	QTY	UNIT COST	TOTAL
low display shelf	4		
closed storage shelf	4		
locking storage cabinet for staff's personal belongings	1		

IN ADDITION TO THESE ITEMS, YOU WILL NEED

AREA	ITEM	QTY	UNIT COST	TOTAL
CLASSROOM ENTRY				
	parent mailboxes	8+		
	sign-in area	1		
	bulletin board	1		
	seating area			
CUBBIES	cubbies or lockers	8		
CAREGIVING				
DIAPERING	changing table & storage	1		
SLEEPING	crib w/ under-crib storage drawer	8		
	evacuation crib	2		
FEEDING	low high chair with or w/o tray	4+		
INFANT FEEDING	chairs and table			
PLAY AREAS				
	infant loft	1		
	crawl through tunnel	1		
	room divider/activity centers	4		
	carpeted risers	1		
	vinyl or fabric covered play pit	1		
	air chair or infant seat	2		
	browser box (for books/toys)	1		
GRAND TOTAL				

NOTE: *These worksheets are for furnishings only and do not include all of the supplies, toys, and materials that will be needed for a well-functioning classroom.*

WORKSHEET FOR PLANNING TODDLER ROOM FURNISHINGS

TO SERVE 12 TODDLERS AND 2-3 TEACHERS

**BASIC COST
FOR FURNISHING
A ROOM OF
10-12 TODDLERS
\$11,000 - \$18,000**

SUMMARY OF FURNISHINGS

ITEM	QTY	UNIT COST	TOTAL
child-size table (16-18")	3		
child-size chair (8-10")	12		
area rugs	2		
adult-size chair	2		
risers for floor seating	2		

STORAGE

ITEM	QTY	UNIT COST	TOTAL
low display shelf	6+		
closed storage shelf	2		
locking storage cabinet for staff's personal belongings	1		

IN ADDITION TO THESE ITEMS, YOU WILL NEED

AREA	ITEM	QTY	UNIT COST	TOTAL
CLASSROOM ENTRY				
	parent mailboxes	10+		
	sign-in area	1		
	bulletin board	1		
	seating area			
CUBBIES	lockers	12		
CAREGIVING				
DIAPERING	walk-up changing table	1		
NAPS	toddler cot	12		
	cot dolly	1		
	storage for sheets and blankets			
MEALS	wall-mounted shelf for storage of dishes/paper goods	1		
PAGE TOTAL				

***NOTE:** These worksheets are for furnishings only and do not include all of the supplies, toys, and materials that will be needed for a well-functioning classroom.*

CONTINUED

WORKSHEET FOR PLANNING TODDLER ROOM FURNISHINGS

TO SERVE 12 TODDLERS AND 2-3 TEACHERS

AREA	ITEM	QTY	UNIT COST	TOTAL
INTEREST RATES				
INDOOR ACTIVE PLAY	toddler climbing structure			
(Select 3-5 items from this list.)	safety surface			
	foam tumbler			
	slide			
	foam log			
	crawling tunnel			
	transportation/ - riding toys			
	rocking boat/staircase			
ART	easel	1		
	drying rack	1		
BLOCK PLAY	low storage unit for large and small blocks and related props	2		
	small area rug	1		
READING AREA	cushions, bolsters, or soft furnishings	2		
	book display shelf	1		
DRAMATIC PLAY	stove	1		
	sink	1		
	refrigerator	1		
	cupboard	1		
	doll stroller	1		
	sturdy doll bed	1		
	child-size round table and chairs	1		
	mirror for 2 children	1		
SAND AND WATER	toddler sand table	1		
	toddler water table	1		
			GRAND TOTAL	

***NOTE:** These worksheets are for furnishings only and do not include all of the supplies, toys, and materials that will be needed for a well-functioning classroom.*

WORKSHEET FOR PLANNING PRESCHOOL ROOM FURNISHINGS

TO SERVE 18-20 PRESCHOOLERS AND 2-3 TEACHERS

BASIC COST FOR FURNISHING A ROOM OF 18-20 PRESCHOOLERS \$14,000 - \$19,500

SUMMARY OF FURNISHINGS

ITEM	QTY	UNIT COST	TOTAL
child-size table	5+		
child-size chair	20+		
hooks or pegs (4 per area)			
adult-rugs	3+		
adult-size chair	2		
risers for floor seating	2		

