

## The Family Childcare Space

The space you design for the children in your childcare home reflects the way you view children and their learning experience. In order for you and your children to live and learn comfortably, the space needs to be designed to encourage children to explore safely and needs to be one that feels accessible to a child. Your childcare space is also the first thing a parent notices when arriving to interview you as a perspective caregiver for their child. If you say you encourage reading, but all the books are out of reach of the children, you may send the wrong message. If you say you believe that children should be able to explore your equipment safely in your home, then all the toys should be visible and easily accessible.

If you're in the process of redesigning your space or new to Family Childcare, sit down before you move everything or make new purchases and ask yourself the following questions. This may seem more challenging than working with a pre-designed classroom floor plan, but it will help make your place a more comfortable area for you to work and the children to learn.

1. When you were a child, what kind of space was comfortable for you? Try to remember the size and scale of things. Think about how things felt. Were they soft and comfortable or sharp and scratchy? Was it easier for you to ask for something or just go and retrieve it yourself?
2. How do you want the children to feel in your space? Should they feel like it's their space to play or someone else's house that they're visiting?



3. Look around. Does the space you've designed reflect your educational values, or is it designed like you think a classroom should look?
4. If you had to be outside your house all day, what would you like the environment to be like? Would you like a small space to keep things that you didn't want to share private?
5. If you were a parent and walked in at the busiest, messiest part of the day, what would you think? If you walked in first thing in the morning, what would you think?
6. If you had an unlimited budget what kind of space would you design? Modify your dream to match your space and budget.

There are some elements that are important to every childcare space. These are:

### **Construction Area**

An area where blocks, Lego and other construction toys are stored with an open floor space.

### **Art Area**

An area where art supplies are stored with tables and perhaps an easel nearby. The floor should have a washable surface.

### **Playhouse Area**

A space that duplicates adult life in child size equipment. It should include dolls and dress up clothes.

### **Reading Area**

A corner where a child can escape with a book by himself. It should have soft pillows and blankets for getting cozy. Books can be stored in this area on open shelving.

### **Table Area**

A place for artwork, small table-top block play, puzzle solving or a snack. Games and puzzles can be stored nearby.

### **Private Storage Area**

A place where a child can keep his belongings. These places should be considered private, for that child's personal clothing and items brought to childcare that the child is not ready to share.

In Family Childcare, infants are often part of your group. You'll need to modify accessibility to keep them safe. You don't want an infant opening Lego or finger-paint and exploring them orally. To solve this problem, you can have higher shelving, but keep it open. (Make sure all shelving is mounted securely to the wall.) This allows your three year olds to see what's available but controls the access to the infants. Make sure you ask the older children often if they need anything on the upper shelves. You can do

## **Reading Chapter Books to Children**

When should you stop reading to children? When they refuse to listen. There are many benefits to continuing to read aloud to older children. By doing so you are constantly enticing them to improve their reading skills by introducing them to material above their reading level. You're able to introduce more complicated plot lines and themes that older children are interested in. It also provides a time to slow down and just be together.

When choosing a chapter book to read-aloud, look for stories that have themes your age group is interested in that have fun characters they can relate to. Make sure chapters are not too long for the group. The following books are a good place to start.

### **Frog and Toad Books by Arnold Lobel**

Frog and Toad books are very short chapter books that are supported by an illustration on almost every page. They're a nice connection between the world of picture books and chapter books. Read a part in the morning and a part in the afternoon to get the children used to listening to one story in two sessions.

### **Winnie the Pooh Books by A.A. Milne**

Great books never go out of style. Written 70 years ago, these stories and poems of Pooh Bear and his friends continue to delight children and adults everywhere. Just enough illustrations to keep those who still want to see pictures satisfied.

the same in your book corner making sure the board books are down on the bottom. Display your paper books, cover forward, on upper open shelves.

After you redecorate, look around. Does your space reflect your educational beliefs? If so, it will make it that much easier for parents who share your values to identify your childcare home as one that their child will be happy to come to everyday.

### **Shelf Safety**

When raising shelves to keep infants safe, make sure they are mounted high enough that curious toddlers and preschoolers can't try and jump or climb up to grab the bottom shelf. All shelves need to be securely bolted to studs inside the walls to keep them from toppling over on children.

