

Conducting an Inventory of Equipment

Teachers are responsible for the learning space of children and it should ensure a stimulating, educational, and inviting learning environment which is critical for a high quality program. To maintain this standard, personnel need to monitor the learning space to ensure equipment is not worn out, broken, torn, hazardous, or missing pieces. Conducting an equipment inventory at least annually will help ensure equipment is adequate and accessible for the number of children in care as well as maintained, appropriate, and in good repair. All equipment should be evaluated, including items in storage, replacing or updating equipment as needed. Equipment should not be counted if it is in disrepair, dirty, missing parts or broken.

Equipment inventories are available from your licensing specialist or on-line at [07LC006E.pdf \(oklahoma.gov\)](#).

When conducting an inventory or evaluating of your learning environment it is important to consider the following:

Art:

Art supplies should be non-toxic, safe, and include a variety of mediums and colors. This equipment should be easily accessible and encourage freedom of expression. When introducing new mediums to children such as glue and paint, it is important to start by making small portions available until skills for appropriate use are established. For instance, when introducing glue put out 1 or 2 small/mini bottles or tiny containers with Q-tips until skills are developed; then you may increase to more bottles or larger sizes.

Scissors should be child safe and blunt-tipped.

Examples of items you might find in an Art area: beads, cotton balls, crayons, cups, glue, leaves or other items found in nature, magazines, markers, newspaper, paint, paint brushes, paper, paper bags, paper tubes, pencils, play dough with tools, scissors, scrap materials, stamps with stamp pad, wallpaper, different types of paper: lined, unlined, and construction.

Books:

Duplicated books (multiple copies in one room) may only count as 1.

Repair or discard books that are torn, missing pages or covers, or scribbled in.

Discard books that are not considered appropriate: violent, stereotypes. (Note: young children are unable to process reality vs fantasy, so be mindful of what books are "inspiring" in young children).

If books are not age-appropriate (too young or too old for children in the room), consider are they suitable for giving to another classroom?

When possible books should be stored or displayed with the front of the book facing outward to be easily seen by children.

Books may be found in other interest areas besides the book area, such areas as the cozy area, dramatic play, blocks, and science/nature.

Ensure books are appropriate in number and a balanced and inclusive collection.

- Do the books inspire and engage the children in the classroom?
- Are there enough books of fact and fiction?
- Are there books that show diversity in race, cultures, ages, gender, abilities, professions and roles?

Examples of items you might find in a Book area: books, books on tape, flannel board with accessories, homemade books, homemade books about the children and their families, magazines, picture books, puppets, tape player, and soft seating.

Blocks:

What are Blocks? They are often wooden building blocks known as unit blocks, large hollow blocks, or large cardboard boxes (resembling a brick at least 2in by 2in) that encourage imagination and large motor development. This does not include small block or Legos/Duplos.

Blocks should be organized and labeled with heavier or large blocks on the lower shelves.

The block area should be designed with enough space to encourage large building structures and room for at least 3 children to build.

There should be at least 2 types of blocks available to children with a variety of accessories that are stored separately. Accessories for the block area include items such as cars, people, dinosaurs, and animals.

If "play people" are used they should be diverse in race, cultures, ages, gender, abilities, professions, and roles.

Examples of items you might find in a Block area: animals, cardboard blocks, blocks made from shoe boxes that are stuffed with paper and covered with contact paper or duct tape, large colored sponges, large wooden blocks, small people, traffic signs, unit blocks, paper and pencils.

Cozy area:

A cozy area is a soft, quiet, relaxing area for children to participate in quiet activities such as book reading.

Equipment that may be found in this area should meet a variety of interest levels and needs. All "soft" equipment should be washable or cleanable.

Examples of items you might find in a Cozy area: family photos, flannel board with accessories, homemade books about the children and their families, mats, pillows, puppets, rugs, sofa, soft washable items, stuffed animals, tent, upholstered chair.

Dramatic play:

Are there dress-up clothes for all genders and props or prop boxes that address multiple themes (such as housekeeping, home life, occupations, and fantasy)?

Dress-up clothes should be clean and in good repair (not torn, missing pieces).

Are materials diverse in race, cultures, ages, gender, abilities, professions, and roles?

The area should be organized and well-maintained (clean, clothes hung up/kept together, dolls and accessories are stored together, "kitchen" or "house play" materials are in good repair and stored together).

Examples of items you might find in a Dramatic Play area: ambulances, aprons, cash register with pretend money, doctor kits, dolls with accessories, dress-up clothes, fire trucks, free stuff from businesses and restaurants (business cards, happy meal boxes, hats, hospital gown, hospital booties, menus, sacks, containers), hats, play food, play-sets, purses, recipe books, small tablet for writing, spy gear, telephones, telephone books, tent, tool set, paper, and pencil. Prop boxes with items supporting themes such as gardening, post office, business office, beach, flower shop, restaurant, veterinarian, bakery, school, and bank could also be included in the dramatic play area.

Large motor equipment:

Large motor equipment such as slides, crawl through and infant activity centers are only counted as a single item unless the piece of equipment is designed for more than one activity and child at any given time, such as an infant/toddler indoor play structure that has a slide AND a crawl through space (tunnel) may be counted as 2 because it allows a child to slide while another child is crawling through.