STORAGE

ITEM	QTY	UNIT COST	TOTAL
low display shelf	6+		
closed storage shelf	4+		
locking storage cabinet for staff's personal belongings	1		

IN ADDITION TO THESE ITEMS, YOU WILL NEED

AREA	ITEM	QTY	UNIT COST	TOTAL
CLASSROOM ENTRY				
	parent mailboxes	20+		
	sign-in area	1		
	bulletin board	1		
	seating area			
CUBBIES	locker w/ top shelf, hook, and boot locker beneath	20+		
CAREGIVING				
NAPS	cots	20+		
	cot dolly	2		
	storage for sheets and blankets			
MEALS	wall-mounted shelf for storage of dishes/paper goods	1		
PAGE TOTAL				

***NOTE:** These worksheets are for furnishings only and do not include all of the supplies, toys, and materials that will be needed for a well-functioning classroom.*

CONTINUED

WORKSHEET FOR PLANNING PRESCHOOL ROOM FURNISHINGS

TO SERVE 20 PRESCHOOLERS AND 2-3 TEACHERS

AREA	ITEM	QTY	UNIT COST	TOTAL
INTEREST RATES				
INDOOR ACTIVE PLAY	climbing structure			
(Select 4-6 items from this list.)	safety surface			
	foam tumbler			
	slide			
	foam log			
	collapsible fabric tunnel			
	transportation toys			
	rocking boat/staircase			
ART	multi-purpose easel	2		
	drying rack	1		
	small table and chairs	1		
BLOCK PLAY	low storage unit for block set and related props	2		
BOOK CORNER-LIBRARY	cushions, bolsters, or soft furnishings	2		
	book display shelf	1		
	storage for CDs and tapes	1		
COMPUTER	computer desk and chairs for 2 children	1		
	small printer cart	1		
DISCOVERY SCIENCE	bulletin board	1		
	small table / discovery table	1		
DRAMATIC PLAY	stove	1		
	sink	1		
	refrigerator	1		
	cupboard	1		
	doll stroller	1		
	sturdy doll bed	1		
	rocking chair	1		
	doll high chair	1		
	child-size round table and chairs	1		
	mirror for 2 children	1		
SAND AND WATER	sand table	1		
	water table	1		
WOODWORKING	carpentry table w/ storage shelf	1		
GRAND TOTAL				

NOTE: *These worksheets are for furnishings only and do not include all of the supplies, toys, and materials that will be needed for a well-functioning classroom.*



