
Early Literacy Area

Building Standard

General

- Furniture must be age appropriate both in size and materials (age 0-5 years).
- The space must be inviting and attractive to children in theme, color and creativity or whimsy.
- There must be enough table or stations for various literacy activities. There must be storage for these activities to be switched out regularly.

Letter Knowledge

- Consider where to affix an adequate magnetic board.
- Consider other opportunities to bring letter knowledge into the area. Ideas include but are not limited to alphabet pillows, letters on the floor, painted on end caps or a mural on the wall.

Phonological Awareness, Print Awareness and Print Motivation

- Consider how the board books are featured and that they are accessible to young children (ages 0-2 yrs).
- Consider the height of shelving to eliminate the need for children to reach materials with a step stool (or climbing on the shelves).
- Include a comfortable space for children and their caregivers to sit and read.
- Ensure that there are enough outlets for kids game computers to be located in the space for access to reading-related and educational games. Don't forget to have enough seating for two kids (a bench perhaps) and for adults to be nearby for assistance.
- Include space to feature librarian approved booklists for various reading levels and interests.
- Ensure that there is space to merchandise the kids collections in high traffic areas coming into the space and within the space, making sure that children can reach them (it's not as important that the displays are low since we also merchandise to parents and caregivers but it should be considered if possible).
- While this space should be exciting, don't forget to provide space for quiet reading.



OVER

Early Literacy Checklist continued...

Narrative Skills

- Consider including space for children to invent stories and/or act out stories they read with room for an audience.
- If this space includes a structure (puppet theater, stage, etc...), be sure it is adequately secure to ensure the safety of children (climbing).
- Consider space where it's appropriate to have messy art projects? With storage for those supplies. And close proximity to a sink for clean up.

Vocabulary

- Consider choosing materials that will allow children to label furniture—either magnetically or an easy cleaning surface.
- Be careful that the signage in the children's area not reflects library lingo, which a parent may not be able to explain to their child (nonfiction, cd-rom, reference instead books by subject, computer games, research materials).

Safety

- Make sure that the space is situated away from exits and other hazardous spaces.
- If possible, choose outlets in this space that prevent electrocution.
- Ensure that the space set up so parents/caretakers may browse easily while keeping an eye/ear out for their charges. Pay attention to shelving height and other building obstacles such as columns.

Bathrooms

- There should be changing tables in both men's and women's restrooms with proper receptacles for dirty diapers.
 - Pay attention to the location of the bathrooms and consider putting them near the program room for easy access for those potty training who may need to leave during a program.
 - Consider installing family bathrooms so opposite sex parents can use the bathroom with young children.
 - Stools should be available if the fixtures are not at the children's level.
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