Young Infants – Birth to 12 Months

The child care setting should have:

- appropriate infant/caregiver ratio
- diapering, feeding, sleeping, and play areas designed to allow quiet, personal contact between caregivers and young infants
- settings that facilitate face-to-face and skin-to-skin contact between caregiver and child by providing multilevel areas and comfortable places for caregivers to sit and hold infants
- interesting spaces on a variety of levels so that non-mobile infants can view their world from different vantage points
- an assortment of stimulating materials to bring to non-mobile infants
- a sturdy, safe crib assigned to each infant
- a changing cabinet
- a variety of textures and visually stimulating surfaces for infants to lie on and explore with their whole bodies
- intriguing objects hung out of reach for infants to look at as they lie on their backs
- spaces for young infants to be alone, as well as places to lie comfortably near other infants so they can watch them and interact with them
- soft, safe seats with secure support to help infants practice sitting and to provide them with new views of their world
- firm soft surfaces where infants can lie and practice body movements – rolling over, sitting up, scooting
- some provisions for storing and preparing foods to allow caregivers to adapt schedules to meet individual needs of infants
Mobile Infants & Young Toddlers – 12 to 24 Months

*The child care setting should have:*

- appropriate child/caregiver ratio
- clear view so that caregivers can see, be available to, and have quick access to children while also allowing them some autonomy and a sense of independence
- safe and interesting environments to explore for mobile infants and young toddlers who are at the peak of sensory and motor development
- several clearly defined play areas that may include art and messy play, block play, quiet and fine motor play, active play and music
- protected areas where crawling infants can safely explore out of the way of more active toddlers
- crib, cot, or sleeping mat assigned to each child
- a small nook for one or two children for secure solitary times
- low, open shelving that allows young toddlers to make independent choices
- sturdy tip-resistant furnishings with rounded edges and corners for young toddlers to pull up on and cruise around
- a changing cabinet with steps
- equipment that provides small, appropriate physical challenges such as low steps and ramps to allow safe risk-taking
- low, simple push-type riding toys and walkers to encourage early walking and gross motor skills.
- small activity units, a double slide, two rocking horses, or other equipment that can be used by two children to encourage and invite peer play
- duplicates of popular toys to discourage conflicts
- small chairs and tables to encourage developing self-help skills and positive self-concepts

Toddlers – 24 to 36 Months

*The child care setting should have:*

- appropriate child/caregiver ratio
- a variety of clearly defined interest centers where two or three children can play. These may include an area for art and messy play, a cozy book area, an active play and music space, an area for manipulatives and fine motor materials, a block center, and a special center with equipment and materials for dress-up and dramatic play.
- enough materials, equipment, and interest areas to allow independent toddlers a choice of activities
• duplicates of popular toys and adequate space to discourage conflicts among territorial toddlers
• a small nook for one or two children for secure solitary times
• a cot or sleeping mat assigned to each child
• protected areas to display children’s creative products at their eye level
• safe, adequate space for large motor activities available for most of the day for robust toddler play
• loft or soft climbing structure, push toys, and pedal riding toys to refine gross motor skills
• sturdy tip-resistant furnishings for energetic toddlers who push the limits
• low, open shelving that allows toddlers to begin caring for the equipment as well as the materials on the shelves
• a changing cabinet with steps and child-size toilet available
• an environment that encourages independence by providing accessible lockers and cubbies for children’s personal belongings, child-size sinks and toilets, and appropriate height tables and chairs
• uncluttered storage shelves with selected toys and materials available on a rotated basis

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