

Appendix 1: Resources for play

There are lots of toys and equipment that can be used for play, and arranging and resourcing a quality play environment need not be expensive. Many of the most useful play props are low-cost, can be found in the natural environment, or can be recycled from homes and businesses. Open-ended materials such as junk, recyclables and boxes allow for great scope in children's play. Many of them cost very little, and provide children with endless opportunities to use their imaginations. Parents and children can be asked to contribute to building up play resources as can local businesses, who often throw out materials which could be very useful to children in their play. Local charity shops and school and community jumble sales are another possible source of materials. This list of resources is not intended to be exhaustive; it is provided to give some ideas to get you thinking. As always, children's safety is a priority so keep this in mind when choosing resources. Also, remember that play props and materials should reflect a variety of backgrounds, cultures, abilities, genders, and family structures.

Table A: Play resources

Type of play	Babies	Toddlers	Young children
Creative play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See other sections. Many of the items listed can be used in creative play. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See other sections. Many of the items listed can be used in creative play. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See other sections. Many of the items listed can be used in creative play.
Games with rules	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> interactive games - <i>Peek-a-boo</i>, <i>Hide and seek</i>, making faces, singing, story telling, nursery rhymes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> word games card games like picture snap matching games pictures of rhyming words - cat, mat, house, mouse, etc. pretend props as all imaginary play has rules of behaviour (See resources listed below.) games like <i>Row, row, row your boat</i> social games, welcome songs, sharing games games like <i>Simon says</i>, <i>I spy</i> or <i>Follow the leader</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> computer games bingo, lotto games board games - snakes and ladders, dominoes, drafts, playing cards word and number games and puzzles - building words and making nonsense sentences with cardboard letters <i>Hide and seek</i>, chase skittles, football giant snakes and ladders, hop scotch to play outdoors (These could be painted on the ground.)
Language play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> picture books (wipeable) with pictures of real things, or with very short stories, books with different textures, bath books a CD player and a variety of CDs puppets books with songs, rhymes, jingles, skipping, clapping rhymes CDs with songs, chants, rhymes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> all kinds of books, especially ones on first experiences - going to the doctor, the dentist, the hospital, going on an aeroplane, moving house, getting a new baby, losing a loved one tapes or CDs toy phones or microphones or old real ones CDs that compare and explore sounds in the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> all types of books, books with no words that can prompt the child to make up the story, books that represent the interests of children - tractors, pets, occupations, friends, travel, books written in the home languages of the children books about feelings multicultural puppets with realistic features materials to make own books about themselves, their families,

Type of play	Babies	Toddlers	Young children
Language play (continued)		<p>home, environment – dogs barking, child laughing, water running, phone ringing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> materials, props to dramatise stories/things that happen 	<p>their interests, their friends, their skills, and their abilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> families of rhyming words story boards (large pieces of cardboard painted with open-ended landscapes) with small props (small world figures and animals) that can be used to develop different stories/scenarios pretend play props (see below.) street games, rhymes – <i>Ring-a-ring-a rosy, Red rover</i> story bags (pillow cases, coloured drawstring bags) with books (one fiction and a related non-fiction one in each) along with supporting materials – puppets, pictures, photos, related games, activities, paper, colours
Physical play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> balls, blocks, hollow cubes, strongly strung beads bath toys, jugs/containers for pouring ride on and push and pull along toys, empty boxes and cartons with string attached that can be pulled along push up/pop up toys, activity centres, mobiles to hang over cots soft play mats musical instruments, musical activity toys tunnels, tents, large cardboard boxes shakers, rattles, teething, mouthing toys floor level safety mirror with hand rail things to smell, taste, touch and listen to opportunities to sit, crawl, shuffle, stretch, experience cause and effect cornflour, gloop, play-dough, water dancing, going for walks, swings, swimming activity mats/circles/gyms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> construction toys (tool set, milk cartons, shoe boxes, hard hats, dumper trucks, measuring tapes, interlocking toys, large and small blocks, bricks) a variety of physical features – slopes, steps, low walls balls, stacking toys, large threading beads ride-on toys, tricycles, pull and push toys, small climbing frames, slides, carts, buggies, trailers and containers to transport materials inset boards, jigsaws, simple puzzles activity centres, spinning tops chunky crayons, writing and mark-making materials, books, aprons, chalk, sand, water, paint (non-toxic), various kinds of paper, old magazines, large brushes, markers, glue, scraps of coloured material, blackboard and chalk, play-dough, lentils, pasta, safety scissors, clay, wood, twigs, leaves, stones, seashells, skin tone paints and pencils, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> sand, water, stones, leaves, twigs, lentils, cornflower, pasta, flowers, grass, feathers, clay, dough, wood, pebbles hoops, bean bags, balls, balancing beams, blocks, boxes, wheeled toys, tractors, bicycles, roller skates, slides, climbing frames, a basket ball hoop, skittles and other throwing games, relay games/races, access to wide open spaces, traditional street games like skipping with a rope, hop scotch model making equipment, sewing materials, sewing cards, peg boards, lacing materials, threading beads, empty spools, large and small construction materials, a real measuring tape, zips, buttons, paper clips, bottle caps, table top activities, sorting sets, interlocking bricks, matching games jig-saws and play figures depicting a variety of positive images laminated pictures of the children cut up and stuck on to cardboard to make jigsaws science materials/sets, microscope, magnifying glass, magnets, old clocks variety of paints, brushes, sponges, straws, pencils, textured materials like felt, cloth, seeds, velvet, corrugated paper, crayons/paints

