

PLAY CENTRE—STRUCTURAL DETAILS

28.1 INTRODUCTION

The play centre is a space for 2—5 year olds to come and play, explore and interact. In order that they may do so in safety and may develop to their optimal best, one needs to focus on the details of setting up a play centre. If you have already visited a good play centre you must have observed that it has space for various activities and not only children but you also feel good standing among children and other things. Why do you feel good? Is space the only reason? What are the other factors that make a play centre good?

28.2 OBJECTIVES

After reading this lesson, you will be able to :

- gain knowledge about the physical structure and facilities in a play centre;
- furnish information regarding the equipment and materials required;
- enumerate some prerequisites of play centre staff.

28.3 LOCATION AND SPACE REQUIREMENTS

A play centre, that is, to provide a play and activity based programme definitely needs adequate amount of space. Of course the other requisites are site, safety, sanitation and ventilation. The play school should be located at a site that is :

- (a) easily accessible to children.
 - (b) safe from hazards/dangers like heavy traffic, ponds, ditches, pollution, etc.
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The next important step is the space and its organisation for various activities, within the play school.

(A) PLAY AREAS : CAN BE OUTDOORS AND INDOORS.

(i) Play space—Outdoors

Do you know how much space is required for a child to play outside ? Well, it should be minimum a area of three to five square metres per child. It is better if this area has hard surface where wheel toys can be used and balls bounced. If there is more area than this have it in the form of grassy lawn where children can play, run, do gardening, have sand box and pets.

Some Precautions

The play area should be :

- regular in outline for easy supervision
- securely fenced for safety
- free from nails, rocks, broken parts and glass pieces
- away from huge pits, water tanks etc.
- with clear pathway.

(ii) Play Space—Indoors

- minimum area of 2 square metres per child
- be adaptable, flexible and viable
- be facilitative of supervision
- be well ventilated and have adequate light
- walls should be clean and well plastered
- walls should have ample space for display of children's work and other pictorial material
- have mat and a set of low and light tables (about 30 cm high) for a group of 6—8 children for art work etc.
- have provision of blackboard at low level for scribbling etc.
- have low racks for putting children's belongings, toys, etc.
- have place for self-expression eg. dancing, dramatic play, music appreciation, etc.

(B) Space for Interaction with the Environment

Garden space for flowers, vegetables and fruits, small space for rabbit bird cages, bird nest, indoor science corner offer opportunities to the child to explore, experiment and understand nature.

(C) Facility for Drinking Water :

A play centre should have arrangement for :

- clear and pure drinking water
- provision for washing utensils.

(D) Sanitary Facilities :

The sanitary facilities in a play school should have :

- clean Indian type toilet should be provided with adequate water facilities
- provision of soap and towel
- provision of dustbin.

(E) Sleeping Facility :

This is required when the play centre functions for full day or longer than 3 hours. Children must definitely sleep for sometime. What all do you think is required to carry out this objective ? Yes, besides space, clean mat or mattresses with sheets and pillows are required.

(F) Storage Facility :

Storage space is needed for keeping children's play items and also kitchen essentials used for the snacks provided to children.

(G) Kitchen Area :

A well ventilated, spacious area that is easy to clean. It should have space for cooking, washing and storage of utensils, etc.

INTEXT QUESTIONS 28.1

1. Play area in a play centre should be :
 - (a) indoor
 - (b) outdoor
 - (c) both indoor and outdoor
 - (d) more inside and outside
 2. Supervision of play in play centre is possible :
 - (a) indoors
 - (b) outdoors
 - (c) indoor and outdoor
 - (d) more indoors and less outdoors
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3. Out door play space should be at least :
 - (a) 1—2 square mts./ child
 - (b) 2 square mts./ child
 - (c) 3 square mts./ child
 - (d) 3—5 square mts./ child
 4. Indoor play space/child should be at least :
 - (a) 1—2 square mts.
 - (b) 2 square mts.
 - (c) 3 square mts.
 - (d) 3—5 square mts.
 5. The priority in any play centre should be of :
 - (a) outdoor play space
 - (b) play material
 - (c) safe drinking water
 - (d) kitchen.
 6. To fulfil the objective of interaction with environment a play centre must have :
 - (a) outdoor space
 - (b) play material
 - (c) safe drinking water
 - (d) clean toilet.
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28.4 EQUIPMENT IN THE PLAY CENTRE

A play centre requires a variety of play equipment in order to provide children with interesting and challenging experiences. Some basic points of the developmental level of children, durability, safety, complexity etc. need to be kept in mind while purchasing or using any equipment. There are also certain other characteristics that need to be taken into account.

CHARACTERISTICS OF GOOD PLAY EQUIPMENT

(A) Educational characteristics :

- No discrimination between boys and girls toys
 - Strong, long lasting
 - Provide for choice and graduated changes
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- Involve the child's imagination
- Encourage co-operation among children.

