



Toys and equipment in Family Day Care

**Great spaces,
Safe spaces**



Toys and equipment – what you need

To run a Family Day Care (FDC) where children are happy, engaged and learning you need to have the right toys and equipment. Children need to have things to do while they are with you and things to learn from.

Every child that you care for must be able to play and learn from material that is right for their age and interests. There must be enough toys and equipment that children can all be doing something – without waiting.

You need toys and equipment like:

- books
- music
- art materials – to draw, paint, glue and sculpt
- blocks and materials to make things
- sand and water or mud for messy play

- dress-ups and musical instruments for dramatic play
- puzzles and games
- equipment to encourage physical play (balance beams, things to jump on and run around)

You also need child-sized tables and chairs and low shelves or cupboards so children can have easy access.

You also need places for children to sleep, like mats or cots, and cushions and soft places to sit.

Where do you get what you need?

As a Family Day Care educator it's your responsibility to purchase the toys and equipment that the children you care for will learn from.

That doesn't mean you have to spend a lot of money though.

You can get toys and equipment through:

- second hand or charity shops
- garage sales and markets
- toy libraries (ask your FDC Provider if there is a toy library in your area)
- local businesses and shops who may throw away boxes or left over materials
- your own house - what do you already own that can be used by children?
- online websites where people sell things cheaply second hand



Art and craft materials

Children love drawing and painting and cutting and gluing and making things.

You need to have the materials for this.

- scissors (child-sized)
- crayons, pencils, felt pens, chalk
- paint and paint brushes, paint rollers
- paper, especially large pieces like butcher's paper and chalk boards
- old magazines for children to cut up



- play dough (you can make this - just Google 'playdough recipe') and things to cut it, and roll it out
- things to stick down (collage materials) such as glitter, buttons, leaves, seeds, string
- tape and glue
- paint aprons or shirts



Dramatic play and music

You need to have the material to allow children to play-act. This is how they learn about their world and practice being part of it. Dramatic play allows children to pretend to be someone or something else.

Toys and equipment that help them do this include:

- dress up clothes (jewellery, hats, clothes, shoes, bags, scarves)
- dolls
- dolls clothing and strollers
- kitchen toys (saucepans, frying pans, plates, cutlery, chopsticks)
- tea sets

Musical instruments you can have are:

- drums or things that can be banged
- shakers, triangles, clap sticks
- bells
- tambourines and xylophones

Some of these you can make!

Have you got a way to play music? A CD player, a radio or through your phone? Do you know children's songs you can sing with the children?



Books, books, books

A Family Day Care educator can **never** have too many books for children.

You need:

- books children can read themselves
- board books for babies to explore
- books for you to read aloud to children
- books with lots of words
- books with pictures only

Good books for young children are ones with lots of rhyme, rhythm and repetition.

You can read books in whatever language you feel most comfortable reading – even if it is not the child’s first language.

The best thing about books is that you can borrow them **for free** from your local library! Garage sales are also a great place to get cheap books from that you can keep.



Toys and puzzles

Babies learn a lot from playing with simple toys but they can also learn from simple things you have in your house – everything is new to a baby! Think about different textures and shapes and colours. Put out groups of things.

Other toys that are good for babies are:

- rattles (you can make these by putting things inside a plastic bottle – just make sure the things inside are not too small in case it breaks)
- activity toys – bead frames, pop-up toys, sorting toys, posting boxes, stacking cups, hammering toys
- blocks
- cuddly soft toys
- pull-a-long toys
- ride-on toys
- walkers and push toys

Things that older children learn from include:

- jigsaw puzzles
- board games
- trucks and cars
- dolls
- plastic animals



Science equipment

Having toys and equipment that help children learn to read and write is important but so is having toys that help them learn about science, technology, engineering and maths. These are called STEM skills.

The best place to learn STEM skills is outside in nature. The toys that help children learn these skills are ones that help children explore, count, look at things and ask questions:

- age appropriate building blocks (Lego® and Duplo® are good but so are plain timber blocks)
- buckets, spades, bowls

- containers from your kitchen like plastic milk bottles, butter containers, ice-cream containers, yogurt tubs
- old kitchen things like wooden spoons, sieves, plastic jugs and measuring cups
- plastic cups
- things you can count
- string
- anything from nature eg pinecones, stones, shells





Loose Parts

Children get quickly bored with toys and equipment that only have one use. That's why in Family Day Care many educators provide children with collections of things known as loose parts.

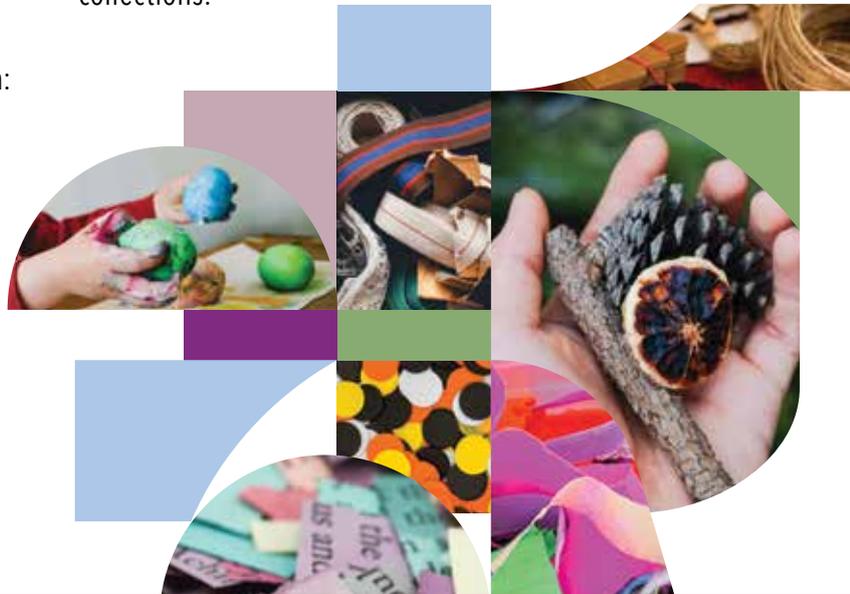
Think of the many things something like a stick can be to a child. It can become a magic wand in the hand of one child, a spoon in another's, a drum stick in another's and a digging tool in another's. What about a piece of material? Think of the many different ways a child could use this in imaginative play.

