

Real and Found Materials

Instructional goals can often be achieved with “found”, donated or made items. These materials or supplies also add a “real” dimension to the instructional program and can be a cost saving measure. The following is a list of such materials to enhance the instructional centers and activities in Prekindergarten classrooms.

Language and Literacy

Brochures
Carbon paper
Cereal box books and other class-made books
Cereal box word strips
Clipboards
Computer keyboards
Coupons
Date books or calendars
Fast food logos—signs, books, word cards
Felt/velon/dryer sheets characters/letters for flannel board
Flannel board made by covering a piece of cardboard box with flannel
Greeting cards
Homemade puppets-socks, gloves, tongue depressors, paper bags, potholders
“Junk” mail, envelopes, canceled stamps, magazine stamps
Hotel note pads
Magazines
Mini-page from newspaper
Misc. paper—receipt forms, order forms, counter checks, etc.
Restaurant menus
School supply catalogs
Spiral notebooks
Teacher recorded story tapes
Typewriters
Telephones

Math

Sort or count any of the following

Acorns, seeds, beans, nuts in shells
Bottle caps
Buttons
Clothespins
Colored pasta
Erasers (in various shapes)
Ice cream sticks
Hair accessories (barrettes, elastic/fabric bands, etc.)
Jewelry
Mittens
Noodles with holes for stringing
Nuts, bolts, washers
Paper clips
Plastic/silk flowers cut from stems
Plastic tokens or chips
Silverware and a tray
Seashells
Socks

General

Dominos
Calculators or adding machines
File folder games
Film containers
Graph paper
Keys and locks
Laundry scoops and detergent container tops
Lotto games made using stickers
Number cubes/Dice
Paint samples made into seriation games
Playing cards
Plastic jars, containers and lids
Puzzles made from front of cereal boxes
Rulers, tape measures
Scales (balance, bath, food)
Shoestrings
Simple cartoons cut into sequence strips
Timekeepers (stop watch, hour glass, egg/kitchen timer)

Dramatic Play

Appliance box (supervise appropriately)	Empty food containers	Plastic/silk flowers or plants
Backpacks	Empty baby powder containers	Paper bags (grocery, shopping, lunch)
Baby clothes	Empty seed packets	Play money
Brief case and file folders	Gardening gloves	Potholders
Broom	Grocery store advertisements	Telephones
Camouflage shirts/vests	Hats/caps	Pots/pans
Canceled stamps	Headphones	Receiving blankets
Canister set	Keys on key chain	Rolling pin
Canteens	Lunch boxes	Rolodex or address book
Cookbooks	Measuring cups	Sale flyers/brochures
Coupons	Measuring spoons	Sports outfits (jerseys, helmets, shin guards, etc.)
Costumes	Microphones	Sifter
Clocks (digital, wind-up, wall, desk, etc.)	Newborn baby clothes	Steering wheels
Coffee pot	Old prom dresses, ties, hats, shoes, shirts, gloves, costume jewelry, pocketbooks, scarves, watches, wallets, etc.	Stuffed animals
Diaper bag	Old typewriters	Suitcases
Dinner plates (plastic)	Pet dish	Teapot
Dishcloths	Picnic basket	Toaster or any small appliance—cords cut off
Dishes and utensils	Placemats	Walkie-talkies
Disposable diapers	Plants	Wardrobe box from movers
Dustpan	Plastic mixing bowls with lids	
Eggbeater	Plastic baby bottles	
Egg timer		

Creative Art

Aluminum foil	Food coloring	Plastic knives
Balls of any size	Golf tees	Push up sticks
Beads	Greeting cards	Rolling pins
Bits of wood and balsa	Kitchen gadgets	Rubber bands
Buttons	Liquid starch	Sand paper
Cardboard	Magazines	Scotch tape
Cardboard tubes	Masking tape	Sequins
Carpet pieces	Matchbox cars	Shells
Cloth, felt, rug, fur scraps	Men's shirts for smocks	Shoebboxes
Clothespins	Muffin tins, frozen food containers, saucers for printing, mixing, painting	Shoestrings
Coffee filters	Newspaper	Sponges
Colored tape	Paintbrushes made from rubber bands	Spools
Combs	Paint in old deodorant bottles	Spray bottles
Computer paper	Paper bags	Squeeze bottles
Construction paper scraps	Paper clips	Staplers
Contact paper	Paper cups	Stencils made from cardboard
Cookie cutters	Paper plates	Straws
Cotton balls	Paper punchers	String
Cotton swabs	Paper towels	Styrofoam
Dental floss	Pasta of different shapes/types	Tissue paper scraps
Empty cans for cutters (cover cut edges with masking tape)	Pine straw paint	Toothbrushes
Egg cartons	Pipe cleaners	Wallpaper samples
Elastic	Plaster of Paris	Wood scraps
Fabric scraps		Wrapping paper
Fly swatter print		Yarn

