

## WHY BLOCKS ARE IMPORTANT WHAT CHILDREN LEARN WHEN THEY PLAY IN BLOCKS

### Objectives for Socio-Emotional Development

- Work independently and in a group (including when, how, and with whom to play).
- Express needs, concerns, and fears in socially acceptable ways (creating a hospital or cave with monsters and playing make-believe).
- Demonstrate pride in accomplishments and a positive self-concept (sharing their buildings by talking about what they have created).

### Objectives for Cognitive Development

- Develop an understanding of concepts of length, height, weight, and area (carrying blocks and using them in constructions).
- Classify and sort objects by size, shape, and function (placing blocks of the same size together).
- Make use of physical principles (exploring weight, stability, equilibrium, balance, and leverage).
- Predict cause-and-effect relationships (seeing how high they can build before the blocks fall).
- Solve problems related to construction (bridging a bridge or making steps to a house).
- Organize in a sequence (laying out blocks from short to tall and counting in correct order).
- Use addition, subtraction, and fractions (judging how many blocks are needed to fill a space).

### Objectives for Physical Development

- Use large and small muscle skills (grasping, lifting, placing, and balance blocks).
- Develop eye-hand coordination (placing blocks in desired patterns).
- Control the placement of objects (under, over, above, below, on top of, and next to when construction with blocks).

These objectives are offered as examples of some of the many learning opportunities available to children when they have access to a rich assortment of blocks.

## WHY THE HOUSE CORNER IS IMPORTANT WHAT CHILDREN LEARN WHEN THEY PLAY HOUSE

### Objectives for Socio-Emotional Development

- Interact with others (taking on roles and play acting).
- Express individuality and creativity (developing play themes based on individual preferences and experiences).
- Play cooperatively with others (taking turns and sharing materials).
- Demonstrate an understanding of the social expectations and attitudes of others (role playing and reenacting life experiences).
- Anticipate how to act in new situations (developing the ability to imagine).
- Address fears and worries (trying out roles and re-playing difficult and scary experiences).
- Demonstrate empathy for others (developing more complex roles and showing concern for others while in those roles).

### Objectives for Cognitive Development

- Use symbols to represent real objects and situations (using a block to represent a telephone or a string for a fire hose).
- Identify and plan play episodes with others. (Let's play store. You be the storekeeper. I'll come shopping.)
- Draw on past information and experience to solve problems. (Doctors don't give shots in the hand. My doctor gives shots in my arm.)
- Identify solutions to problems that arise during play. ("What are we going to feed this baby? There's no cereal in the house! We'll need to go to the store.")
- Classify props according to common characteristics. ("You put away the cooking utensils and I'll put away the things for eating.")
- Arrange objects according to size (cleaning up props and returning them to labeled places).
- Persevere at a task (remaining involved in play episode for increasing periods of time).

### Objectives for Physical Development

- Improve small muscle control (putting on dress-up clothes and snapping, buckling, zipping, and buttoning).
- Use eye-hand coordination (dressing dolls and matching pots and pans with outlines on the shelves where they are stored).
- Use visual discrimination skills (matching and grouping like objects such as dishes or utensils).

These objectives are offered as examples of the skills and understanding children can develop playing in the house corner.

## WHY TABLE TOYS ARE IMPORTANT WHAT CHILDREN LEARN WHEN THEY PLAY WITH TABLE TOYS

### Objectives for Socio-Emotional Development

- Work cooperatively in small groups (playing lotto, dominoes, and memory and matching games).
- Develop self-control (sharing toys and waiting for a turn with a desired toy).
- Demonstrate perseverance and self-discipline (working with a puzzle until it has been completed).
- Experience pride in accomplishments (seeing a task through from start to finish).

### Objectives for Cognitive Development

- Demonstrate creative abilities (experimenting with open-ended toys).
- Sort and match objects by attributes such as color, size, texture, and shape (using collections such as buttons, shells, or bottle caps).
- Demonstrate an understanding of number concepts related to sequencing, seriation, and classification (using table blocks, parquetry, and attribute blocks).
- Develop emergent reading skills such as directionality, figure-ground discrimination, matching like objects (using such table toys such as pegboards, puzzles, dominoes, and collectibles).

### Objectives for Physical Development

- Develop fine motor control (placing pegs in holes, stringing beads, piecing together puzzles, and manipulation buttons, marbles, or shells).
- Develop eye-hand coordination (sewing with yarn, sorting buttons, and returning puzzle pieces to their frames).
- Demonstrate visual discrimination skills (sorting objects according to attributes of size, color, and shape).
- Refine sense of touch (learning to distinguish toys made of different materials).

These objectives are offered as examples of the skills and understanding children can develop playing with table toys.