Think of collecting loose parts for children to play with:

- egg cartons
- boxes
- stones
- sticks
- buttons
- pieces of wood
- fabric
- kitchen items
- ribbons
- tiles
- old containers

Loose parts can be put into containers for inside play and larger loose parts can be used in the garden or outdoors.

Children can help find things for your loose part collections.



Outdoor play stuff

Children need to be outdoors as much, if not more than, indoors. They learn a lot from nature but they also need space to develop what is known as large motor skills - like running, jumping, throwing, crawling walking, sitting up.

Some of the toys and equipment you will use outside can help children develop these skills like:

- balls
- things to climb over and on top of
- balance boards
- tricycles or ride on toys
- sandpits and toys to play with the sand
- empty cardboard boxes



Furniture and other things

Think about the other things you may need as a Family Day Care educator:

- child-sized tables and chairs – for eating, drawing and painting, doing puzzles
- small shelves or storage cubes – that children can reach
- cushions and mats to sit on
- sleeping mats or cots and separate sheets for each child
- strollers or baby carriers so you can leave the house

- small steps so children can reach hand basins to wash their hands
- baby and child car seats if you have a car and want to drive anywhere
- safety gates if you need to keep children out of parts of your home or away from stairs
- fire blanket and fire extinguisher
- safety plugs for electrical outlets
- first aid kits (one for home and one to take out)
- change bench or mat, paper to put on it, bins for dirty nappies
- liquid soap and paper towels
- noticeboard to put notices up for parents and children's art
- files for you to keep forms and paperwork
- baskets and containers to store toys and equipment in



Keep it right for everyone

You need to make sure that all the toys and equipment you have reflect many different cultures. Do you have chopsticks as well as cutlery? Do you have dolls that have different skin colours? Do you have books that show children and adults of many races? Do you have posters or pictures of people from different cultural backgrounds? Do you also have toys and equipment that challenge gender and cultural stereotypes? Girls need to see that there are female doctors. Boys need to see that there are male nurses. Girls and boys need to see that mothers work and that men can care for children.



Toys and equipment in Family Day Care

Keep it organised

Having the right toys and equipment for children in Family Day Care is important but so is keeping what you have organised, clean and easy for children to get to.

As a Family Day Care educator you can organise what you have by sorting it in:

- plastic containers
- cane baskets
- shelves
- cardboard boxes

You need to think each day about what toys and equipment you will put out for children and how you will organise it. One day you could put equipment for measuring and pouring sand in the sandbox, the next day you could put toy trucks in there. Have dress up clothes out one day and playdough out the next. Vary what art materials you have out. Is today a good day to use chalk on concrete paths? Or should you have paints set up at a small table?

Keep it natural

Not everything that children play with needs to be bought. Collect things from outdoor places like seashells, stones, pinecones and leaves, feathers, bark, seed pods and flowers.

Use the children to help you find and collect this sort of materials. As children find material like this they are learning about science and nature.

You can use this material in art projects by giving children glue and paper. You can sort it by colour, size and shape. You can use it to create temporary artworks. You can use it to teach children how to count. You can use it to teach about nature.



Keep it safe

Some things are too small for children under 3 years to be able to play with. To prevent young children from choking, you need to keep all toys and other things with small parts away from them. A good way to check is if it can fit into a toilet roll holder, it's probably too small for a young baby to play with.

You also need to make sure all toys and equipment are safe for the ability levels and ages of the children.



Don't Break The Law

As a Family Day Care educator you have to follow special laws to ensure children are safe at Family Day Care. The main laws are the Education and Care Services Law, and the Education and Care Services Regulations.

The best way to get an understanding of the law and regulations is to talk to your FDC Provider. They will help you to understand the law.

The other way is to read the *Guide to the NQF*. You can find it at www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/about/guide

The most important parts of the regulations in regards to toys and equipment, require your FDC Provider to make sure that the part of your home where you provide Family Day Care and all the equipment and furniture you use in providing FDC, are safe, clean and in good repair.



GUIDE TO THE NATIONAL QUALITY FRAMEWORK



Where to find out more

Want to know more about the toys and equipment needed for Family Day Care?



Ask

The NSW Department of Education Information and Enquiries Line. The Department is the Regulatory Authority for FDC services. Call 1800 619 113 or email ececd@det.nsw.edu.au



Watch videos

www.nswfdc.org.au/greatspaces

Look at websites

www.familydaycare.com.au

www.nswfdc.org.au



Read

The other booklets in these series
www.nswfdc.org.au/greatspaces



Read the curriculum

The *Early Years Learning Framework* (the curriculum for FDC and other early education and care services) has been translated into 11 different languages.

www.nswfdc.org.au/EYLF

The Framework for School Aged Care (the curriculum for FDC for school aged children) is available in English only.

www.nswfdc.org.au/MTOP

Pinterest and Facebook



Pinterest and Facebook have lots of pictures of other Family Day Care educator setups – just google 'Family Day Care environments Pinterest' or put 'Family Day Care' into Facebook and you will see pictures of what toys and equipment other educators have and how they organise their homes.







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