APPENDIX II

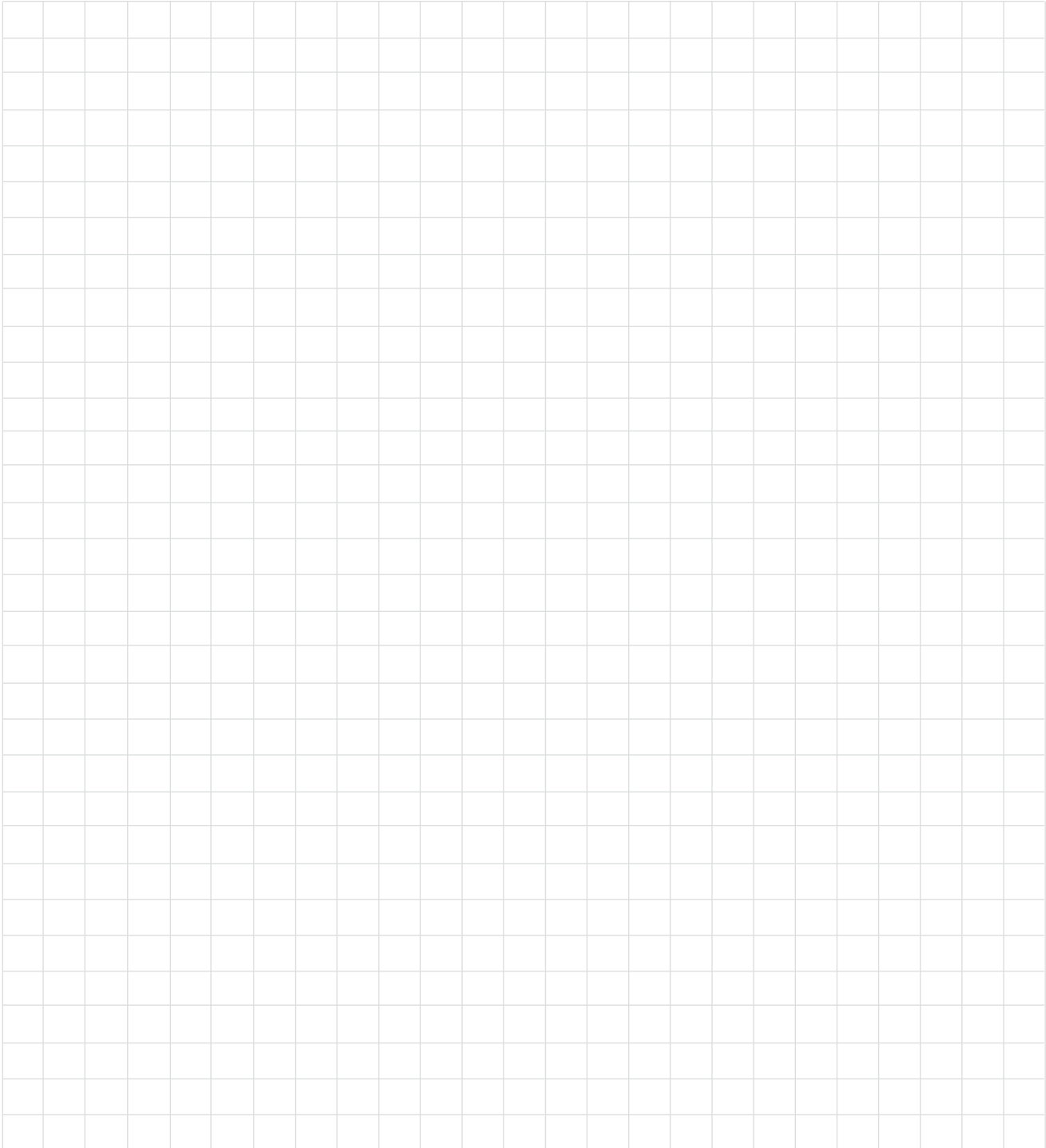
Room Layout Activity

ROOM LAYOUT ACTIVITY

Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"

INSTRUCTIONS

Use this graph to develop your room layout. Each 1/4" square represents 1 square foot of your space. For more information on how to create a scaled drawing, refer to page 2 in this guide book.

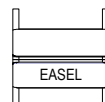
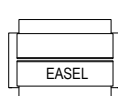
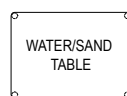
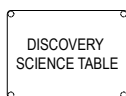
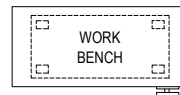
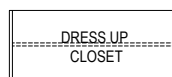
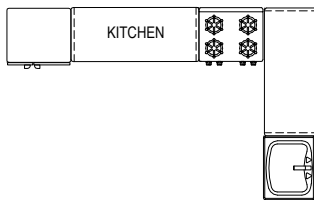
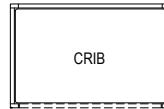
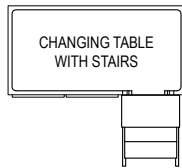
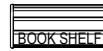
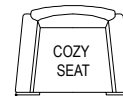
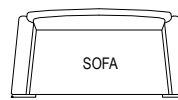
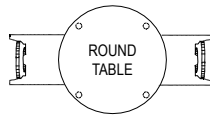
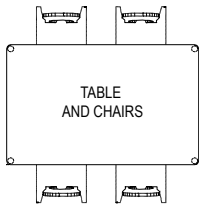
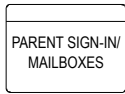


FURNITURE OPTIONS Drawings provided by Community Playthings.

Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"

INSTRUCTIONS

Copy this page as many times as needed, then either cut or trace the below furniture to place on your room layout.





APPENDIX III

Materials used in Classroom Furnishings



MATERIALS USED IN CLASSROOM FURNISHINGS

WOOD

Wood is a warm, natural material. It displays colorful materials and toys well, without adding to the visual chaos of the classroom. Wood furniture often requires a higher initial investment, but lasts significantly longer than furniture made of other materials.

