

CHOOSING TOYS AND EQUIPMENT FOR MOBILE CARE



When offering mobile care for newcomer children, the locations, caregivers and children change often, making for many variables to consider when selecting toys and equipment. For example, the children in attendance will come from diverse backgrounds and communities and will be of varying ages. Accordingly, there will be a wide array of interests and preferences to consider.

In some organizations, mobile care may also be offered in multiple locations on the same day. It is necessary, therefore, to purchase toys and equipment that can be transported easily, and to consider the types of spaces you'll be using.

Before you begin shopping for or ordering toys and equipment, clarify your priorities. Create an inventory list for the amount and type of materials that would be beneficial for each location.

TIPS FOR CHOOSING TOYS AND EQUIPMENT

- Select toys and equipment that reflect the diverse cultures that your program serves. This promotes an inclusive environment where every child can feel comfortable.
- Choose games with instructions that are easy to read and follow for children who are learning English.
- Consider the number of children you are expecting at each session, their ages and the space available for the activities.
- Have materials that relate to the seasons and the program.
- Select equipment that can be used in a number of ways or by multiple children at the same time. This will help to reduce your costs.
- Ensure the toys and equipment are in good and safe condition. Caregivers should check for sharp edges and/or small or broken parts.
- Choose toys that can be easily sanitized and stored appropriately after each use.
- Purchase storage containers that are easy to transport and store and that allow caregivers to easily identify the contents.
- Consider any maintenance costs associated with various toys and equipment (e.g., batteries that will need replacing).
- Avoid purchasing toys and equipment that have a gender bias.

WHERE TO PURCHASE QUALITY TOYS AND EQUIPMENT

Work with a reputable company that specializes in toys and equipment for group care to ensure that you purchase durable, high-quality materials and equipment. These companies may offer warranties that are not always available in local stores.

Using toys and materials that have been donated or that are from second-hand stores, dollars stores and/or yard sales is not recommended; however, if you do, make sure that they are clean, safe and made of non-toxic materials. Check for any broken or missing pieces and ensure that the toys are not on any recall lists.

Visit cmascanada.ca for more resources to support your work with newcomer families



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