(B) Design characteristics :

- Multi-use
- Safe
- Child-scale
- Made of different materials (wood, rubber, metal, rope, sand, etc)
- Proportionate and quantitative
- Flexible.

(C) Constructional characteristics :

- Splinter free wood, sturdy hardware
- Dependable (always works)
- Cost effective and economic
- Repairable and finishable.

28.5 OUTDOOR AND INDOOR PLAY EQUIPMENT

Following is a list of play equipment that could be provided in a play centre. However the type of play equipment and the number will depend on the number and age of children, outdoor and indoor play space and the funds available for the purchase and maintenance of the play equipment in a play centre. The list of equipment given below may be provided for a group of 35—40 children in a play centre if adequate funds are available.

Outdoor Play Equipment

<i>Name of the item</i>	<i>Quantity</i>
1. Swings	2
2. Tricycles	2
3. Jungle gym cum slide	1
4. Rubber balls (small and big)	two each
5. Rocking toys	2
6. Wooden plank for balancing	1
7. Push carts	2
8. Small ladder	1

<i>Name of the item</i>	<i>Quantity</i>
9. Tyres hung on a tree branch or a frame (tyre swing)	2
10. Small buckets, tumblers, cans, containers, moulds for sand pit	one set
11. Easel board	1
12. Plastic tubs	2
Indoor Play Equipment	
1. Building blocks (assorted sizes and shapes)	Half of dozen in each
2. Constructive materials	
a) Fix in toys	
b) Multi-moons	
c) House building sets	
d) Picture puzzles	Three in each
3. Doll corner equipment	
a) Dolls	3
b) Doll's bed, chairs and tables (miniature)	3
c) Household articles for cook- ing, washing, tea-set, hand- bag, shoes, caps, radios, etc.	One set
4. Science equipment	
a) Magnifying glasses	2
b) Magnets	2
c) Balance with weights	1
d) Measuring cans	One set
e) Siphon tubes	2
f) Small brooms, buckets, sponges	Two in each

<i>Name of the item</i>	<i>Quantity</i>
5. Musical instruments	
a) Drums	
b) Jingle bells	
c) Dholak and Tablas	
d) Rattlers	Two in each
e) Xylophone	
f) Rhythm sticks	
g) Chimes	
6. Carpentry tools	
a) Hammers and nails	
b) Pieces of soft wood	One set
c) Wooden planks	
d) Saws and vice	
e) Pairs of scissors	6
f) Brushes	4
7. Beads	
a) Wooden beads (red, blue, yellow)	200
b) Plastic beads (assorted colours)	200
c) Plastic bowls	4
8. Form boards	3
9. Peg board and hammer	2
10. Hollow pyramids (plastic/wood)	Two sets
11. Transport toys (car, buses, train, etc.)	Two each
12. Puppets	6
13. Rabbit/Bird cage	1
14. First aid box	1
15. Weighing machine	1
16. Waste bins	3
17. Display boards	3
18. Aprons	10

<i>Name of the item</i>	<i>Quantity</i>
19. Picture books and story books	24
20. Animal toys	6
21. Costumes, caps and accessories	1 set
22. Story telling aids like picture books, puppets, story cards etc.	
23. Blackboard, chalk or slate	
24. Crayons, paper, stencils, paints	
25. Clay and plastercine	
26. Scissors	
27. Gum/ fevicol etc.	

As far as possible arrange the materials in a way that children can use these directly. Further any damaged material should be replaced as soon as possible. Low cost equipment can also be created by using things in the environment eg empty cartons, cloth pieces, newspapers, thermocol etc.

FIRST AID KIT

The kit should have the following essentials :

- Bandages
- sticking plaster
- Sterilised surgical cotton wool
- gauze
- thermometer
- scissors
- antiseptic ointment
- gentian violet

INTEXT QUESTIONS 28.2

Q.1. State whether true or false :

- (1) Play centre can function effectively without play equipment.
- (2) Play equipment should only be bought from shops.
- (3) Proper arrangement of play equipment is important for its effective use.
- (4) Equipment once bought need not be replaced.
- (5) Play equipment should not be flexible.

28.6 PLAY CENTRE STAFF

(A) Teacher

The teacher in the play centre has a key influence on quality of service provided. She is a person responsible for the activities and programmes

conducted in the play centre to achieve the established goals and objectives.

Necessary training in the area is an important qualification. The teacher should have undergone the vocational course or diploma course in play centre management or in pre-school organisation. Certain other qualifications are required of a play centre teacher. She should have :

- an understanding of specific aims and objectives of organizing the play centre
- a thorough knowledge of where and how to organise the play centre activities and
- X std + 2 years training or XII std pass + 1 year. training
- Not less than 18 years of age
- Aware of material needed in play centre and how to use it meaningfully.

