

Branching Out

Resource Updates to Support the Growth and Goals of Educators



Block and Construction Play is an open-ended, creative, and beneficial play learning experience for children. The opportunities for block and construction play are endless. Check out some resources the ECCDC offers to extend block and construction play in your early learning environment.



Provocation for Learning Kits for Borrowing



Building, Technology & Block Centre Materials - Community Block Set

This provocation for learning kit has everything children will need to create their own community.



Building, Technology & Block Centre Materials - Vehicles with Wooden Arches and Tree Blocks

This provocation for learning kit offers children everything they need to explore and construct roadways for their cars. Definitely a fan favourite!



Building, Technology & Block Centre Materials - Children Explore Building & Construction with Loose Parts

Check out this wonderful resource that has an abundance of loose parts that children can explore and construct into a variety of structures to their liking.



Infant Activity Equipment - Natural Building Materials for Infants and Toddlers

This provocation for learning kit is a great introduction to block and construction play for infants and toddlers! The naturalized materials are open-ended which supports creativity and also supports fine motor skills!





Presents ...

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Connor's Corner

Connor Walsh, Student Intern, ECCDC

Benefits of Block & Construction Play for Children

Block and Construction play offers a wide range of benefits for children.

STEM Skills:

Firstly, this type of play can provide a foundation for building STEM skills. In later education, this inclusive play for children prepares them for these skills, giving them opportunities and choices including STEM.

Block and construction play lets children engage with their world so they can make sense of it. With block play there are many fractional parts and relationships. STEM skills build from experiences with well-structured tools like blocks. For example, a child could use a cylinder like an empty paper towel roll, prop it up on a few books, and roll a toy car down it. This showcases science, gravity, and balance. Then they begin to understand things like "if you add one more of these blocks, it will fall." This thinking can come from block play. Other simple machines that can be used are an Inclined plane, wheel and axel, and wedge. They may also better-understand supports for platforms.

There are always inspiring questions the children can ask themselves, and that there is always something to discover with block play.

Problem Solving Skills:

Children may want to build a specific structure or have an idea in mind. Then they wonder how to do that. Anything the child constructs requires concentration and thinking of a solution.

Literacy & Language:

Children will have unfamiliar experiences with block play. While doing so, there are many opportunities to use new vocabulary from words they have seen in a book or words they maybe only heard a few times. Literacy and language are enhanced while working with their peers, and when they are faced with stimulating questions.

Creativity and Imagination:

The blocks and other play items can be manipulated and connected in multiple ways. They can experiment, form patterns, and use blocks as visual representations for their imagination.

Fine Motor Skills:

While piecing together interlocking blocks or adding blocks to a structure, they develop precision involving hand-eye coordination.



Farr Out Findings

Emily Farr, Student Intern, ECCDC

Enhancing Block & Construction Play

There are several natural and synthetic materials that can be incorporated into block and construction play to further enhance it. Including other materials also helps support other learning/developmental skills such as literacy, science, math, art, creativity, gross & fine motor skills, etc.

Natural Elements

- Tree Stumps
- Rocks
- Sticks
- Pinecones
- Shells
- Sea glass
- Pieces of natural fabrics such as burlap

Synthetic Materials

- Signs (Stop, Yield, Traffic, etc.)
- Measuring Tape
- Rulers
- Cars, Dump trucks, Trucks, etc.
- Small Plastic Animals & Bugs
- Small Plastic People
- Mirrors
- Spools
- Plastic Hair Rollers
- CDs
- Clipboards
- Pencils, Crayons, & Markers
- Artificial Grass, Flowers, and Leaves

It is equally important to keep in mind covid-19 restrictions and age appropriateness of the materials when adding to your block & construction play space.





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Expanding Children's Play Series

Ever wonder why children play the way they do? In children's play they have opportunities to explore, engage and experiment with their ideas and beliefs of the world around them. Many programs have shifted to offering play-based learning experiences to the children they work with to expand the children's learning. This series takes a closer look at the learning taking place in Block and Construction Play, Imaginative and Dramatic Play, and Rough and Tumble Play. Each of the new series started as a session in the **Unpacking children's Play** series and has been expanded to its own unique series, which builds upon the initial sessions. Current research and reflective practice will offer ideas for educators to explore within their program. Participants are encouraged to attend each session in the series for continuation of learning and resources.

Expanding Children's Block and Construction Play

In our classrooms we ensure that children have a large, open area filled with different blocks, small world items and props that link to children's interests, experiences, and developmental skill sets. In having these materials available, children are developing their problem solving, mathematic, continuity and permanence skills.

Session 1

Participants will have an opportunity to explore and reflect upon the research, resources and connect with other educators to share experiences, ideas, knowledge and develop an understand the principles of children's block and construction play.

Session 2

Building upon the principles of children's block and construction play, participants will consider the materials, items, props, and environment to support children's learning linking to *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years*.

Session 3

The final session in the series will give participants the opportunity to put into practice the principles and knowledge gained in sessions 1 and 2. They will engage in hands-on experiences while considering the benefits, developmental skills, and experiences they can offer children in their block and construction play areas.



Session 1

Tuesday February 15, 2022
Presented *In Person in Niagara*
6:30 to 9:00 pm

Session 2

Tuesday March 1, 2022
Presented *In Person in Niagara*
6:30 to 9:00 pm

Session 3

Tuesday March 29, 2022
Presented *In Person in Niagara*
6:30 to 9:00 pm

Cost

Niagara Educators: No Charge (*sponsored through funding provided by Niagara Region Children's Services*)

Outside Niagara Educators: \$25 per session or \$50 for all three sessions

Not Comfortable Attending in Person or live at a distance from the ECCDC? You may register to attend via live webcam

To register for this series or any other Professional Development opportunity offered through the ECCDC, please [click here](#)

