



# Quality ChildCare

For Registered Home-Based Providers

LEARNING TO GROW ★ WINDWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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## 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

### Individualize Care and Learning Activities

## Helping All Children Thrive

Imagine that you want to take a trip on an airplane. However, the aisle is too narrow, the seat doesn't allow enough legroom, or the noise is upsetting. These barriers end up discouraging you from taking part in traveling. Similarly, children can be unintentionally excluded from participating in activities in your program – whether the child has a developmental delay, limited abilities, or needs more support to do an activity.

Take a moment and observe the children doing activities. Do you see instances when children are interested but not participating? Look to see if there are unintended barriers that are preventing them from participating. Perhaps they can't reach the materials or they don't have the strength or coordination to use the small items. Recognizing these differences and normalizing how you think about these differences is beneficial for all children and families. It begins with a shift in thinking from *Binary* to *Constellation* thinking (Huber 2023). This shifts from a belief that some people are able-bodied and others are disabled to the belief that everyone has a wide range of abilities and attributes.

Care providers can make a large impact by making small modifications, allowing children to fully and independently participate in activities. The benefits of making simple modifications include:

- Providing access to a wide range of learning opportunities
- Promoting participation with peers
- Creating meaningful interactions
- Supporting greater learning opportunities

When you intentionally arrange the physical space so children can participate in different ways, you create an environment where all children can learn and thrive. This newsletter will share strategies you can use to:

- Create an accessible play area
- Adapt materials in your program such as blocks, dramatic play, art, and books, and
- Individualize care



# Creating Accessible Play Spaces

Accessibility means being able to participate in the play areas fully. Infants, toddlers, and preschoolers can use the areas in your program by ensuring that:

- Infants have safe spaces to explore (e.g., gated areas for tummy time)
- Furniture is spaced for wheelchair access and active exploration
- Materials and toys can be seen and reached by the children (e.g., placed on low shelves at child's eye level)
- Chairs and tables are at the height needed to accommodate all children (e.g., children are sitting so that their feet are flat on the ground)
- Flexible seating options are available during circle time (e.g., small stools, wobble chairs, carpet squares)

## Adapting Materials

Once the children are comfortable in the environment, check to see if there are ways to adapt activities to promote their independent use of materials. The following are some ways to adapt materials:

- **Blocks** – Define a space for building by spreading a recycled shower curtain cut to the desired size and taping it down to prevent rumpling. This reduces distractions and helps children understand boundaries.



If mouthing blocks is an issue, use non-toxic, soft stacking blocks, which are gentle for infants and can be easily washed and sanitized.

- **Dramatic Play** – Provide some dress-up clothing that are easy to get on/off. Make a small snip in the buttonholes to make it easier to button/unbutton, which helps children who are learning to master their fine motor skills.
- **Art** –Stabilize materials by taping the paper to a table or a small desktop easel to help those who are working on their balance when using their arm and hands. Adapt finger painting for those who don't want to place their hands in the paint by offering tools (e.g., paintbrush) or placing the paint in a clear baggie and taping it closed. You can also use foam grips or shorter crayons for little hands.
- **Books** –Secure clothespins or popsicle sticks to the corner of each page to make them easier for the child to grasp and turn the page. If you have children that chew up or tear pages, make the pages stronger by covering them in clear packing tape, clear contact paper, or putting individual pages in plastic sleeves or baggies, then re-binding. To increase attention and engagement, create a story box using characters/items from the story (e.g., different sized bowls and spoons for *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*).



# Individualizing Care

Sometimes you may have a child with a need for **movement**. In fact, you may notice that toddlers and young boys naturally have a strong urge to move by running, spinning, climbing, and crawling. You can provide opportunities for all children to move indoors and outdoors. Opportunities for movement also support all children in their physical development, enhance brain wave activity, and increase the endorphins related to mood. Here are ways to add movement opportunities indoors and outdoors:

- **Indoors** – set up an area with space for movement (e.g., stacking cardboard boxes, pillows/mats for climbing, small brooms for sweeping). This provides activities that push or pull against the body, activating the proprioceptive sense to help children calm and regulate their bodies.
- **Outdoors** – Have loose parts that children can stack, push, and pull, dirt or sand for digging, and obstacle courses for climbing and crawling. If you have infants, place a large blanket on the grass for outdoor exploration.

