

# What Children Need

## Threes and Fours

\* **FREEDOM** Threes and fours want to know what there is to do, and what there is to do it with. Manipulatives, props, art materials, blocks, sand, and water are their raw materials for play. Well-defined spaces to explore independently are key.

## Fives and Sixes

\* **PLACES TO BE WITH FRIENDS** Kindergartners seek out well-defined spaces where they can play in groups, such as dramatic-play and block areas. Large areas for meetings, stories, and music and movement answer their interest in large-group activities.

## From the Environment

\* **A PLACE TO RELAX** Threes and fours also need a place to “get away from it all.” Private areas with pillows, toys, and a few books meet this need.

\* **ROOM TO CREATE** For fives and sixes, a “self-service” art center, science/discovery center, writing area, and workbench are essential.

## From You

\* **INDEPENDENCE** is developing rapidly in 3- and 4-year-olds. They often prefer to play near or with other children rather than with an adult, yet they still need their teacher's approval. Threes and fours also look to adults to help them solve the social conflicts that commonly arise as they learn to play together. They need teachers to be good listeners, mediators, and play partners.

\* **FIVE- AND 6-YEAR-OLDS** are beginning to resolve their own conflicts, but social issues are still a major part of their relationships with teachers as they interact not just in one-to-one or small-group situations, but in large-group discussions and activities as well. In these interactions, children look to teachers to facilitate social issues, and also to ask for their opinions and challenge their thinking.