



Quality ChildCare

For Registered Home-Based Providers

LEARNING TO GROW ★ WINDWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE Vol. VII, No. 2

10 Hallmarks of Quality Child Care

- ★ Build trusting relationships
- ★ Provide consistent care
- ★ Support children's health
- ★ Provide a safe environment
- ★ Provide positive guidance
- ★ Provide a language-rich environment
- ★ **Foster curiosity and development through play**
- ★ Individualize care and learning activities
- ★ Partner with parents
- ★ Pursue personal and professional growth

This Month's Hallmark of Quality Child Care

Foster Curiosity and Development through Play

Play during a Pandemic

During this uncertain time, children rely on routines and play to normalize their day. According to the American Psychological Association, research shows that play is necessary for children to thrive physically, emotionally, mentally and socially. In fact, play is how children learn best.

Play is even more important during the current COVID-19 crisis because play builds resilience, mitigates stress and anxiety, and strengthens family and caregiver bonds and relationships. While the guidance may, at first glance, seem to discourage interaction and playing together, there are ways to still encourage play. For example, the Hawai'i Department of Human Services (DHS) Guidelines for Child Care Facilities states, "Minimize activities that require close contact (e.g., circle time), sharing of materials, and waiting in line." To meet this guideline, while still ensuring that children engage in meaningful activities throughout the day, providers can do a variety of things:

- Arrange the environment for physical distancing
- Create individual activity bins for each child, and
- Implement outdoor activities with physical distancing.

It is important to remember that there is no single "right" way to balance health and safety with children's play and learning, rather there are "many right ways." As with any business, it is important to look at the guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and DHS, and then implement the strategies that work best for your program while keeping in mind quality learning experiences for children.

This newsletter will discuss strategies for arranging the environment, creating individual activity bins, and implementing activities for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers as a way to get you thinking about how to balance safety, health, and children's growth and development.



Arranging Your Environment

To minimize close contact and create physical space is challenging in child care, especially with young infants and toddlers. For those little ones, you have to maintain close supervision, still picking them up when they need comfort and engaging them in activities that stimulate their senses. However, if you have preschool age children, you can separate part of the learning environment into individual spaces for each child. It's important to note that the children should not be required to stay in an assigned individual space all day; rather that they are offered "safe" areas where they can each play independently.

To create these spaces, you can lay painter's tape on the ground (or use a blanket/mat/hula hoop that each child sits on while playing) and have the child know which area is hers – for example Anna's space is the red mat and Micah's space is the green one. Within each area, try to give each child the same amount of toys and creative supplies. For example: several books, paper, crayons, trucks, blocks, personal sensory bin, animals, and access to a table. You want to arrange the furniture so children can see each other but are engaged enough to stay in their area. This can be done by using a child-size bookshelf or storage unit to separate two areas, or allowing the children to sit on separate ends of a table, or using a clear barrier of plexiglass or acrylic if they are sitting closer than 6 feet apart.



If sensory materials (e.g., play dough) are included, the items may only be used by the same child each day.

If this method doesn't work for the children, you can use this strategy for short group activity times such as morning greeting. Have each child use their mat while singing and dancing to the morning songs, thus creating physical distance while gathering.

Creating Individual Bins

Another idea to minimize shared materials is to create individual bins (plastic shoe box size bins with a lid, or resealable plastic bags) that are used by a single child and can be easily disinfected. Prior to the pandemic, many programs had community bins for shared art materials, blocks, manipulatives. You can still utilize these materials by putting them into bins for individual use. Some general tips to keep in mind are:

- Get creative and have each child customize their own bin, but make sure it is clear which bin belongs to each child.
- Each bin should be wide and deep enough to play, or allow children to play in an area where the materials won't mix with another child's if they dump out the materials.
- Children should not trade or share the materials.
- Rotate the contents of the bins weekly, or as the children remain interested.
- Store bins in each child's private cubby space or put them on a shelf where the contents won't touch one another.