Additionally, each child in your program has an individual **sensory** profile. This means that some children need more tactile input while others may be sensitive to various textures and mediums. You can begin by having sensory activities available, supporting those who are sensitive by introducing the



materials from dry (sand, grass, leaves) to medium (playdough, clay, slime) to messy (fingerpaints, mud, wet sand). You may find that sensory activities help to calm children, so setting up a sensory space is important. An area that allows for spills and mess, along with water and rags nearby will make clean-up easier.

It's important to note that some children may be sensitive to stimuli (e.g., bright light or loud noises). Modifying the environment can support all children when they are overstimulated and need a quiet space. This can be done by allowing natural light, lowering shades when needed, turning down background noises (e.g., TV, loud music), and creating a cozy corner behind a chair or with a large box and soft pillows to help children feel safe.



## Training Opportunity

*Show Me What to Do: Using Visuals to Teach Social Skills and Emotional Literacy in Early Childhood*  
by Lindsay N. Giroux

Register at EdWeb to view this recorded webinar and earn a 1.0-hour continuing education certificate. Learn how to proactively provide instruction, visual supports, and playful learning experiences to build children's social-emotional skills.

<https://home.edweb.net/webinar/studentachievement20220810/>

## Featured Activity

### Healthy Oatmeal Cookies

Adapted from: <https://kirbiecravings.com/2-ingredient-banana-oatmeal-cookies/#recipeBa>



#### What you need:

- 1 cup quick oats
- 1 large overripe banana mashed to a liquid-like consistency
- 1/2 cup chocolate chips

#### What to Do:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Have keiki mash the banana. (\*If keiki struggles with grasping the fork, try a potato masher).
3. In a large bowl, add oats and mashed bananas. Mix with a fork until it becomes an evenly mixed, thick batter.
4. Mix in chocolate chips.
5. Have keiki shape 8 round balls out of the cookie batter. (\*If the texture is challenging for keiki, use a baggie to shape the balls).
6. Place onto a baking sheet, spacing about 2 inches apart. Gently press down on each ball so that it flattens into a round disc.
7. Bake for about 15 minutes or until cookies are lightly brown and set.

## Citations

Huber, M. (2022). *Inclusion Includes Us*. Redleaf Press.

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## Suggested Books

Discover these books and more at the Hawai'i State Public Library [www.librarieshawaii.org](http://www.librarieshawaii.org)

### Infants and Toddlers

#### ***See, Touch, Feel: A First Sensory Book***

by Roger Priddy

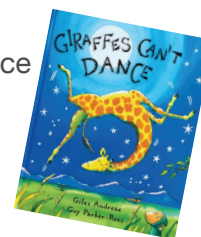
This sturdy board book, with images of happy babies, will stimulate curiosity and brain development through sensory play. Babies can see, feel, and touch the raised textures in this colorful book.



#### ***Giraffes Can't Dance***

by Giles Andreae

Gerald the giraffe wants to dance but his crooked knees and thin legs make it harder you would think. But with some words of encouragement from a friend, he finds the courage to be himself on the dance floor.



### Preschoolers

#### ***Every Body: A Celebration of Diverse Abilities***

by Shelley Rotner

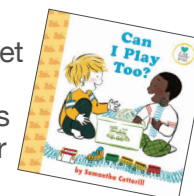
This book celebrates children of differing abilities. Each page features gorgeous photographs of children moving around their community, using scooters, wheelchairs, walkers, and more.



#### ***Can I Play Too? (Little Senses)***

by Samantha Cotterill

Two boys building with trains get into a disagreement when one of the boys insists on doing this his way. This is a great book for teaching children how to read emotions and build friendship skills.



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