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/pelon/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

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

**Creative Art**

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

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
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

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
Ladies
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
**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)