



Charts and Materials for VPK Classrooms

The purpose of these lists is to ensure that in every classroom and on the playground children have the developmentally appropriate materials that research and experience have shown are essential components of a quality program. While every classroom is different and it may be a challenge to set up distinct areas, all the centers and charts included in these lists offer important learning experiences and should be incorporated into the program in some way. When the Coalition monitors VPK classrooms it is expected that most of these materials will be available and charts will be displayed and used.

■ **Charts**

- Charts should be meaningful to the children
- Have children help create charts
- Hang charts at eye level to allow children to interact independently
- Charts should have picture clues children can understand

Chart Recommendations

- Attendance chart
- Helper/job chart
- Daily schedule with words and pictures
- Weekly/monthly calendar
- Alphabet
- Number
- Shapes and colors

■ **Dramatic Play Center (4 to 5 children)**

- Space is large enough for children to move around easily
- Located near the block area for integrated play situations
- Child size furniture and shelves
- Props/accessories are labeled and accessible to children
- Materials are organized for easy accessibility and clean up
- There are props to encourage emergent literacy and writing (recipe books, telephone books, message pads)
- Home-like touches such as curtains, tablecloth, vase with flowers

Note: Dramatic play area can change theme and become a grocery store, office, hospital, restaurant, among others)

Dramatic Play Center Materials

- Child sized kitchen/dining room furniture*
- Dishes*
- Silverware*
- Pots and pans*
- Empty cans of food, empty food boxes*
- Play food- variety of ethnic food*
- Cookbooks*
- Telephones and telephone book*
- Dress up clothes*
- Hats representing community helpers and cultures*
- Culturally diverse dolls*
- Doll bed*
- Props to support several different play themes (example: play medical kit, baby stroller, shopping cart, cash register)*
- Full length non-breakable mirror*
- Child size broom and mop*
- Iron and ironing board*

■ Manipulative/Math Center (4 to 5 children)

- Child size table and chairs
- Manipulative materials are stored on low shelves near the tables
- Manipulative materials are labeled and stored neatly in containers
- There is a variety of materials and in quantities large enough for small group activities
- Materials are complete with all necessary components
- Materials for counting, sorting, recognizing shapes and classification are included

Manipulative/Math Center Materials

- Assorted puzzles (for various skill levels and interests)*
- Lacing boards*
- Various beads for stringing*
- Large and small pegboards and pegs*
- Shape sorter*
- Sorting boxes and materials to sort, including real objects (ex: shells, keys, seeds)*
- Magnet blocks*
- Legos*
- Legos people and vehicles*
- Waffle blocks*
- Colored wood unit blocks*

- Pattern blocks*
- Attribute blocks*
- Geoboards and rubber bands*
- Simple card games*
- Memory card games*
- Picture lotto games*
- Magnetic boards and felt boards with shapes and numbers*
- Unifix cubes*
- Interlocking toys*
- Counting and math concept books*

■ **Block Center (3 to 4 children)**

- The largest area of the classroom
- Smooth flat carpeting
- Child size shelves for storing blocks and props/accessories
- Clearly defined by shelves
- Located away from quieter centers such as books and listening,
- Located away from main traffic, but close to dramatic play center
- Shelves clearly labeled with block shapes outlined to facilitate learning (sorting and matching) and cleanup

Block Center Materials

- Hardwood unit blocks (250+ pieces)*
- Hollow blocks*
- Cardboard blocks*
- People props, including multi-ethnic families and community workers*
- Animals – farm, zoo, pets, sea life, prehistoric*
- Road signs*
- Small cars, trucks, trains, buses, boats*
- Wooden train set with trains*
- Photographs and books related to construction and buildings*

■ **Art Center (4 to 6 children)**

- Center should be close to a water source
- Child size table and chairs
- Area for easel
- Materials organized in containers on low shelves, labeled
- Area for work to dry and unfinished projects to be stored
- Place to display children's work at their level

Art Center Materials

- Plain and assorted papers of different colors and textures for drawing and painting*
- Pencils, colored pencils, markers, crayons*
- Child size scissors*
- Glue and paste*
- Collage materials of all sorts (ex: feathers, small shells, buttons, paper)*
- Stickers*
- Finger paints*
- Watercolor paints*
- Washable tempura paints*
- Assorted paint brushes*
- Paint containers with lids*
- Paint smocks*
- Playdough, clay*
- Clay hammers, cookie cutters, rollings pins, popsicle sticks for cutting*
- Stencils*
- Ink pads and stamps*

