Questions to Guide Reflection: Ensuring Developmentally Appropriate Materials

Do these materials reflect and respect the racial, ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and family diversity of the program and of the broader community?

- How do you think children relate to this toy?
- How do you think families will respond to these materials?
- How can children and families see themselves in these materials?
- How do the books, toys and materials in your room reflect and respect the different ways families in our program live? Can children see their own family structure in a positive way (i.e., materials go beyond traditional mom, dad, and kids)?
- How will children who are learning English use this material?

Do these materials reflect the children’s current interests and help spark new interests?

- Tell me more about this toy, book or material. How did you choose it? How do the children use it?
- How did you go about identifying the kids’ interests?
- What are the children in your room or program interested in right now? How do you know?
- What learning standards tie into the children’s interests?
- What have you tried that the kids loved? What have you tried that the kids disliked? How do they let you know they like or dislike materials or activities?

Do these materials allow children to play in a variety of ways?

- What kind of play do you see the kids doing with these materials?
- What behaviors are you seeing in the room or program? Do any of the toys seem to spark more violent play or cooperative play? Which ones and why?
- How long do children typically stick with these materials? Do they play for a long time or do they move on to something else quickly?
- What messages do you think this toy sends about how to play with it?
- What roles can a child take on with this toy?
- How many different ways can these materials be used?
- How do families feel about this toy or material?

Do these materials help us reach important learning goals for children?

- What learning goals do you have in mind for these materials?
- Can these materials meet different learning goals? Which ones?
• How many different ways can these materials be used?
• How do children respond to these materials?
• What do you like or dislike about these materials? What would make them more useful to you?