(B) Assistant

The house keeping services needed in any play centre like cleaning, washing the linen, care of the play ground and floor, changing pictures on the bulletin and papers on the easel board, laying out equipment and minding equipment and other items in a play centre require an assistant. She should love children and be ready to care for them at all times. Since the children spend much of the time on the floor, the floors must be cleaned thoroughly. The assistant needs to be on duty in the toilet room and washing area helping the children and the teacher to handle the situation effectively. She should have passed at least eighth standard.

(C) Cook

If the play centre includes meal programme, the teacher plans menu, supervises the preparation and serving of food. Meal preparation requires a cook on the staff list. The cook must have clean habits personally and in the cooking area. She should be ready to take directions from the teacher to prepare nutritious and tasteful food on time. The cook should know reading and writing.

Note : Though the number of staff is influenced by the programme, finance, building, provision of equipment, number of children, age of children, training of teacher etc. there should be one adult for every 10—15 children.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF A TEACHER IN THE PLAY CENTRE

A play centre teacher has certain responsibilities to self, children, school and community. In fact these responsibilities can be taken as the characteristics of a good teacher, who is the pivot around which the whole functioning of the play centre revolves and depends. Following are the responsibilities of a teacher :

1. To Herself

The responsibilities of the play centre teacher to herself are to :

- a) remain in good physical and emotional health at all times
- b) be progressive
- c) be enthusiastic always, and
- d) grow professionally

2. To the Children

The teacher in the play centre needs to fulfil the following responsibilities to the children in the group. She should :

- a) meet their needs
- b) enjoy working and being with them
- c) respect them as individuals
- d) build desirable relationship with them, and
- e) help to build a good self-image.

3. To the Parents

The teacher's responsibilities to the parents are to :

- a) provide good counselling
- b) value them and their ideas
- c) plan with them for the well-being of the child, and
- d) bridge the gap between the home and the school.

4. To Other Staff Members

The responsibilities of the play centre teacher with respect to other staff members are :

- a) support ideas and knowledge
- b) value them and their ideas, and
- c) involve them in the programme.

5. To the Community

The teacher in the play centre needs to fulfil the following responsibilities in regard to the community :

- a) be aware of the problems of the community and try to solve them, and
- b) participate in local professional organisation pertaining to the welfare of children.

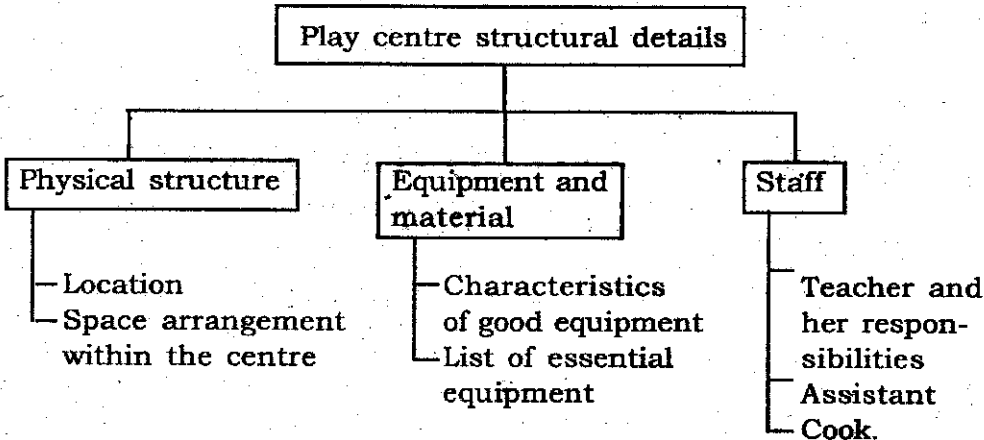
INTEXT QUESTIONS 28.3

State whether true or false :

1. One teacher is sufficient in a playcentre regardless of the number of children enrolled.
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2. The teacher's only duty is to teach.
3. A teacher needs to bridge the gap between home and school.
4. A play centre being child centred, a teacher has no role in the learning of the child.
5. A teacher needs to be progressive and enthusiastic.

28.7 WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT



28.8 TERMINAL EXERCISE

- Q1. What are the essential characteristics of good equipment ?
- Q2. What are the responsibilities of a play centre teacher ?
- Q3. Visit any play play centre, observe the use of physical space and evaluate.

28.9 ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

- 28.1 1. (c) 2. (c) 3. (d) 4. (b)
5. (c) 6. (a)
- 28.2 1. F 2. F 3. T
4. F 5. F
- 28.3 1. F 2. F 3. T
4. F 5. T