

Remember: Spending time explaining learning centres is important. Never take for granted that children know how to work with materials appropriately. Many children may have no prior experiences using the materials in your classroom. The rules for what is appropriate play at home may also vary greatly with what is appropriate at the child care centre. Children who lack motor planning may not have the skills required to select and appropriately play with an activity independently.

- Are the learning centres clearly defined?
- Are the centres visually labeled?
- Do you limit the number of children in each centre?
- Are the centres arranged to encourage appropriate use?
- Do you separate loud centres (blocks, music, dramatic play) from quiet centres (writing, books, table toys)?
- Do you provide an open art shelf for the children?
- Does the art focus on the process of the activity and not the end product?
- Is the block area carpeted (to reduce noise)?
- Is the dramatic area near the blocks to encourage extended play?
- Does each centre have an adequate amount and variety of materials?
- Are there enough materials in each area for children to engage simultaneously?
- Are there materials that can be used for imaginative play in each centre?
- Are children able to play with all the materials that they can see and reach?
- Do you have real life materials in each area (plants, utensils, tools, instruments, etc.)?
- Are the children involved in choosing what activities to put out on the shelves?
- Do the children have individual storage space (cubby, baskets, etc.)?

- Are there “loose parts” available in each area such as shells, feathers, brushes, key rings, poker chips, spools, etc.? Items such as these can be counted, stacked, sorted, matched or used for representing food or money.
- Do the toys have all of the pieces needed to play with them (all pieces to complete the puzzle, batteries, cars for garages, dolls for houses, etc.)?
- Do you add/remove things from areas to spark interest?
- Do you add a new centre occasionally?

This sheet was created by the All Kids Belong team based on their years of knowledge and experience. If you have any further questions about learning centres, please talk to your All Kids Belong Resource Consultant.