TYPE OF MATERIAL	DESCRIPTION	TYPICAL USES	DURABILITY	COMMENTS
1. HARDWOOD	Beech, Birch, Maple, Oak	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cubbies • Tables • Chairs • Shelf units • Dramatic play furniture • Lofts • Indoor gross motor equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very durable • Can be refinished 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hardwood construction is generally considered to be the highest quality, and has the highest cost • Purchasing higher quality hardwood up front may be more cost-effective than frequently replacing lower-priced furniture
2. SOFTWOOD	Pine, Spruce, Fir	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shelf units • Dramatic play furniture • Cubbies • Sand and water tables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fairly durable • Can be painted or refinished to extend the life of the furniture • More affordable but less durable than hardwood versions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used by some smaller independent manufacturers • Check on construction methods; sometimes combined with more flimsy fiberboard in shelf units or drawers
3. VENEER	Very thin slices of wood attached to particle board or solid wood; may be combined with solid wood in some furniture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Table tops • Cubbies • Storage units • Dramatic play furniture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-quality veneer can be more durable than solid wood since it resists cracking and warping because of its construction • In less expensive versions, exposure to moisture or the regular wear and tear of a child care classroom can lead to separation of the layers in the veneer and deterioration of the furniture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometimes used to create the look of solid wood, so be sure to verify what you are purchasing
4. PLYWOOD	Made from many layers of wood veneer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rounded or molded furniture shapes • Lofts and activity platforms • Play furniture with interesting shapes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very durable • Can be refinished 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Called “laminated wood” by some manufacturers • Furniture-grade plywood is often used in building children’s furniture, and has an attractive smooth finish

PLASTIC

Plastic is affordable. It's lightweight, comes in a range of colors, and can be washed and sanitized, so its use in the manufacture of children's furnishings continues to grow. There are so many types of plastic that it's difficult to generalize about their uses, but the most common are discussed below. The chief drawbacks of plastic furnishings are aesthetic and philosophical.

TYPE OF MATERIAL	DESCRIPTION	TYPICAL USES	DURABILITY	COMMENTS
1. MOLDED PLASTIC	Molded plastic furnishings are often child-safe and durable, with rounded edges and smooth surfaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chairs • Dramatic play furnishings • Large waffle blocks • Room dividers • Riding toys • Indoor gross motor equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easily washed and sanitized • Often acquires a worn or grimy appearance over time • Most molded plastic cannot be repaired 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to limit the color palette and cartoon-like appearance of molded plastic • Avoid flimsy, lightweight plastic chairs that tip or slide out from under active children
2. PLASTIC LAMINATE	Plastic laminate is made of melamine impregnated veneer or paper that creates a smooth, non-porous surface	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Table tops • Cubbies • Counters and changing tables • Shelf units 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Durable • Easily cleaned and sanitized • Refinishing and repairs can be difficult 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several vendors offer color-coordinated lines of furniture • If you plan to attach cubbies or shelf units to the wall or floor, check with the vendor on the feasibility of doing so without damaging the laminate • Better versions have rounded corners and plastic protective edgings to guard against chips or scratches
3. ACRYLIC	Acrylic is transparent or translucent plastic, also known as Plexiglas or Lucite	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unbreakable mirrors • Transparent easels • Windows in play structures • See-through crib ends • Sand and water tables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shatter-resistant • Can scratch • Often discolors when exposed to sunlight for long periods • Ammonia-based cleaners can destroy the finish and appearance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A safe and attractive alternative to glass.
4. FOAM PLASTIC	Polyurethane foam is available as plastic or vinyl-covered foam mats and cushions for child care use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mats • Play structures • Soft blocks • Soft seating • Indoor gross motor equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resilient and easy to shape • Higher-end products are very easy to clean and hold up well • Low-cost versions rarely have the durability needed for child care use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be difficult to verify the quality of the foam and covering materials when purchasing from a catalog, so check the manufacturer's specifications • Look for vendors who offer replacement covers

METAL

Metal is a harsher material than plastic or wood, and has limited but important uses in child care settings.

