

Providing Learning Materials and Resources

Accomplished early childhood teachers are resourceful in creating, selecting, combining, and adapting a wide variety of appropriate materials that assist children in their development and learning. Teachers know that young children build understanding from the concrete to the abstract and from the simple to the complex, and they use this understanding when sequencing materials. They ensure that younger children have early access to materials that make it relatively easy to encounter and work with foundational ideas, such as objects that support initial counting and one-to-one correspondence. As children grow older, teachers provide them with materials that encourage higher-level engagement with the same ideas. When considering learning materials, accomplished teachers take into account many criteria including safety, developmental appropriateness, quality, durability, affordability, flexibility, and aesthetics.

Accomplished early childhood teachers carefully select materials such as books, music, manipulatives, visuals, and technology that are current and accurate and which enhance the curriculum. Teachers select materials that are developmentally appropriate and diverse in nature and that will enhance children's self-images; items such as books, dolls, and puppets reflect the class's diverse makeup as well as the composition of the broader society. They ensure that the language and images in the materials do not depict any group or individual as less capable than another or in stereotypical ways. Teachers select materials which show individuals demonstrating positive leadership, democracy, and cooperation; for example, individuals in a computer game might accept responsibility, solve problems, and settle disputes in a creative manner to which children can relate. Accomplished teachers evaluate possible materials to determine whether they are likely to encourage critical analysis and broaden children's outlook on the world.

Accomplished early childhood teachers organize materials in ways that make them easy for all children to access. Teachers teach children to use materials appropriately and to work as a team to ensure that materials are ready for classmates the next day. Teachers label shelves and containers with pictures and words in English and also, where possible, in children's home languages, in order to support children's independence in accessing materials and returning them to their proper place. Teachers arrange materials in ways that pique curiosity and wonder. They ensure that children encounter the tools and representations that are commonly employed in the subject areas, such as calculators, globes, and magnetic letters.

Accomplished early childhood teachers integrate technology throughout the curriculum and the daily routine in ways that support and extend traditional resources and help children become lifelong learners in an ever-changing world. Teachers carefully position technology in ways that allow easy access for children, including children with physical challenges. In addition, teachers provide enough space so that children can easily collaborate when using technology, for example, by equipping the computer table with multiple chairs. Accomplished teachers ensure that all technology is developmentally appropriate, safe, carefully selected, and used appropriately by children to enhance the curriculum and address developmental objectives.

Accomplished early childhood teachers conscientiously manage time as a resource in order to meet the needs of young children. Teachers structure time in such a way as to provide a clear framework for each school day, and they organize temporal transitions between learning activities, including *down time* when children can reflect and rest. Accomplished teachers provide sufficient time for reading and writing, social conversation, play, collaboration with others, learning new things, and building on prior knowledge. Teachers recognize that schedules should accurately embody curriculum priorities and that children need sufficient time on task in order for learning activities to be meaningful. Teachers build flexibility into schedules so that they can respond to children's spontaneous need to ask questions, their tendency to stop to ponder, and their desire to interact with other learners. They help children adapt to unscheduled events that may occur such as a fire drill. They use developmentally appropriate methods to help children understand schedules. Schedules for younger children might consist of symbols for the day's activities paired with pictures of clocks showing the times. Schedules for older children might consist of standard written lists of activities next to standard times.