

ITERS-3 Materials Checklist

The purpose of this checklist is to provide guidance in how to best support the learning and development of the children in your program in regard to accessible materials in your environment.

Encouraging Children's Use of Books

General considerations:

- At least 5 books (20 is better)
- Books have pages that children can turn easily, have clear pictures, and show nothing violent or frightening
- Books are placed in easily accessible places for all children (including within reach of non-mobile babies)
- Books are clearly rotated and/or based on current seasons, events, or interests
- Include fiction and non-fiction options

Vary your topics! Possibilities:

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Feelings | <input type="checkbox"/> Health | <input type="checkbox"/> Sports/hobbies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Families | <input type="checkbox"/> Work/jobs | <input type="checkbox"/> People |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Differing abilities | <input type="checkbox"/> Math | <input type="checkbox"/> Science |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Differing cultures | <input type="checkbox"/> Nature/animals | <input type="checkbox"/> Concepts (letters, colors) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Homemade books with words and photos | | |

Fine Motor

General considerations:

- At least 5 different choices (10 is better)
- Materials at different levels of difficulty are available
- Have a well-organized and comfortable place for children to use the materials
- Diversity should be reflected in puzzles/fine motor materials

Fine Motor Possibilities

Infants

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grasping toys | <input type="checkbox"/> Nested cups | <input type="checkbox"/> Textured toys |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Busy boxes | <input type="checkbox"/> Containers to fill and dump | <input type="checkbox"/> Cradle gyms |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rattles | | |

Toddlers and Older Children

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bristle blocks | <input type="checkbox"/> Shape sorting games | <input type="checkbox"/> Large pop beads |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Duplo blocks (interlocking blocks) | <input type="checkbox"/> Large stringing beads | <input type="checkbox"/> Stacking rings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inch cubes (30 months and up) | <input type="checkbox"/> Big pegs with peg boards | <input type="checkbox"/> Nesting toys |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Simple puzzles | <input type="checkbox"/> Zip, snap, button vests | <input type="checkbox"/> Links |

Recyclables and loose parts manipulatives for fine motor skills:

Various containers with snap-on lids, tissue boxes that fabric scraps or scarves can be stuffed in . . . what else can you find?

Art

General considerations:

- All materials should be simple, appropriate for age, non-food items, safe, and non-toxic
- Access to art materials is expected for children over 18 months
- Paper and/or an appropriate surface must be provided for use with art materials
- Affirm diversity through the art materials available (e.g. crayons, markers, and paper in real skin tones)



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Art Possibilities

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chalk | <input type="checkbox"/> Crayons | <input type="checkbox"/> Markers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chalkboards | <input type="checkbox"/> Textured papers | <input type="checkbox"/> Finger paints |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Playdough/tools | <input type="checkbox"/> Tempera paints/brushes | <input type="checkbox"/> Watercolors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Boxes | <input type="checkbox"/> Pipe cleaners | <input type="checkbox"/> Cardboard pieces/tubes/egg cartons |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Paper scraps | <input type="checkbox"/> Dry erase boards/markers (non-toxic) | <input type="checkbox"/> Wood scraps |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Felt pieces | | |

Music and Movement

General considerations:

- At least 3 music materials/instruments (10 is best)
- For children 2 and up, music instruments must be accessible (not just music materials)

Music Materials

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rattles | <input type="checkbox"/> Busy boxes | <input type="checkbox"/> Toys that pop, jingle, or make noise |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recorded music | <input type="checkbox"/> Electronic toys that beep or play music | |

Music Instruments

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bells/wrist bells | <input type="checkbox"/> Hardwood blocks with mallet | <input type="checkbox"/> Triangles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Castanets | <input type="checkbox"/> Maracas | <input type="checkbox"/> Shakers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cymbals/drums | <input type="checkbox"/> Piano | <input type="checkbox"/> Tambourine (with blunt edges) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Electric keyboard | <input type="checkbox"/> Rain sticks | <input type="checkbox"/> Rhythm sticks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Instruments/music reflecting diverse cultures | <input type="checkbox"/> Homemade instruments (such as pots, pans, buckets with wooden spoons, and shakers from toilet paper rolls) | <input type="checkbox"/> Xylophone |

Blocks

General considerations:

- Non-mobile infants should have just a few soft blocks within reach
 - Mobile infants and toddlers able to stack blocks should have at least 6 blocks
 - For 2-year-olds, there should be enough blocks that structures can be built without competition for blocks
 - Offer blocks in a special block interest center for older toddlers/2-year-olds with storage and a surface for building out of traffic
 - Offer large, hollow blocks (made from cardboard or plastic) in addition to unit blocks, for highest quality in this area
- Notes: Large, heavy wooden blocks should only be offered if older children can use them safely. Interlocking blocks (e.g., Legos) or blocks with most sides less than 2 inches do not count as blocks. Accessories should enhance, not detract from, block play.*

Blocks

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Unit blocks: | Large hollow blocks: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Soft fabric | <input type="checkbox"/> Cardboard |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wood | <input type="checkbox"/> Plastic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Foam | <input type="checkbox"/> Homemade from boxes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Plastic | |