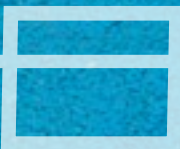
When choosing metal furnishings, pay careful attention to the connections and finishes – welded joints, machine screws, or nuts and bolts. Poor-quality construction can undermine the strength of the material. Watch for protruding parts or loose connections that could be hazardous. Colors for metal furniture parts are most often black, brown, chrome, or bold primary colors. Metal’s chief advantage is price and durability.

TYPE OF MATERIAL	DESCRIPTION	TYPICAL USES	DURABILITY	COMMENTS
1. STEEL	In children’s furniture, steel is finished with paint or chrome to create a smooth, rust-resistant finish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legs and base on classroom tables • Frames and legs of some lightweight plastic chairs • Cribs • Utility shelves • Storage systems • Tricycles and other riding toys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less expensive pieces may have finishes that chip or peel, leaving it subject to rust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid steel folding tables in child care because of potential pinch hazards • Carefully examine the finish, connections where metal is attached to metal, as well as the glides on chair and table legs, to ensure safety and durability
2. ALUMINUM	A softer and less expensive version of steel, not widely used in child care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cots made of aluminum or steel tubes with mesh covers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aluminum cot frames often bend and the rubber tips get lost • Can be subject to gradual corrosion as it ages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plastic stacking cots may be a better option



APPENDIX IV

List of Catalogs



LIST OF CATALOGS

CATALOG	ADDRESS	CONTACT INFORMATION	FEATURE	PRICE POINT	LOOK FOR
CHILDREN'S FACTORY	510 S. McKinley Ave. Union, MO 63084	1-877-726-1696 www.childrensfactory.com	Vinyl-covered foam	\$	Acrylic mirrors, mats, foam riding toys
COMMUNITY PLAYTHINGS	359 Gibson Hill Rd. Chester, NY 10918	1-800-777-4244 www.communityplaythings.com	Wooden furniture	\$\$	Changing tables, lofts, room dividers
DISCOUNT SCHOOL SUPPLY	P.O. Box 734309 Chicago, IL 60673-4309	1-800-627-2829 www.discountsschoolsupply.com/	Furniture + materials	\$\$	Rugs, banners, soft elements
JONTI-CRAFT INC	PO Box 30 171 State Highway 68 Wabasso, MN 56293	1-800-543-4149 www.jonti-craft.com	Furniture	\$	Computer tables, 3 lines of furniture
JULIANA GROUP	1610 Staley Ave. Savannah, GA 31405	1-800-959-6159 www.julianagroup.com	Imported wooden furniture	\$\$\$	Wooden cots, cubbies with doors, unusual highchairs
KAPLAN EARLY LEARNING CO	PO Box 609 1310 Lewisville-Clemmons Rd. Lewisville, NC 27023	1-800-334-2014 www.kaplanco.com	Furniture + materials	\$\$	Lofts, reading nooks, soft furniture
LAKESHORE LEARNING MATERIALS	2695 East Dominguez St. Carson, CA 90895	1-800-778-4456 www.lakeshorelearning.com	Furniture + materials	\$\$	Tuff Stuff laminate furniture
SAFESPACE CONCEPTS	1424 North Post Oak Houston, Texas 77055	1-800-622-4289 www.safespaceconcepts.com	Vinyl-covered foam in muted colors	\$\$\$	Unusual activity centers, landing mats
SCHOOL SPECIALTY	W6316 Design Drive, Greenville, WI 54942	1-888-388-3224 www.store.schoolspecialty.com/	Wood furniture + materials	\$	Lofts, area rugs
WOOD DESIGNS	PO Box 1308 Monroe, NC 28111	1-800-247-8465 www.wooddesigns.com	Wood furniture	\$\$	Tip-Me-Not wooden furniture

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LISC

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Drawing on LISC's deep expertise about the unique challenges of developing child care and early learning facilities, and our array of relevant financing and technical assistance tools, we are focused on:

- Assembling flexible capital to address the most pressing market needs
- Delivering technical support to providers and developers to enhance project implementation and to explore innovative approaches and partnerships
- Producing training and resources that introduce innovation and best practice
- Building a platform of support for equitable child care and early learning facility access that engages providers, business leaders, advocates, developers, other CDFIs, funders and policymakers