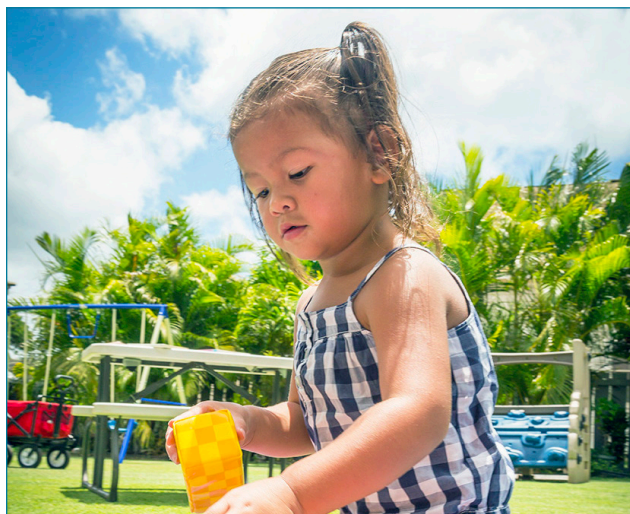
Depending on the child's age, the materials in the bin can differ:

- For infants, include toys that they can mouth and that you can disinfect after their play. These can include rattles, rings, noise making toys, and board books.
- For toddlers and preschoolers, choose a few toys and manipulatives. They can be based on a weekly theme, such as sea creatures by including books, plastic sea animals, and shells.
- For art bins, include paper (or composition books) and age-appropriate tools, such as crayons, markers, collage materials, and glue for each child.

Physical Distancing Activities

Although physical distancing (maintaining at least 6 feet of space aside from momentary or minimal contact) is critical in reducing the risk of spreading coronavirus, it may not always be realistic in large groups of young children. Consider extending outdoor activities, which according to the Mayo Clinic, reduce the spread of germs as fresh air is constantly moving, dispersing droplets. Here are some ideas you might want to try:

- **Games that you can space children 6 feet apart** – Simon Says (no face touching), Red Light/Green Light,



stretching and yoga moves, dancing in place, practicing locomotion skills in place (hopping, jumping, stationary jogging).

- **Give children the opportunity to explore what 6 feet looks like.** Give them each a 6 foot long length of rope, yarn, ribbon or tape to lay on a flat surface. Let them choose whatever measuring device they like (their own shoe, their favorite doll, truck or stuffed toy, etc.) to count how many of that item it takes to make 6 feet. They might need help learning to move the item along the 6' scale.
- **Go on a scavenger hunt.** Have children look for items in nature that can then be used in art, math or science projects, such as small sticks, stones, and leaves.
- **Build an obstacle course** with ropes, small cones, hula hoops laid out in a large area. Space the obstacles far apart for endurance, and encourage use of a variety of locomotor skills such as jumping, hopping, galloping, and movements such as crawling, tip-toeing, log-rolling, etc. as children move between obstacles.

Training Opportunity

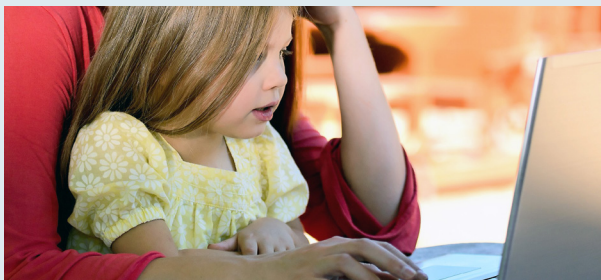
This online training offers a certificate for training hours.

Family Child Care: Overcoming Barriers to Lead Fun Physical Activities

<https://extension.psu.edu/programs/betterkidcare>

Featured Activity

Virtual Field Trip



What You Need:

- Laptop/tablet/smartphone with internet access

What to do:

1. Arrange a virtual field trip day with the children by choosing a place that the children would be interested in. Many zoos, aquariums, and national parks have live web cameras that stream their location. Some local sites include: Maui Ocean Center, Honolulu Aquarium Hawaiian Monk Seal Habitat, Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, and Poipu Beach.
2. Talk to the children about what they will see. For example, if viewing a beach, talk about the sand and water, as well as what they've done at a beach. Access the live camera streams by doing an internet search of the place. A live web camera video feed will be displayed. Show it full screen so that the children can see it for a few minutes.
3. Extend the field trip by doing a hands-on activity. For example, if you viewed the beach cam, have small individual tubs of sand with buckets and shovels that each child can use to make a sand castle. You can also have books available to read about the beach. Note: if using sand, have each child use their own bin and have them wash hands after they are finished. Disinfect or throw away used sand.

Suggested Books

Discover these books and more at the Hawai'i State Public Library www.librarieshawaii.org

Leo Loves Baby Time by Anna McQuinn

This book uses simple words and bright illustrations to feature activities familiar to little ones and encourage young readers to play along.



The Hug by Eoin McLaughlin and Polly Dunbar

This book is perfect to read when you really want to hug someone, but can't. It explores the many different ways you can show someone you care.



Nonni's Moon by Julia Ingerro

This book shows how a little creativity and inspiration can bridge the gap of loneliness and distance, and bring even far away loved ones closer.



Citations

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