



## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FACT SHEET # 4

# EQUIPMENT FOR SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN

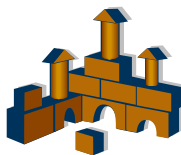
Outside school hours care services provide a range of recreational and play experiences, catering for school age children from a broad age range. In designing the program it is important to take into consideration the developmental stages of the children and also their particular interests and skills. Based on this information equipment can be selected to support and enhance children's learning.

When assessing the resources, equipment and materials needed for your service it is important to ensure that:

- They meet the range of interest, ages and abilities of the children;
- There is sufficient quantity to avoid overcrowding and/or children waiting long periods of time. (Services with large numbers of children will require more equipment than smaller services);
- There is choice and variety for children;
- The equipment reflects the diversity of the service;
- The equipment is inclusive and developmentally appropriate for the children;
- Children provide input into the types of equipment purchased;
- All equipment is regularly maintained and assessed to ensure it meets all safety standards and is free from defects or damage etc.

To ensure resources, materials and equipment are of interest, it is important to involve children in their selection. Regular conversations and/or group meetings with children or having a suggestion box will provide educators with direction for equipment purchases. If children are involved in equipment selection they are more likely to take greater responsibility for the care of the equipment.

Services can contribute to their sustainability plans by welcoming recycled items, donated by families and other community members. Recycled items are of particular use for art and craft activities where children can put wrapping paper, old magazines, stamps, cards and wool to many uses. Lengths of material and old clothing can be used to create costumes and props for dramatic play and often encourage greater creativity than a purchased theatre prop. Donated items may include books, toys and board games.



To determine how much equipment you need for your service you must take into consideration the ages of the children, stages of development and the number of children in your service. Resources, materials and equipment should be provided across a variety of areas allowing children to participate in a range of rich and meaningful experiences:

- **Books** – offer a variety of fiction and non-fiction books including picture books, joke books, comics, magazines and activity books such as word search and crossword;
- **Indoor games** – Offer a range of developmentally appropriate card and board games such as Uno, Old Maid, Chess, Snakes and Ladders, Connect 4, Scrabble, Monopoly and Pick-up Sticks to name a few;
- **Construction and manipulative play** – School age children enjoy manipulating smaller pieces, making intricate designs and incorporating dramatic and fantasy play in their building experiences therefore it is important to include a variety of large and small blocks, cars, trucks and other equipment to extend these play opportunities. Equipment offered may include Lego and/or wooden blocks, Mobilo and car mats.
- **Music and dramatic play** – equipment needed for dramatic and fantasy play include cd player and music, dress up clothes, 'home corner' furniture and equipment, dolls and dolls clothes just to name a few.
- **Sport and outdoor games** – Sporting or outdoor equipment required will depend on the interest, age and skill level of children attending your service. Equipment offered should include (but not be limited to) a variety of balls, skipping ropes of varying lengths, a selection of bats and rackets as well as team bibs and field markers. To ensure equipment remains in good condition, it is important to ensure it is stored and maintained correctly. Large tubs or bins are suitable for storing bats or balls whilst hanging skipping ropes on a hook can prevent tangling.
- **Kitchen equipment** - Cooking is a popular activity with school age children therefore a range of basic kitchen equipment will need to be accessible. Services must ensure there is a sufficient supply of equipment to cater for the size of the group doing the activity. Equipment should include a variety of mixing bowls, cutlery and crockery, measuring cups/spoons, cutting boards, whisk/beater, rolling pin, biscuit cutters, saucepans and storage containers.
- **Art and craft equipment** – Art and craft resources, equipment and materials can be listed under two categories: consumable and non-consumable. Non-consumable items include equipment such as scissors, staplers, plaster moulds, paint pots and storage containers. Consumable items include paper, paint, glue, ribbon, pipe cleaners, clay, plaster of paris etc.

As you select equipment for your service it is important to consider how it will be stored. The method of storage will depend on whether you share premises and are required to pack away all items each day or if you have sole use of the premises.

Where premises are shared it may be useful to consider storage systems on wheels or trolleys. Shelving units and cupboards which can be locked together or securely closed, may also assist to keep equipment safe and secure.

Children will be encouraged to pack away and help themselves to various items of equipment if it is stored neatly and in storage systems which are clearly labelled. Outdoor sheds may be used for storing large items of equipment designed for outdoor use.