Manipulatives/Table Activities

What are manipulatives? They are equipment that encourages eye-hand coordination and fine motor skills as well as small pieces of equipment that stimulates the imagination. These items include such things as pegs & pegboards, lacing or string/bead activities, and small building materials.

Are they stored in individual sturdy, labeled containers? Are they well-spaced and easily accessible?

Puzzles

- Puzzles should be complete and diverse (puzzles that cover nature/science, life). Boxed puzzles should be in well maintained sturdy boxes.
- Do you have puzzles to meet a variety of stages of learning (easy, some challenge, hard)
- Discard any puzzles with missing pieces
- Are puzzles easily accessible and organized (maintained in racks, labeled and reachable areas)

Examples of items you might find in a manipulative area: attribute blocks, beads with string, bristle blocks, Duplos, file folder games, gears, lacing boards/cards, Legos, Lincoln Logs, marble runs, pegs and pegboards, puzzles, tinker toys, tokens, paper and pencil.

Math:

What are Math materials? This area includes items used for counting, sorting, recognizing shapes, comparing, ordering, fractions, one to one, temperature, measuring length/weight/time, and promoting eye-hand coordination.

Examples of items you might find in a Math area: counting bears, pattern blocks, geo-boards, dice, dominoes, colored cubes, abacus, play money, cash register, clocks, file folder games, calculator, ruler, tape measure, measuring cups, scales, paper and pencil.

Music and Movement:

This area includes age-appropriate music and items that encourage music and movement such as creative dancing, exercise, or other large motor movement.

Music for this area should be a variety of soothing soft music, sounds of nature, sing-alongs, and music that inspires dancing and moving. Music that includes foul language, bullying, or violence are not acceptable.

Examples of items you might find in a Music and Movement area: musical instruments (including homemade) such as rattles, bells, xylophone, shakers, drums, rhythm instruments, maracas and rain sticks, CD/tape/MP3 players, scarves, bandanas, ribbons, pieces of fabric, parachute.

Science/Nature:

This area should include items that promote science/nature awareness and exploration; items for this area should be well-organized and contained.

If there is something living and growing kept in the classroom that encourage children to care for it such as ant farms, aquarium, plants, class pets (hamster, rabbit, hedgehog, etc.) the cages, containers and other living space for these should be clean and well-maintained for the health of the item and the children.

Examples of items you might find in a Science/nature area: animals and information about animals, aquarium, bottles with rice and chalk, file folder games, globe, information about humans, items found in nature, leaves, live animals, live plants, magnets, magnifying glasses, microscope with specimen slides, pattern blocks, prisms, rocks/stones, sand and water bottles, scales, shells, sensory table with accessories, transparent color paddles, space information (stars, moon, sun), weather information (rain, clouds, tornados, snow), bones/fossils, binoculars, water sources (ocean, streams, lakes), health information (eating, exercising, growing), paper and pencil.

When purchasing equipment consider:

- ✓ Is the equipment sturdy and well made?

- ✓ Is it age appropriate?
- ✓ What is the intended use of this equipment? Can it be used for other purposes?
- ✓ Does it meet licensing requirements?

No cost or low cost ways to stock or enhance your learning environment

- Collage materials for art—Styrofoam peanuts, feathers, wrapping paper scraps, greeting cards, magazines, etc.
- Dress-up clothing—ask for donations of hats, scarves, dresses, shoes, ties, dress shirts, costume jewelry, costumes
- Homemade books—cover photos, magazine pictures, or environmental print with contact paper, glue onto construction paper/cardboard/poster board, paper punch holes and tie with yarn, bread bag twist or other “connector”
- Homemade bubbles—mix dish soap and water then use cups, fly swatters, etc. to blow bubbles
- Homemade felt board—cover a piece of plywood with felt and cut animals/people/shapes/objects out of other felt
- Homemade play dough, Gak or other fun mediums—recipes via the internet
- Homemade puppets—use items such as paper bags, socks, fabric, paper towel/toilet paper rolls or wooden spoons along with yarn, buttons, magazines to create puppets
- Homemade puzzles—take a picture from a magazine or greeting card, cover with contact paper or laminate it, then glue onto sturdy cardboard and cut into puzzle pieces
- Large cardboard boxes for pretend play—crawl through tunnels, creatively made into cars, spaceships, drive through windows, etc. Can also be used as an outdoor interest area for art and dramatic play.
- Local Resource & Referral—some R&R’s have books and equipment that may be checked out for use.
- Musical instruments—kitchen utensils, pots/pans, shakers made from small container or water bottle filled with beads, beans or rice and glued or taped (duct or packing) shut. An outdoor music and movement area can be created by securely fastening pots & pans and wooden spoons to a chain link fence.
- Public Library—check out books, cassette tapes, books on tape
- Recyclable products—ask for donations to add to art area--milk jugs, paper towel/ toilet paper rolls, scrap paper, wallpaper books, newspapers, magazines
- Recyclable products—ask for donations to add to dramatic play area—clean and empty food containers may be stuffed with newspaper and closed with clear tape to enhance the “home or kitchen area”, boxes such as cereal, cake mix, pudding, etc., containers such as oatmeal, orange juice, etc.
- Sensory table—dish tubs and house hold items (sieves, funnels, measuring spoons, potting soil, Styrofoam peanuts, feathers, Gak*, Oobelick*, or “clean” mud*, etc.) may be used for water or other sensory play at the table.
*Recipes for Gak, Oobelick, or “clean” mud can be found on-line.