## WHY ART IS IMPORTANT WHAT CHILDREN LEARN IN ART

### Objectives for Socio-Emotional Development

- Express feeling (selecting bright colors for a painting to match a playful mood).
- Learn to channel frustration and anger in a socially acceptable way (punching and pounding clay).
- Assert individuality (drawing a pumpkin that differs in color and design from the traditional).
- Experience pride (making a mobile that is hung in the classroom).
- Share and cooperate with others (working together on making a group mural).

### Objectives for Cognitive Development

- Enhance creativity (combining materials and textures for a collage in a unique way).
- Develop an understanding of cause and effect (observing what happens when blue paint is added to yellow).
- Label shapes and objects (painting a yellow circle and calling it a "sun").
- Solving problems (figuring out how to get a mobile to balance).
- Develop planning skills (determining which color finger paints to assemble before starting work).

### Objectives for Physical Development

- Develop small muscle skills (coloring with markers).
- Refine eye-hand coordination (pouring tempera into an easel paint can).
- Learn directionality (painting a circle with one continuous brush stroke).

Taken together, these learning objectives can help teachers plan appropriate art experiences. By targeting specific objectives, you can more easily select the art media and activities that will help children expand and increase their skills.

# WHY SAND AND WATER ARE IMPORTANT WHAT CHILDREN LEARN WHEN THEY PLAY WITH SAND AND WATER

## Objectives for Socio-Emotional Development

- Play cooperatively with others (sharing water play props with another child).
- Explore social roles (washing dolls and dishes).
- Develop pride (requesting that a castle made in the sand tub not be knocked down at the end of play).
- See a task through to completion (mixing up and using a bubble solution and then cleaning up).

## Objectives for Cognitive Development

- Observe materials to see how they compare and contrast (adding water to dry sand to see how it changes).
- Understand cause-and-effect relationships (predicting what will happen when soap flakes are added to water).
- Observe conservation of volume (pouring sand, water, or wet sand into differently shaped containers and comparing them).
- Develop problem-solving skills (figuring out how to dig a tunnel in wet sand so that it won't collapse).
- Develop creativity (molding wet sand into a variety of shapes).

## Objectives for Physical Development

- Strengthen fine motor control (using a tongue depressor to trace figure-eights in the sand).
- Develop eye-hand movements (shaking sand through a sieve).
- Improve coordination skills (filling measuring cups and spoons).

This listing is provided to spark your own thoughts. You can add or change objectives to meet the specific needs of the children in your program. Your choice of objectives will guide you in planning appropriate experiences with sand and water that will promote children's learning.

## WHY LITERACY IS IMPORTANT WHAT CHILDREN LEARN IN THE LITERACY AREA

### Objectives for Socio-Emotional Development

- Develop concern for others (demonstrating empathy after hearing a story about people with disabilities or people who have suffered from prejudice).
- Try out different roles (play-acting characters from a story).
- Share time and materials with others (inviting another child to join in listening to a tape).
- Enhance self-esteem (making a book composed of photos of themselves and their families).

### Objectives for Cognitive Development

- Develop an understanding of symbols (relating the picture of a boy to the written word "boy").
- Increase vocabulary (learning the names of animals in a book on Africa).
- Predict events (telling what's going to happen next in a story being read aloud).
- Recognize objects, colors and shapes (pointing to objects on a flannel board and describing their attributes).
- Understand sequence (opening up a book and turning the pages in order).
- Apply knowledge to new situations (making up a nonsense rhyme after hearing poems of this type on a tape).
- Develop storytelling abilities (dictating stories to a teacher or creating a story with scribbles or invented spellings).

### Objectives for Physical Development

- Develop small muscle skills (writing with a marker).
- Strengthen eye muscles (following pictures and words in a book as it is being read out loud).
- Coordinate eye and hand movements (placing objects on a flannel board).
- Refine visual discrimination skills (finding an object or person in a complex illustration such as *Waldo* in the *Where's Waldo?* books).

Teachers can use the library area to accomplish a wide range of learning objectives. Not all the objectives indicated here are appropriate for any one child; you can individualize by selecting objectives that best match the developmental levels of the children in your group.

## WHY MUSIC AND MOVEMENT ARE IMPORTANT WHAT CHILDREN LEARN THROUGH MUSIC AND MOVEMENT

### Objectives for Socio-Emotional Development

- Participate in a group (singing or dancing with other children).
- Develop social skills by playing cooperative musical games (simple games such as "Ring Around the Rosy," or those requiring more cooperation such as "Farmer in the Dell").
- Express anger, fear, joy, and other emotions through music and movement (creating a happy dance to celebrate snow).
- Recognize that music and dance of each child's culture (teaching the group a familiar song from home).