Type of play	Babies	Toddlers	Young children
Physical play (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ nesting/stacking toys ■ treasure baskets ■ shape sorters ■ chunky crayons, paper, chubby paint brushes and non toxic paints 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ mirrors for portrait painting ■ musical instruments and musical toys ■ a toy hammer and pegs ■ tunnels/barrels for climbing through, pop up tents, large empty cardboard boxes, slopes, steps, curves, structures for climbing on/over/under, opportunities to run, jump, climb, a traffic sign set, road markings ■ nests of shapes/hollow blocks ■ sand and water trays (or a basin/bath), a selection of sand equipment (baking tins, moulds, cutters, jugs, measuring spoons, spades, cups, sand and water wheels, buckets, colanders), water equipment (watering cans, balls, boats, plastic cars and trucks, washable dolls, tea sets, funnels, things that float/sink, plastic bottles, empty liquid soap bottles, bubbles) ■ different smelling materials and bottles ■ sound boxes (cereal boxes filled with different sounding things - pebbles, pasta) ■ matching games 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ that match children’s skin tones, pencils, junk materials, stories, books, cardboard, old magazines, old wrapping paper, end lines of wall paper, paper plates, clay, chalk, dough, a variety of paper of different colours, sizes and textures, safety scissors (left and right handed), ink pads and stamps, sellotape ■ sand/water trays, an outside tap, hoses, plastic piping/tubing, gardening equipment, shovels,rakes, wheelbarrows, watering cans, seeds, a bird feeder/table, equipment to pour, measure, cut, manipulate, scoop, fill, pretend with, build with, make shapes with, containers of the same and different sizes/shapes ■ musical instruments, items that make noise (babies’ rattles, wind chimes, bells), materials to make their own musical instruments (plastic bottles, pebbles, biscuit tins) ■ old machinery, wheels, old clocks, piping ■ computers, digital cameras ■ cooking ingredients, baking trays, spatulas, wooden spoons
Pretend play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ soft toys, dolls, puppets (finger- and hand-held) ■ household items - pots, pans, wooden spoons, measuring cups, jugs, whisks, spoons, colanders, teapots ■ cardboard boxes ■ bunches of keys, empty containers with lids ■ wind up musical toys ■ tea sets, hats, shawls, blankets, buggies, beds, hammers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ clothes, hats and other props, old curtains or sheets ■ small versions of real life kitchen equipment - pots, pans, utensils, toddler sized cookers and sinks, mirrors, a table, chairs, a sofa ■ tea sets, dressing up models of animals, vehicles, people, houses, farm sets, halting sites (representative of local communities) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ culturally diverse cooking utensils, food packages, clothes, home props reflective of children’s family experiences (real kitchen equipment, weighing scales, teapots, colanders, baking trays, woks, chopsticks, table and chairs, a sofa, an old hairdryer, a kettle, a toaster with the flex cut off), purses, empty food containers reflective of what children see their families using ■ restaurant, flower shop, office props, post office, travel agents, hospital, doctor, dentist, vet,



Type of play	Babies	Toddlers	Young children
<p>Pretend play <i>(continued)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ cars, tractors, trains, aeroplanes ■ safety mirrors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ small brushes, mops, a real dustpan and brush ■ play houses, cubby/hidey holes ■ cuddly toys ■ sorting and posting boxes ■ a large safety mirror ■ old mobile phones, toy and real telephones, old computer keyboard ■ large cardboard boxes ■ fire station and shop props 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> chipper, pizzeria, social welfare office props ■ small tables, chairs, sofas, sinks ■ a picnic table, garden seat ■ a cash register, toy money ■ dressing up clothes that reflect children’s experiences, old shoes, handbags, old mobile phones, old spectacles, cameras, saris, everyday clothes, hats, a clothes rail, a mirror, a dressing table, an iron and ironing board ■ a bench with pegs and a hammer, a drill, a hard hat, overalls ■ dolls with a variety of clothes ■ boy and girl dolls with a range of skin tones and hair types and realistic multicultural racial features, dolls that reflect children with SEN ■ a puppet theatre and puppets ■ buggies, cots, a doll/baby bath plus accessories, microphones, tape recorders, digital cameras ■ puppets, soft toys ■ small world materials – people, cars, animals, train sets, farm sets, a garage, road mat sets, a doll’s house and furniture, dinosaurs, small world figures including people from different cultures and different disabilities including people in wheelchairs, with glasses, hearing aids, crutches ■ tree houses, dens, a playhouse inside and outside.