■ **Discovery/Science/Sensory Center (3 to 4 children)**

- Table or shelf for materials accessible to children for display and exploration
- Something living and growing (plants, pets)
- Child size table and chairs
- Located near a window, if possible
- Display area for children's work
- Paper and pencils for children to record observations
- Books and magazines related to themes and science topics

Discovery/Science/Sensory Center Materials

- Water/sand table with accessories*
- Color paddles*
- Magnifying glass*
- Magnets and assorted objects*
- Kaleidoscopes*
- Balance scale*
- Science puzzles, pictures and games*
- Sensory materials*

- Plants (non-toxic)*
- Animals*
- Collections of natural objects such as rocks, shells, leaves, found items*
- Science books*

■ **Literacy Center – includes *Library, Listening and Writing Areas***

A. *Library Area (3 to 4 children)*

- Located in a quiet well-lit area of the classroom
- Soft places for children to sit and read
- More books available than children enrolled
- Some books reflect current theme/topic of class
- Books are appropriate for the age and interest of the children
- Bookshelf to display books facing out
- Big book stand
- Materials that support language development

Library Area Materials

- Books reflect all cultures and backgrounds*
- Predictable books*
- Concept books*
- Alphabet books*
- Children's poetry books*
- Books about families and traditions*
- Fantasy books*
- Photo books*
- Big books*
- Favorite story books*
- Class made or child made books*
- Children's magazines*
- Flannel board*
- Magnet board*
- Hand puppets*

B. Listening Area (2 to 4 children)

- Located in a quiet well-lit area of the classroom
- Located within the Literacy Center
- Tape player in working condition with 2 to 4 headsets available every day
- Close to electrical outlet
- Container for storing books and tapes in an organized and accessible way
- Soft, comfortable seating or table and chairs

Listening Area Materials

- Variety of books with tapes*
- Variety of stories on tape*
- Variety of music on tape*
- Environmental sound recognition tapes and lotto games*
- Tapes made by the children, teacher, or class*

C. Writing Area (3 to 4 children)

- Located in a quiet well-lit area of the classroom
- Located within the Literacy Center
- Child size table chairs and shelves
- Display area for work
- Book-making materials
- Meaningful print for children to copy – words with pictures, name cards

Writing Area Materials

- Assorted paper, lined and unlined, different sizes, shapes, colors and textures*
- Children's name cards*
- Index cards*
- Envelopes*
- Small note pads*
- Pencil sharpeners*
- Pencils, chubby and regular*
- Markers, crayons*
- Paper clips*
- Staplers, staple remover*
- Letter and number stamps*
- Ink pads*
- Letter and design stencils for tracing*
- Small alphabet and number strips*
- Letter stickers*

■ **Music/Movement Center**

- Open area with carpeting (circle area can be used)
- Storage for musical instruments (shelf, pegboard, box)
- Storage for tapes/CDs
- Music/instruments reflect various cultures
- Music is played at various times of the day; classical music is included

Music/Movement Center Materials

- CD player and/or tape player/recorder*
- Variety of music - songs, instrumental, different moods*
- Rhythm instruments, including child made, such as drums from oatmeal boxes*
- Props for movement, such as scarves, streamers*

■ **Computer Center (1 to 2 children)**

- Child size computer table and chair
- Set up so child is not looking up at the screen
- Storage space for software
- Display area for work

Computer Center Materials

- Word processing software*
- Appropriate games*

■ **Woodworking Center (1 to 2 children) Optional**

- There is a woodworking table
- Safety is modeled and discussed
- Tools are stored safely

Woodworking Center Materials

- Soft wood for constructions*
- Lightweight hammer (8 – 12 ozs.)*
- Roofing nails*
- Hacksaw with 10-14 teeth*
- C-clamp or vise*
- Miter box*
- Yellow wood glue*
- Sand paper (different grades)*
- Sandpaper block*

■ **Outdoor Playground**

- Schedule adequate daily outdoor play
- Slides, swings and climbers are spaced for safety with enough soft material underneath
- Teachers should have a clear view of all children
- Some shaded areas
- Easy access to bathrooms
- Drinking water available

Outdoor Playground Materials

- Age appropriate equipment for climbing, swinging, and building
- Area for digging
- Materials to support pretend play
- Wheeled toys, if there is a paved or hard surface
- Indoor materials that can brought outside, such as sand and water tables, easels, dolls and strollers, pots and pans, woodworking
- Sprinklers

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References: Florida VPK Performance Standards; Learning Center System, Muriel Wong Lundgren for Kaplan Companies Inc.; The Scholastic Book of Early Childhood Learning Centers; Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning; Creative Curriculum for Preschool