Block Accessories (2-year-olds)

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Animals | <input type="checkbox"/> Vehicles |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Small people | <input type="checkbox"/> Road signs, fences, trees, small buildings, etc. |



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Dramatic Play

General considerations:

- Some materials that represent everyday life
- Materials should allow for meaningful play and promote combining of props (e.g. pot *and* spoons)
- Offer many and varied materials from the list below
- At least 4 clear examples of materials to represent diversity
- Materials for toddlers and 2-year-olds should be offered in a dramatic play interest center with materials organized by type and some child-sized play furniture

Infants

- Dolls (**required**)
- Soft animals (**required**)
- Pots and pans
- Play food
- Toy telephones
- Small people figures
- Toy animal figures
- Toy vehicle figures
- Simple dress-ups (hats, purses)

- Cultural cooking utensils
- Dolls (different races, cultures)
- Equipment used by people with disabilities

Toddlers and Twos

- Telephone
- Cooking/eating utensils
- Doll furniture (bed, high chair, stroller, etc.)
- Dress-up clothes for both boys and girls
- Stuffed animals
- Small play buildings with accessories
- Child-sized furniture (e.g., stove, washer/dryer, etc.)

Dramatic Play Materials that Reflect Diversity

- Fabrics, textiles, household items from different cultures
- Multicultural dress-up clothes
- Pretend foods of different cultures

Nature/Science

General considerations:

- Some appropriate pictures, books, and/or toys that represent nature realistically are available
- Opportunities exist for children to experience the natural world or natural objects both indoors and outdoors
- Sand and/or water with appropriate toys should be available to children 2 and older (indoors or outdoors)
- Nature/science materials are organized into an interest center for 2-year-olds
- Consider the size of objects such as rocks, shells and nuts for safety risks

Nature/Science Possibilities

Living Things Children Can Observe Closely or Care For

- Ant farm
- Aquarium with fish, snails, etc.
- A window for children to look out of
- Class pet
- Eggs that hatch
- Plants/seeds planted
- Window bird feeder
- Worm farm

Natural Objects

- Birds' nests
- Different types of wood
- Rocks/crystals
- Insects in transparent plastic
- Realistic plastic animals
- Leaves
- Nuts
- Pinecones
- Seashells

Factual Books/Nature-Science Picture Games

- Books
- Matching game (e.g., body parts)
- Simple puzzles with nature pictures or natural sequences
- Matching texture boards
- Smelling cans with different things to match/sort



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Nature/Science Tools

- Binoculars/viewers
- Balance scales with natural objects to weigh
- Color paddles
- Lifting objects with levers/pulleys
- Magnifying glasses
- Prisms
- Sensory bottles (oil and water, etc.)
- Kaleidoscope

Sand or Water with Toys (Indoors or Outdoors)

- Fine-grained materials for digging or pouring (sand, sterilized potting soil, millet bird seed)
- Buckets
- Funnels
- Measuring cups/spoons
- Water accessed from a hose, in a dishpan, or water table
- Rakes
- Scoops
- Shovels
- Sifters/sieves
- Spray bottles
- Turkey baster/pipettes
- Unbreakable containers/bowls
- Sand molds
- Pails

Math/Number

General considerations:

- Many appropriate math materials should be available to all children

Infants

- Number picture books
- Grasping toys or rattles with different shapes
- Stacking rings
- Busy boxes with numbers or shapes
- Nesting cups

Toddlers

- Number picture books
- Bathroom scale
- Cash register
- Busy boxes with numbers and shapes
- Stacking rings
- Materials that show both a numeral and the corresponding number of objects
- Toy telephones with printed numbers
- Nesting cups
- Simple puzzles with geometric shapes
- Number blocks
- Activity boxes with different shapes to push

Twos

- 3D shapes
- Attribute blocks of different sizes, shapes, colors
- Abacus
- Magnetic shapes
- Calculator, toy phone, cash register
- Big pegs with number boards
- Materials that show both a numeral and the corresponding number of objects
- Simple puzzles with different geometric shapes
- Shape sorters
- Unit blocks with image/outline labels on shelves
- Balance scales with things to weigh
- Number and counting books
- Large, safe tape measures



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Promoting Acceptance of Diversity

General considerations:

- Diverse materials are easily visible in the classroom
- Dolls representing at least three races are accessible
- At least 3, 10 is best, positive examples of diversity with at least 1 example each of books, displayed pictures, and play materials
- Include examples from at least 4 of the 5 types of diversity listed below

Note: One example consists of a contrast in diversity (ex. a book with children with disabilities and children without).

Books

- Race
- Culture
- Age
- Differing Abilities
- Nontraditional Gender Roles

Displayed Pictures

- Race
- Culture
- Age
- Differing Abilities
- Nontraditional Gender Roles

Play Materials

- Race
- Culture
- Age
- Differing Abilities
- Nontraditional Gender Roles

References:

Seplocha, H. (2019). *Coaching with ECERS: Strategies and tools to improve quality in pre-K & K classrooms*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Harms, Thelma, et al. (2015). *Early childhood environment rating scale third edition*. Teachers College Press.

