BLOCK PLAY: AN IMPORTANT BUILDING BLOCK OF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Aside from just being fun, block play supports the social emotional, physical, and cognitive development of children in a variety of ways. When building and exploring with blocks, children are able to express their creativity as they construct towers, castles, buildings, parking garages and other structures. The possibilities are as endless as their imagination! Through the process of trial and error, children begin to develop problem solving skills as they make observations, discoveries, and test and re-test their hypotheses.

Working together with peers to build and construct with blocks provides opportunities for children to practice important social emotional skills like:

- sharing
- taking turns
- collaboration
- cooperation
- conflict resolution
- perseverance
Using a variety of shapes and sizes of blocks children practice and build both fine and gross motor skills as well as develop an understanding of mathematical concepts like height, weight, balance and symmetry.

Other mathematical concepts practiced through block play include:
- counting
- quantifying
- comparing
- estimating
- sorting
- measurement
Literacy skills can be enriched through block play in many ways...

- Incorporating alphabet blocks and Magna-Tiles into literacy centers provides the opportunity for children to practice letter and sound recognition as well as build word and letter towers!
- Providing a literature rich block area exposes children to words and language and helps them to expand their vocabulary
- Making signs and labels for buildings and structures as well as drawing blueprints and plans for building provide opportunities for children to practice emerging writing skills

The Owl's frequently find inspiration from well-loved books to create dynamic structures. Some of the Owl's favorite books to inspire ideas for block play include:

- *Iggy Peck Architect* by Andrea Brady
- *Rosie Revere Engineer* by Andrea Brady
- *The Three Little Pigs: An Architectural Tale* by Steven Guarnaccia
- *What Do You Do With an Idea?* by Kobi Yamada
- *If You Lived Here Houses of the World* by Giles Laroche
- *Homes in Many Cultures* by Heather Adams

“The goal of education is not to increase the amount of knowledge but to create the possibilities for a child to invent and discover.”

Jean Piaget