

SUGGESTIONS FOR ENRICHING THE ENVIRONMENT

- Create an environment that includes materials and equipment that can be used by children with varying physical abilities.
- Provide adequate, safe space to move and play both indoors and outdoors.
- Provide *age-appropriate* equipment and materials, with *adaptations* as needed.
- Provide child-size tables and chairs so children can use them independently.
- Play music with different beats and from different *cultures*. Encourage children to move to the *rhythm* of the music. March and dance to the music.
- Set up safe places that children can choose activities to develop strength, endurance, coordination, and other *gross motor* skills (jumping, hopping, and throwing).
- Provide pillows, small mounds, balance beams, stepping-stones, and other low barriers for children to climb on and crawl over. This develops balance, builds strength, and improves coordination.
- Create safe mazes and obstacle courses that are age-appropriate (tunnels, under tables or chairs, around objects, and over objects).
- Provide push and pull toys, balls, tools, slides, and other materials that give children chances to exercise large muscles and practice skills.
- Provide safe riding toys (with and without pedals) and other safe wheeled vehicles for children to ride.
- Provide safe objects on the floor for infants to grab and handle (rattles, teething toys).
- Provide safe connecting toys for toddlers to put together (blocks, snap-together toys).
- Offer children toys and materials to fill, stack, dump, and pour, such as small blocks, buckets, plastic cups, and water.
- Set up the environment so children can choose activities that develop *fine motor* skills (areas with puzzles, pegboards, large beads for stringing, and small blocks). Provide containers for putting away toys when finished.
- Change fine-motor materials routinely to encourage a range of discovery, engagement, and participation.
- Add dress up clothes, dolls, and doll clothes to the *dramatic play* area where children can practice buttoning, zipping, and snapping.
- Set up an art area where children can use crayons, washable markers, chalk, paintbrushes of various sizes, scissors, and other art materials that build hand and finger strength.
- Set up a writing area with various kinds of paper and writing *tools*. Include other hand-held objects such as stamps and stamp pads, tracing shapes, paper punchers, etc.