# Fingerplays: Snowy Day Poems and Songs

## Pudgie Snowman

A pudgie little snowman,  
*(Make a circle with your arms.)*  
Had a carrot nose.  
*(Touch your nose.)*  
Along came a bunny,  
*(Make bunny ears with your fingers.)*  
And what do you suppose?  
That hungry, little bunny,  
looking for some lunch,  
*(Rub your belly.)*  
Ate the little snowman's nose.  
*(Touch your nose.)*  
Nibble, Nibble, Crunch!  
*(Clap three times.)*



## Five Penguins

One royal penguin feeling very blue,  
*(Put up one finger.)*  
Called for his brother and then there were two.  
*(Put up two fingers.)*  
Two royal penguins swimming in the sea,  
Called for their sister, then there were three.  
*(Put up a third finger.)*  
Three royal penguins waddle on the shore,  
Call for their mother, then there were four.  
*(Put up a fourth finger.)*  
Four royal penguins learning how to dive,  
Call for their father, then there were five.  
*(Put up all five fingers.)*

## Friendly Snowman

I'm a friendly snowman big and fat.  
*(Hold hands in front of belly.)*  
Here is my tummy, and here is my hat.  
*(Point to tummy and then top of head.)*  
Here are my eyes and mouth and nose.  
*(Point to appropriate body parts.)*  
I'm all snow from head to my toes.  
*(Point to head and then toes.)*



## Sledding Hill

Here's a big hill.  
*(Extend arms and tilt to one side.)*  
With snow on the side.  
Let's take our sleds,  
*(Place one hand on your shoulder.)*  
And down the hill we'll slide.  
*(Slide hand from shoulder to hand.)*

# The Wonder of White

## A Toddler's Snowflakes

Toddlers can't use scissors to create snowflakes out of paper, but they'll get a beautiful result from just using white paint on dark paper.

### Supplies:

Navy blue or black paper  
White Tempera or fingerpaint  
Silver glitter in a sprinkling container

Have the children paint patterns on the dark paper with the white paint, using paint brushes or their hands. Before the paint is dry sprinkle with the glitter. Allow to dry overnight.

## The Ice Skating Rink

Add some spark to the children's Lego/Duplo play by making a real mini ice skating rink. Just fill two aluminum, pie or cake tins with water and freeze them. Take one out and let the children play with their figures and dolls. When it gets too watery, place it back in the freezer and take out the second one. Ice inspires all kinds of games from Barbie olympics to zamboni races with mini trucks.

## Shaving Cream Mountains

Purchase some inexpensive white unscented shaving cream. Squirt mounds on the table and allow the children to play, molding and manipulating the shaving cream. This is not an activity for children who are still exploring things orally. If they want to participate, make a thick vanilla pudding mix and place them in a high chair close to the other children.

## Winter Clay Play

Put away the colored clay and give the children all white clay or Play-dough to create some wonderful snowy winter scenes. Taking the colors away actually forces children to look more closely at the shapes they're forming. They can make snowmen, polar bears, snowballs and igloos. white styrofoam boards make a perfect platform for their new scenes.

## Chalk and Paper

Give the children white chalk and dark colored paper. Let them color freely.

## Snowflakes Up Close

Don't hide inside when it begins to snow. Have some black construction paper and a magnifying glass standing by. Bundle your group and go outside to catch snowflakes on the paper. Look at their beautiful shapes through the magnifying glass.

# All About Town

## Safe Sledding

Sledding is great fun, but every year between 30,000 and 35,000 children are treated in emergency rooms due to sledding accidents. Children under five suffer the most severe injuries to the head, neck, face and abdomen due to their usual face first position on the sled. Older children who ride seated and sometimes become airborne risk serious spinal injury.

These are some recommendations from St. Louis Children's Hospital and Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh:

- \* **WEAR A HELMET**
- \* Wear heavy boots and gloves to protect hands and feet from cold and injury.
- \* Use a classic sled with a steering mechanism. They are safer than toboggans or saucers.
- \* Have children sit feet first.
- \* Teach your child how to stop the sled.
- \* Teach your child to roll off the sled in case of impending collisions. It's a safer option.
- \* Do not sled on ice or in the dark.
- \* Children should only sled when an adult is present.

