

Smarter Spaces, LLC
Excerpt from an Initial Consultation Report

Prepared by: Jodi Gaertner and Susan Carroll
For: Heather Rourke and family
Date of consultation: June 14, 2007

Math skills: There are a number of opportunities within the room to develop math skills. The train table is a favorite because it can develop so many different skills. As a child manipulates the tracks, he is developing his spatial sense. Comparing size, length of train, number of wheels -- these are all ways that young mathematicians explore the concepts that make a solid math foundation. Some trains even have numbers on the side which help encourage number recognition. Adding containers¹ to the large drawers of the train table will make it easier to find things. The rice box used with some measuring cups or different sized and shaped scoops helps give a child experience with volume and relationships among quantities. Puzzles are another great way to develop spatial sense. We've recommended a puzzle rack² and some storage options that might make these easier to access.

Fine motor: Both writing and math provide natural fine motor experiences. Colored links and lacing beads provide fine motor practice and can be used to create basic patterns. Additional activities that promote fine motor development include stringing pasta or cereal to make jewelry, lacing cards, simple sewing crafts with yarn, and art activities. The existing shelves next to the books have wicker baskets that can store small manipulatives that enhance fine motor skills. Small plastic bins (shoe box sized) with lids³ can also be used and can be stacked on shelves. The clear plastic allows for children to see inside and makes it easier to rotate manipulatives out of the room.

Sensory: Heather stated that everything for Noah is a "full-body experience." With such a sensory-oriented child, there are an almost endless amount of activities to do. These include, but are certainly not limited to: sand and water play, flour, rice, beans, play dough, and playfoam (www.playfoam.com). Cooking projects are also a great way to explore all of the senses. Noah can even help with the daily act of cooking dinner. If dinner is too complicated for him to help or requires too much supervision at the stove to be feasible, Noah can be given his own pot or bowl and random ingredients (flour, salt, water, beans, etc.). Then he can mix and create whatever he wants while mom or dad cooks dinner. The positive social interaction this creates is another added benefit.

¹ Storage Container Recommendations for Train Table Drawers

² Puzzle Rack Recommendations

³ Small Manipulative Storage Recommendations