Blue prints or sample floor plans
 Bubble wrap
 Carpet pieces
 Cardboard tubes/cylinders
 Carpenter's apron
 Cones from yarn
 Construction hats
 Empty egg cartons
 Fabric tablecloths, small blankets
 Graph paper, rulers, pencils
 Homemade blocks (oatmeal containers, jewelry boxes, shoeboxes, cereal boxes, etc. wrapped in contact paper or wrapping paper)
 Linoleum pieces
 License plates
 Maps
 Paper scraps, masking tape

Sensory Table

Basters
 Bottles
 Clear plastic tubing
 Corks
 Dry beans, rice, oatmeal, potato flakes, lentils, corn
 Eggbeaters for water table
 Food coloring for water table
 Funnels
 Garden tools
 Ice
 Ladles
 Measuring cups
 Molds
 Packing materials (regular or biodegradable)
 Pasta (bow tie, seashells, curly, corkscrews)
 Plastic cups and bowls
 Serving spoons
 Scoops
 Short length of garden hose
 Sifters
 Sponges
 Small spray bottles
 Strainers
 Tongs and tweezers
 Whisks
 Watering cans

General

Air pump
 Bark
 Binoculars, bird feeder, birdseed, bird book (for playground or to place outside the classroom window)
 Bug boxes made from old boxes

Blocks

PVC pipes and connectors
 Plastic berry containers
 Plastic construction cones
 Safety goggles
 Shipping tubes (chutes for mini-cars)
 Shoeboxes for mini-car garages or tunnels
 Slants/ramps covered with different surfaces (corduroy, foil, sandpaper)
 Steering wheel
 Styrofoam
 Thread spools
 Tool belt
 Wood scraps (sanded smooth)
 Work gloves

Science

Compass
 Dental molds
 "Discovery" bottles made using plastic bottles
 Fabric with different textures (velvet, satin, burlap, corduroy, etc.)
 Field guide books
 Flashlight
 Ice cream sticks for labeling plants
 Kaleidoscopes
 Keys
 Leaves
 Mineral samples
 Moss samples
 Magnifying glasses
 Nuts in shells (pecans, walnuts, coconuts, etc.)
 Non-toxic plants
 Outdoor weather thermometer
 Perfume samples/strips from magazines
 Pinwheels
 Pinecones and pine needles
 Rocks/stones
 Sandpaper in a variety of grades
 Seashells
 Seedling trays and seeds
 Snakeskins
 Stethoscope
 Sound games (film containers filled with various items such as dry beans, dice, bells, dry rice, etc.)
 Science magazines (examples: *National Geographic*, *Astronomy*, *Ranger Rick*, *Kids Discover*)
 Terrarium made from a soft drink bottle
 Windsocks, pinwheels, wind chimes
 x-rays

Music

Aluminum pie pans
Authentic maracas
Bells on pipe cleaners
Crepe paper streamers
Dress scarves or strips of fabric for dancing
Drums made from coffee cans
Maracas - use old soft drink bottles, fill with rice, beans, etc. and glue tops on
Music recordings (various types)
Pots with wooden spoons
Rain sticks made from shipping or gift wrap tubes
Rhythm sticks made from wooden dowels
Streamers made from fabric hair bands and thin satin ribbons
Streamers attached to dowel sticks, tongue depressors or cardboard tubes

Outdoor

Blanket/tablecloth/flat sheet (in place of parachute)
Blankets to sit on (read books, work on puzzles, etc.)
Bowling pins made from empty oatmeal containers
Cheerleader pom-poms
Concrete culvert section (tunnel)
Empty appliance boxes (supervise appropriately)
Hammers, nails, goggles, and a tree stump (woodworking)
Frisbees
Kites and string
Magnifiers
Newspaper to be held for children to run through
Old tires for climbing through, hopping in, etc. (be sure to drill drain holes)
Photography paper to expose in the light
Plastic construction cones
Potato sacks (burlap or canvas)
Racquetball rackets and rubber balls (safety goggles, too)
Rowboat (imaginative play)
Small boxes (for throwing small ball and bean bags)
Squirt bottles
Traffic signs made from new toilet plungers and cardboard signs
Tent (offer appropriate supervision)
Wicker baskets (to balance and carry on heads)