

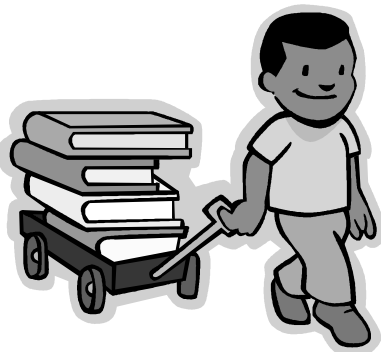
## ARRANGING YOUR FAMILY CHILD CARE HOME

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### LIVING ROOM, DINING ROOM OR FAMILY ROOM:

This may be where you and the children will spend the majority of time during the day. Doing a good job of arranging this room will make supervision easier.

- Use furniture already in the room to create boundaries for play. Your existing couches and bookcases can become partitions for quiet and active play materials.
- Use non-slip area rugs to help divide play spaces. Add pillows and a basket of books for a quiet reading area or a soft place to watch television.
- Think about using your tables as places where the children might draw pictures, play board games or do homework.
- Use shelves to make toys accessible. Clear the existing shelves in the room which are within eye level and a child's reach. Build inexpensive shelves or make shelves by using sturdy cartons from the grocery store. Some caregivers use empty ice cream containers to create additional display spaces for toys or storage of personal belongings.
- The children's play area should be well lighted and ventilated.
- Windows should be double checked for safety, so children cannot fall out of the building
- Select which toys you will put out each day.
  - Remember that children need to have the same selection of toys available from day to day, to give them a sense of security. These will vary depending on which are the most liked and suitable for their development at the time. Too many toys will be distracting and a chore to pick up. Many caregivers rotate their Family Child Care toys so that not everything is available at once, and so they have something "new" to take out at different times.



**KITCHEN:** This is usually the room you will be using for meal preparation and where the children will be eating.

- A low table and chairs (or booster seats on the floor) are ideal for children. They should be able to seat themselves so their feet touch the floor.
- If a low table is not available, be sure that children can sit safely at the table.
- Hand washing is a key to the prevention of illness. Have a step stool ready so the children can wash their own hands before and after meals.



**The kitchen is often the best place for messy activities.**

- Use an oil cloth, old shower curtain, or canvas tarp to protect your floor.
- Being close to the kitchen sink will make cleanup easier. The children should be encouraged to help.
- Water play activities with soapy bubbles or toys which float can be just as successful in one inch of water as with four inches in a plastic tub or dishpan and there will be much less of a mess.



**BEDROOM AND BATHROOM:** These rooms are often used by the children for naps, diapering and toileting. Because children are sometimes in these rooms unsupervised, it is important that you take precautions to keep detergents, cleansers, medicines and perfumes out of reach.

- Cribs, playpens, beds, cots, and mattresses can be used for naps. Try to give children the same place to nap each day. This consistency will make it easier for the child to rest and fall asleep.
- Diaper changing areas should have access to water. Many caregivers find it helpful to set up the diapering area each day with everything they will need right at their fingertips. This way when it is time to diaper the baby, the caregiver will not be distracted trying to find things and will have time to focus on the diapering. Remember that children learn from their experiences, and diapering is one experience which happens approximately 7,000 times during the first three years. Try to make this time enjoyable for the child. The caregiver should be sure to wash his hands after diapering.

You will be surprised at how cooperative young babies can be when they are involved in the diapering process.

**Try not to distract them with toys and mobiles. Instead, focus on communicating what the baby is experiencing and learning.**



*“I will take off this wet diaper. Can you help me by lifting your legs?”*

- Unused rooms in your Family Child Care home should be latched with a large hook and eye. You can buy these at most hardware stores.
- Garage and basement areas which are not used by children should be kept locked at all times.

If children pass through these areas to get outside, passage ways should be kept clutter free. Keep dangerous chemicals, poisons, and sharp tools in locked cabinets. Using basement and garage areas for caring for young children is becoming increasingly more common. Be sure to follow common sense health and safety guidelines, and pay particular attention to ventilation, lighting, and heating.

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