## February Trainings

### Caring for Infants and Toddlers

Saturday, February 25, 2006  
9:30 AM - 12:30 PM  
33 Washington Street, Newark NJ 07102  
Lower Level  
Fee: \$15.00  
For Registration call  
973-744-4050 ext 1009

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### Curriculum Planning - Part 1

Friday, February 3, 2006  
8:30 AM - 1:30 PM  
Urban League of Hudson County  
253 Martin Luther King Blvd.  
Jersey City, NJ 07305  
Fee \$25.00  
Phone - 856-582-7000

Perhaps more than any other experience, an effective pre-school program impacts a child's lifetime achievement. Learn how to create a curriculum and an environment in which children learn and grow to reach their highest potential. This session will explore methods of planning. Participants are expected to complete an assignment prior to Part 2. Participants who sign up for Part 1 must sign up for Part 2 on March 3.

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### Ouch! That Hurts!

Friday, February 10, 2006  
8:30 AM - 1:30 PM  
Urban League of Hudson County  
253 Martin Luther King Blvd.  
Jersey City, NJ 07305  
Fee \$25.00  
Phone - 856-582-7000

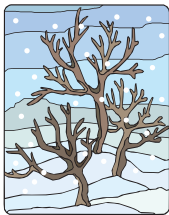
Examine the behavior of young children and learn how to respond rather than react. This workshop will help participants understand how to provide positive guidance for young children and reduce problematic behaviors.

## Stories from Snowy Lands



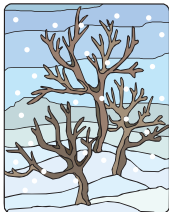
### Bear Snores On by Karma Wilson

A big brown bear sleeps, comfy and cozy, in his cave on a cold, snowy day. A mouse happens upon his warm hibernation spot and decides it's a great place to build a fire, but "The bear snores on." A hare drops by with tea and popcorn, but "The bear snores on." A number of other forest friends drop by and soon bear's cave becomes the latest party spot. Finally a pepper speck from a fragrant stew reaches the bear's nose and he sneezes. The author keeps children on the edge until she resolves the story with a happy ending. Toddlers love books with expected repetition. In board book form, *The Bear Snores On* provides beautifully drawn friendly animal friends, rhythmic rhyme and a surprise ending. (ages 1½ - 4)



### The Girl From the Snow Country by Masako Hidaka

Mi-Chan is just like other little girls. On a snowy day she goes out to play. She discovers she can make snow bunnies by placing two camellia leaves in small mounds of snow, but she's missing something for the eyes. It's time for her mother to shop, so Mi-Chan goes along, brushing the snow off the Jizo statue on the way. (Jizo is the protector of children and travelers.). They shop at the market and a vendor, hearing of the girl's need for bunny eyes, gives her a small branch of red berries. On the way home her mother explains that her care of Jizo is what gave her the luck to obtain her berries. The beautiful pictures of the snowy Asian countryside enhance the author's description of the magic and wonder of an ordinary winter's day. The magic of Jizo will spark conversations about luck and spirit that translate to any culture or religion. (ages 3 - 8)



### Snow by Uri Shulevitz

Adults just have no imagination. But not this little boy. One snowflake falls and he rejoices as his stiff grandfather tells him, "It's only a snowflake." He runs outside to report it's snowing, only to have a tall man say, "It's nothing." More and more snow falls but the expressionless, non-exuberant adults insist nothing is happening. The little boy's excitement lights up the page as the city turns from gray to white. These illustrations are genius. You can feel the cool arrogance as the adults toss off this little boy's snow fantasies. As the city grows whiter and lighter the boy and a few excited friends dominate the pages, while the stiff, gray adults become invisible. This picture book is well deserving of its Caldecott Honor. (ages 3 - 7)

## WARMLINE

Providing you with practical, accurate information on health, behavior issues and regulatory information relating to the children in your care.

**1-800-713-9006**



### Directory

Montclair Office  
973-744-4050

Newark Office  
973-297-1114



### Childcare Matters

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#### Writer/Editor

Elizabeth A. Allen

#### Copy Editor

Simona Bana  
Susan Boyle

#### Page Layout

Elizabeth A. Allen

#### Distribution

Simona Bana  
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Programs for Parents  
Barbara Fedoroff, CEO  
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