



Center Goal 5

Allow children to explore their natural curiosity within reasonable limits.

Children want to know all about their world. We want them to splash in water, build a train track, draw with markers and paint and cut with scissors. We hope they explore their physical nature and run, jump, climb and hop. Our job is also to teach them to be safe. Our limits help keep children safe and still exploring. The rules we have are positive, we keep running for outside, climbing for playground equipment, painting for paper and water in the sensory table.

- Sensory Ideas
- Acceptable Art Materials
- Items to Explore
- Secondary Centers

Sensory Ideas

Safe Sensory Table Play for Infants and Toddlers

- Spoons, ladles and buckets and balls of all sizes. Make sure balls CANNOT fit through a choke tube (empty toilet paper roll). Children can practice scooping balls and filling buckets.
- Fabric swatches in all shapes, sizes and colors. To increase interest, hid toy animals or people.
- Cloud Dough- 8 parts flour to 1 part oil
- Cups of all shapes, sizes and materials.
- Different size and shape sensory bottles.
- Crinkly paper, cotton and other items that have different textures and might make sounds
- Empty toilet paper rolls with scarves that can be pulled through.
- Small amount of water with various sponges

Other Sensory Experiences

- 'paint' the room with small cup of water and paintbrushes
- wash/dry baby dolls with washcloths, water and mild soap
- wrap and unwrap presents with newspaper
- egg hunt using eggs filled to make sounds like a shaker
- gardening tools and dirt
- blowing and popping bubbles
- cotton balls with spoons
- rice and sand toys

Acceptable Art Materials for <3years

(All must be labeled non-toxic and labeled for appropriate age)

Infants/Young Toddlers (7-23 months)

- large crayons
- finger painting
- sponges
- large chalk
- stamp pads
- water
- large paper/surfaces
- large stampers

Older Toddlers (24-36 months)

- watercolors
- painting tools (brushes, fly swatters, toy cars, koosh balls, toothbrushes, etc)
- variety of paper (construction, tissue, cellophane, newspaper, foil)
- foam sheets
- play dough
- modeling tools (rollers, utensils)
- felt
- craft sticks
- large washable markers
- glue
- nature items
- stickers
- child-size blunt scissors
- cotton balls
- tape
- clothespins

Unacceptable Materials:

- shaving cream
- acrylic/oil paints
- small beads
- uncooked beans
- food
- styrofoam
- glitter
- permanent markers

Items to Explore

Music and Movement Ideas:

dance to a variety of music
march in a parade using instruments
pretend to be a rock band with instruments, microphones and music
sing together with song books
exercise by taking turns picking an exercise move
yoga
parachute play
tunnels and balls

Creative Learning Ideas:

modge podge day- use scissors, glue and various 'leftover' materials
brush paint
toothbrush paint
finger paint on table or paper
sponge paint
marble paint
glue parts of face/picture
glue items on the LOW that begin with that letter
glue to decorate an item
color/draw a picture
color on paper over screens or other textured item
make sun catchers out of tissue paper and contact paper
play with play doh or cloud dough
chalk on sidewalk OR black paper
science experiment

Secondary Centers

Center Title	Materials Available (at all times)
IMAGINE	Kitchen with food and dishes, Tool Bench with tools, Baby crib with babies
BUILD	Wooden blocks, cardboard blocks, city blocks, lincoln logs
CREATE	Crayons, scissors, glue sticks, blank on one side paper, stickers, stamps, stencils, coloring books
PERFORM	Microphones, instruments, music, costumes
EXPLORE	Magnifying glasses, rulers, tweezers, smocks, bin of rocks, bin of pine cones, bugs, sensory table (changed regularly: rice/sand (shovels/cups), water (sink/float), goop/fluff, seasonal/nature)
CONNECT	Legos, duplos, k'nex, star blocks, potato heads, waffle blocks, gears
PRETEND	Animals, dinos, farms, cars, doll houses, barbies
PLAY	Table top games (requires teacher assistance)
READ	Kids books, puppets, felt boards, magnet letters, Cdplayer with headphones and song books

Center Focus- Centers should be labeled and have a designated area. Though it is something that is available regularly, an item should be highlighted each week to encourage interest and appropriate use. Choose a different item in a center to highlight each day. The teacher should demonstrate how to properly use the item to the class.