



How Block Play Promotes Development and Learning

Blocks, especially hardwood unit blocks, are standard equipment in *The Creative Curriculum* classroom. Wooden blocks appeal to young children because they are symmetrical, proportional, and invite open-ended exploration. When children construct, create, and represent their experiences with blocks, they progress in each area of development and learning. Here are some examples:

Social -Emotional – In the Block area, children negotiate the use of materials, determine how many children can work comfortably in the area, care for materials, and follow the rules for building safely. They also exchange ideas. Especially when one child's idea of how to build a structure differs from another child's, children expand their knowledge and learn to respect viewpoints different from their own.

Physical- Children's small muscles develop when they carry and carefully place blocks together to form a structure or make an intricate design. They gain large-muscle strength by using hollow blocks, and they improve eye-hand coordination when they carefully balance blocks so they will not tumble.

Language and literacy- Children are very willing to talk about their constructions when adults ask questions and show genuine interest. They increase their vocabularies when adults tell them new words to describe what they are doing, and they practice writing skills as they make signs for their buildings.

Cognitive- Children try to make sense of their experiences by connecting new information with what they already know. Playing with blocks gives them an opportunity to reenact experiences and process information. Creating representations of their environments is a basis for more complex abstracts thinking. Moreover, block play promotes understanding of essential concepts. Children learn about size, shape, number, order, area, length, patterns, weight, balance, and cause and effect as they select, build with, and put away blocks.