

# Equipment Examples for Interest Areas

This resource was developed to give examples of items that may be found in each interest area. Many other appropriate options exist.

**Interest areas are one of the options for family child care homes to meet the enhancement activities for 4 & 5 Star levels.**

## **Art**

**Purpose: To encourage individual expression and creativity, to develop a sense of personal accomplishment, to offer opportunities to explore a variety of media in a variety of ways.**

Shelf for art materials (that are accessible each day). Table, drying rack or area, display board to display work, paint smocks, pencils, glue sticks, materials for tracing such as templates, rulers, crayons, paper of various colors, textures, and sizes, clay/play dough, clay tools, cookie cutter, rolling pins, garlic press, markers, paint, paint brushes, rollers, hair rollers, potato masher, scrub brushes, scissors, glue, scrap materials, magazines, beads, paper tubes, cups, paper bags, newspaper, wallpaper, stamps and stamp pads, various sponges, feathers, pipe cleaners, cotton balls, craft sticks, yarn and ribbon. Easels, dry erase boards, and clipboards.

## **Blocks**

**Purpose: To develop awareness of himself/herself in space in relation to others, to encourage creativity taking apart, sorting and stacking and building various constructions, to learn to cooperate and accept work of others and to extend problem solving.**

Shelf for blocks and accessories, At variety of blocks...at least 20 in a set [large wooden blocks (unit blocks), cardboard blocks, shoe boxes, large colored sponges, hollow blocks, vinyl blocks, cylinders, foam, pool noodles cut in various lengths], along with accessories such as small people, animals, cars and traffic signs, silk flowers, basket of small fabric pieces. Display photos of people (representing human diversity, including women) working as mechanics, construction workers, and carpenters. Display photos of building structures and bridges.

## **Books and Language**

**Purpose: To promote language and emerging literacy skills and to develop an appreciation for other language and literature.**

Book display racks or bookshelves, cozy seating area (pillows, sofa, rocker or rug), a rotating selection of books, picture books, photo albums, teacher made books, tape player, books on tape, magazines, puppets, flannel boards w/ accessories, magnet/dry erase board w/accessories, writing materials and alphabet materials.

## **Dramatic Play**

**Purpose: To encourage social interaction and self-expression, to stimulate and expand oral language, to use real experiences in play, to develop language and expressive skills.**

Shelves, clothes rods, accordion hat racks or hooks for dramatic play equipment. Doctor kits, hats, neutral color kitchen set (with play food, pots and pans, dishes, utensils, bucket of river rocks), empty food boxes, grocery sacks, small kitchen table and chairs with flowers, tablecloth or place mats, cleaning equipment (brooms, vacuum cleaner, mops, feather duster), cultural dolls (with clothing, diapers, diaper bags, bottles, doll beds, strollers and high chair), play-sets, dress-up clothes, purses, suit jackets and ties, sports jerseys, tool set, spy gear, telephones, old cell phones, telephone books, recipe books, baseball cards, trophies, disposable cameras, prop boxes (such as gardening, fruit stand, pizza parlor, wedding, post office, pet store, gas station, sports, bakery/Deli, flower shop), full length shatterproof mirror.

## **Manipulatives**

**Purpose: To develop eye-hand coordination, to enhance and gain confidence in problem solving, to allow children to work independently with materials that will enhance cognitive skills.**

Small child size table and chairs, puzzles of graduated levels of difficulty, Lincoln Logs, Tinker Toys, bristle blocks, marble run, gears, pegboards with pegs, tokens, attribute blocks, beads of various sizes and shapes and string, straws cut in various lengths for stringing, lacing boards, tongs, Legos, file folder games.

## **Math**

**Purpose: To develop the vocabulary and skills to measure, describe patterns and express order, to develop skills to make comparisons, notice similarities and differences and learn about time, space and numbers.**

Shelf for math materials. Counting bears, pattern blocks with cards or boards, pattern cards, sorting trays, fraction circles, geo-boards, dice, dominoes, colored cubes, abacus, play money, cash register, clocks, pocket calendars, magnetic calendars, liquid or sand timers, patterning and sorting file folder games, calculator, rulers, tape measure, measuring cups and spoons, scales, graphing charts, paper and pencil.

## **Science or Nature**

**Purpose: To develop skills of observation, to stimulate cognitive development by encouraging children to reason, question, experiment, investigate, explore and classify, to learn about the natural environment.**

Shelf for science/nature materials. Science materials that encourage use of the five senses to observe, explore and experiment. Magnets and magnetic objects, magnifying glasses, sand and water bottles and tables with materials that float and sink, prisms, shells, aquarium/animals, insect cages, plants, file folder games, living and non-living things such as plants, rocks, shells, bones/fossils, color wheels, kaleidoscopes, binoculars, eye droppers, funnels, scientific concepts such as life cycles, space (stars, moon, sun), weather (rain, clouds, tornados, snow), water sources (ocean, streams, lakes), health (eating, exercising, growing). Light table with accessories, old x-ray films and nonfiction books about science.

## **Outdoor Interest Areas (2)**

**Purpose: To offer intentional learning experiences when children are outside.**

Any interest area can be effectively set up outside, with some planning and creativity. Outdoor interest area equipment can be taken outside and set up each day or can be more permanent. See additional resources for more outdoor interest area ideas.

Gilbert, B. B., Grymes, J. M., & Walters, L. M. (2000). *Creating environments & curriculum for infants and toddlers: Connecting the pieces*. Lewisville, NC: Kaplan Press.