Block Activities

Block play is a very good learning activity for infants and toddlers.

Collect different sets of blocks: large and small soft blocks, alphabet blocks, plastic interlocking blocks (the large size for infants and toddlers), wooden building blocks, and cardboard nesting boxes. Store the blocks in open containers on low shelves.

Collect toy figures of people, animals, cars, etc., to go with the blocks.

Invite children to play, alone or in small groups, with 1 or more block sets at a time. Encourage them to spread out the blocks and be creative. A little disorder is important so children can practice choosing next steps in their block play. Help older toddlers practice putting the blocks back in the containers.

Each of the following activities includes related competencies in the Mississippi Early Learning Guidelines (Mississippi Head Start Collaboration Office, 2010) and related items on the Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale (Harms, Clifford, & Cryer, 2006).

References
Build

Provide 1 or more sets of blocks on the floor or on a low table. Invite 1, 2, or 3 children at a time to use the blocks. Show very young toddlers how to stack 2 or more blocks. Show older toddlers how they can use blocks to form the outlines or walls of pretend structures such as a house, road, or ramp.

Talk with the children as they experiment with the blocks. “Cynthia, that is a good row of blocks you have made. It is a straight line, isn’t it? Cranford, I noticed that you stacked 3 red blocks. That was impressive!”

Provide toy figures of people, animals, cars, etc., for children to use with their block structures.

Help children think about sharing the blocks by talking with them about how they feel. For example, “Rex, I see that you want to use all of the wooden blocks, but Suzanne wants to use some of the blocks. Let’s see if we can put some of the blocks over here where Suzanne can use them. You will still have a lot of blocks!”

Variation

- Relate building with blocks to the curriculum theme. For example, during the unit “Animals,” invite children to build pens or yards for ducks or pet dogs.
**Materials**

- Sets of blocks
  - Large and small soft blocks
  - Alphabet blocks
  - Plastic interlocking blocks (the large size for infants and toddlers)
  - Wooden building blocks
  - Cardboard nesting boxes
- Small toy figures
  - People
  - Animals
  - Cars and trucks
Sort

This activity is good for older toddlers. Place the classroom’s collections of blocks – soft blocks, plastic snapping blocks, wooden blocks, etc. - in open containers in different areas of the room. Invite one child or a small group of children to search all of the block collections for blocks in a single shape or color. Before they tire of the activity, ask them to return the blocks to their proper containers so other children can play the game. Repeat with another group and a different shape or color.

Reference


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