### Objectives for Cognitive Development

- Refine listening skills by noticing changes in tempo or pitch (adapting one's dancing or clapping to shifts in tempo or beat).
- Increase awareness of different movements or body positions (folding legs like a child in a picture book).
- Develop creativity and imagination by responding to problems in movement or music (creating thunder sounds with instruments).
- Learning new words and concepts through songs and movement (learning body parts by singing "Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes").
- Explore cause and effect (experimenting with musical instruments and other devices for creating sounds).

### Objectives for Physical Development

- Explore the many ways in which a body can move (finding different ways to get to the other side of a line without stepping on it).
- Develop large motor skills (moving to music and participating in other creative movement activities).
- Improve balance, coordination, and rhythm through dancing and other movement activities (playing "Follow the Leader").
- Improve small motor skills (learning finger plays and playing musical instruments).

These objectives are offered as examples of some of the many learning opportunities available to children when they have access to a rich variety of music and movement activities.

## WHY COOKING IS IMPORTANT WHAT CHILDREN LEARN THROUGH COOKING

### Objectives for Socio-Emotional Development

- Work cooperatively in small groups (making bread).
- Develop self-help skills (preparing snacks for oneself).
- Complete a task (preparing a recipe from start to finish, including clean-up).
- Develop independence (following a recipe by referring to picture signs without adult supervision).
- Show consideration (sharing and waiting one's turn when working with others).
- Develop pride in oneself and one's heritage (preparing and serving a family recipe).

### Objectives for Cognitive Development

- Learn about nutrition (preparing a healthy snack).
- Solve problems (determining how high to fill a muffing tin to allow for rising batter).
- Develop beginning reading skills (relating recipe picture cards to written directions).
- Gain a foundation for math concepts such as sequencing and measurement (filling a quart pitcher with four cups of water).
- Learn about the scientific properties of food (turning cream into butter by vigorously shaking the cream).
- Express creativity (making nontraditionally shaped pretzels out of pretzel dough).

### Objectives for Physical Development

- Develop fine muscle control (chopping celery, stirring batter, and squeezing lemons).
- Enhance eye-hand coordination (cracking an egg).
- Learn directionality (using a wire whisk).

This list is just a sampling of the many ways in which cooking can be used to promote children's growth in all areas of development. You'll want to add to this list individual objectives that you've set for children in your classroom, based on their particular needs and interests.



## WHY OUTDOOR PLAY IS IMPORTANT WHAT CHILDREN LEARN THROUGH OUTDOOR PLAY

### Objectives for Socio-Emotional Development

- Demonstrate social skills (pushing and being pushed on swings, helping care for a garden, participating in social play with peers).
- Take turns, negotiate compromises, and cooperate (using playground equipment, sharing art materials; playing group games).
- Express creativity (making art, sand, and woodworking creations, developing a new game).
- Enhance self-confidence (learning to use small and large muscles in competent ways).
- Increase independence (climbing a stepladder or going down a slide unassisted).
- Demonstrate pride in accomplishments (performing physical feats, caring for pets, growing plants from seeds).

### Objectives for Cognitive Development

- Make decisions (choosing an outdoor activity).
- Plan and carry through ideas (playing games, building sand structures, doing woodwork, creating artwork, growing plants).
- Solve problems (making a tunnel through sand, getting from one place to another on playground equipment, connecting two pieces of wood).
- Reenact life experiences (playing ambulance driver, painting a fence with water, washing dolls or dishes).
- Identify cause and effect (making sand hold together by adding just the right amount of water, running through a sprinkler and getting wet).
- Learn about science (talking nature walks, observing growth in the garden, seeing outdoor animals in their habitat, noting seasonal changes).
- Develop an understanding of basic math concepts (counting jumps or hops, estimating distance, measuring the growth of plants).
- Increase vocabulary (conversing in the sandbox or at the woodworking table, acquiring new names for plants, animals, and objects found in nature).

### Objectives for Physical Development

- Develop large muscle skills (climbing, swinging, jumping, skipping, running).
- Develop small muscle skills (playing with sand and water, drawing, painting, picking up small objects).
- Coordinate eye-hand movements (catching, throwing, woodworking, decorating the sidewalk with chalk).
- Improve balance (climbing, swinging, sliding, using the balance beam, using spring-rocking equipment, hopping, walking on different surfaces).
- Increase spatial awareness (swinging, climbing up, down, in, out, over, and under).
- Demonstrate persistence and endurance (playing group games, climbing on playground equipment or pumping on a swing for an extended period, banging nail into a tree stump).

These objectives are offered as examples of the many ways that outdoor play can promote children's learning and development. You can use them to help plan an outdoor program that will best suit the needs and interests of the children your group.