Appendix 2: Legislation, regulation and assessment

Legislation and regulations impact on assessment in out-of-home settings. At the **time of publication**, the following should be considered in relation to assessment:

- The Education Act (Department of Education and Science, 1998)
- The Equal Status Act (Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, 2000)
- The Data Protection (Amendment) Act (Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform, 2003)
- The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (Department of Education and Science, 2004)
- The Disability Act (Department of Health and Children, 2005)
- Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No 2) Regulations (Department of Health and Children, 2006).

The relevant aspects of each of these are outlined below.¹⁴

Education Act (1998)

In relation to young children attending primary schools, the Education Act (1998) requires principals and teachers to regularly evaluate students and to periodically report the results of the evaluation to the students and their parents. The implications of this requirement for teachers and schools include

- developing assessment procedures which provide an accurate account of children's progress and achievement
- creating and maintaining records of children's progress and achievement while they are attending the school
- providing parents with assessment reports which contain accurate and clearly accessible information about their children's progress and achievement

(NCCA, 2007, p. 95).

Equal Status Act (2000)

The Equal Status Act (2000) has implications for the assessment policy in settings. In particular, it requires settings to be aware of the effects of context, culture and language in assessing children's learning and development.

Data Protection (Amendment) Act (2003)

Assessment information gathered and stored in an early childhood setting is subject to the terms of the Data Protection (Amendment) Act (2003). Parents have a right to information about their children which is stored. After the age of eighteen, children themselves have a right to the information. The setting needs to have procedures in place to ensure that assessment information is stored securely with limited access to it, and for an agreed period of time. When information is stored electronically, it should be backed up.

Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (EPSEN) (2004)

The Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (EPSEN) (2004) requires that where a child has or may have special educational needs an assessment of those needs should be carried out. With children not attending formal schooling this is the responsibility of the relevant health board. The Act requires

¹⁴ For a fuller discussion of the implications of legislation for assessment practice in infant classes see Appendix C in *Assessment in the Primary School Curriculum: Guidelines for Schools* (NCCA, 2007).

primary schools to identify when a child is not benefiting from the education programme on offer and to investigate the reasons behind this. The school, or in the case of a child not at school the relevant health board, is mandated to ensure that an individual education plan (IEP) appropriate to the child is drawn up in consultation with the child's parents¹⁵. The Act outlines the statutory requirements for educational planning for children with special educational needs (SEN). It requires that a multidisciplinary assessment be carried out in situations where it is considered that the child may have special educational needs. An IEP must then be prepared for each child identified as having such needs. Discussion and agreement regarding the abilities, skills and talents, as well as the nature and degree of the child's special educational needs, together with an analysis of how these needs affect the child's learning and development is required. The plan must include these and must also specify goals for learning and development for the child over a period not exceeding one year. It must also specify the supports that need to be put in place to enable the child to participate in and benefit from education.

Disability Act (2005)

The Disability Act (2005) provides for the assessment of health and education needs for persons with disabilities, arising from their situation. The Act provides for access for people with disabilities to health and education services. In relation to educational needs, Part 2 Section 8 (9) states that where an assessment is applied for it must be carried out by or at the request of an assessment officer. For children in school the matter is referred to the principal. For children in other settings the National Council for Special Education deal with the matter.

Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No 2) Regulations (2006)

The Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No 2) Regulations (2006) set out the regulations and requirements pertaining to all aspects of the operation of pre-school settings. Regulation 5 explicitly requires that:

A person carrying on a pre-school service shall ensure that each child's learning, development and well-being is facilitated within the daily life of the service through the provision of the appropriate opportunities, experiences, activities, interaction, materials and equipment, having regard to the age and state of development of the child and the child's cultural context.

To fulfil this requirement it is necessary for adults to engage in making important judgements about children's learning and development and how best to extend and enrich it. By implication this involves the adult in assessing learning and development. Indeed, the explanatory guide directs adults to *be pro-active in ensuring that appropriate action is taken to address each child's individual needs with his/her parents and following consultation, where appropriate, with other relevant services* (p. 39).

¹⁵ The use of IEPs as outlined in the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs Act (EPSEN, 2004) is not yet enacted, and is therefore not currently a requirement of educational settings.

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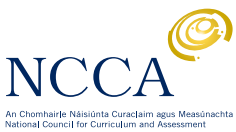
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