

SUGGESTIONS FOR ENRICHING THE ENVIRONMENT

- Provide musical mobiles for infants to watch and listen.
- Display children's artwork at eye level on a rotating basis. Include other items of beauty such as wall hangings, tapestry, weavings, posters, stained glass, or arrangements of flowers and leaves. Laminate pictures and attach them to the wall with Velcro® so young children can touch them without damage.
- Provide an assortment of *sensory* materials both indoor and outdoor, such as playdough, goop (cornstarch and water), clay, finger paint, chalk, sand, mud, and wood pieces.
- Set up an art area so children can access materials independently. Provide different art materials, such as washable paints, modeling materials, multiple writing utensils and papers, etc. Choose materials suitable for age and development of the children. Materials should encourage children to use their *imagination* and express ideas through art, construction, movement, music and *play*.
- Include puppets or stuffed animals to act out songs, rhymes, and stories.
- Use multiple horizontal and vertical surfaces (easels, floor, and walls) and two- and three-dimensional objects (boxes, clay, and plastic containers) for *creative expression*.
- Have a place where children may store unfinished artwork and projects to continue at a later time.
- Use mess trays and smocks or old oversized shirts to make cleaning up easier and to keep clothes clean.
- Provide woodworking *tools*, wood scraps, glue, and paint in a closely supervised woodworking area.
- Provide many different items for stamping or painting including household items such as potato mashers and thread spools, items from nature such as leaves and sticks, and other shapes and textures.
- Provide glue or paste and materials for making collages such as craft feathers, ribbon, fabric scraps, small pom-poms, and shells. Use contact paper for collages with children who cannot handle glue.
- Set up a music area with different types of instruments that children can explore and play (xylophones, rhythm sticks, triangles, bells, and multicultural instruments including rain-sticks, maracas, sand blocks, shakers, and drums).
- Play an array of music, including classical, jazz, and multicultural music.
- Play music with many different beats and *rhythms*, such as marches, waltzes, polkas, Reggae, Latin, folk music, and jigs. Encourage children to move to the music.
- Provide streamers, ribbons, and scarves for children to use as creative movement *props*.
- Include books with artwork in the library area and hang pictures of great artwork *representing* various countries and ethnic groups. Some libraries have paintings that can be checked out for extended periods of time. Encourage children to talk about what they like about the pictures.
- Set up a *dramatic play* or pretend area where children can act out different *roles* and explore projects of interest. Include dolls and clothing from various *cultures* and props for children to use such as hats, big boots, and tools for builders; dresses, ties, shoes, and play watches for house and office play; fruit and vegetable play foods for farmers. Include both male and female articles of clothing.