

## Learning Centers in The Building Blocks™ Classroom



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## Learning Centers

- Learning Centers are designated areas within the classroom where children explore, construct, and play with materials.
- Teachers select materials and design open-ended activities from which students choose what to learn and how to learn it.
- Learning centers should allow for students to be actively involved in learning and making choices.
- Learning centers, along with whole group instruction and individual activities, comprise a balanced approach to early childhood instruction.

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## Learning Centers

Opportunities to play, construct, and explore allow children to:

- take risks
- explore roles
- make connections between the known and the new
- problem-solve, and
- engage in meaningful conversations

(Owocki, 1999)

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## Literacy-Enhanced Learning Centers

- provide opportunities for children to develop oral language
- encourage print awareness
- encourage children to further explore the relationship between reading and writing
- help children develop a natural connection between reading and writing at school and reading and writing in their world

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## What is your goal?

- manage themselves and materials
- opportunity to explore and experiment
- choose to work alone or to work with others
- be on task and complete assigned activities
- work with specified materials to practice a skill or objective
- work independently

*Learning Centers*

*Something else...*

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## Learning Center Continuum

student directed —————> teacher directed

- time
- center choice and movement
- activities and materials
- alone or with others

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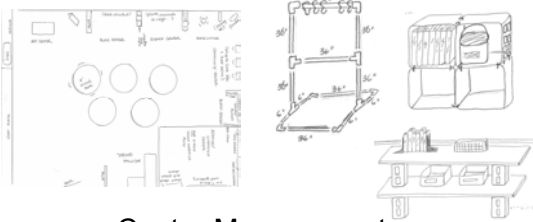
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## Preparing for Learning Centers

Room arrangement

Furniture



### Center Management

Movement

Number of children at each center

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## Learning Centers

Limit the number of centers you establish.

1. Reading and Listening
2. Writing
3. Home Living/Community Center [social studies]
4. Blocks
5. Science (may separate sand/water table)
6. Math and Manipulative (may separate games and puzzles)
7. Art
8. Other – generally related to a theme of study, a field trip, or other interests shown by children

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## Reading/Listening Center

- read to and read by focus
- activities center around looking at books, listening to books, and playing with words.
- provides additional opportunities to build children's desire to learn to read, to learn interesting to them words, and develop print concepts

## Writing Center

- writing by focus
- activities center around writing for real reasons, book making, and playing with words
- provides additional opportunities to build children's desire to learn to write and learn letters and sounds

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### Home Living Center

- language development focus
- activities center around dramatic play with concrete, real, and relevant materials
- provides additional opportunities to build children's desire to learn to read and write, develop language concepts, and develop oral and meaning vocabulary

### Community Center

- Hair Salon
- Repair Shop
- Gift Wrapping Center
- Travel Agency
- Post Office
- Hospital/Doctor's Office
- Grocery Store
- Restaurant

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### Block Center

- spatial and motor focus
- activities center around building, replicating, and representing real world structures, dramatic play with structures, and patterning
- provides additional opportunities to develop language concepts and ability to represent objects through print

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### Science Center

- observation and play focus
- activities center around looking at animals and related books, experimenting, and recording observations and experimentations
- provides additional opportunities to build children's desire to learn to read and write, learn interesting to them words, and develop language concepts and oral and meaning vocabulary

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## Math Center

- counting, recording, and play focus
- activities center around developing patterns, measuring, counting, and finding math concepts in books
- provides additional opportunities to build children's desire to learn to read and write, to learn interesting to them words, and develop language concepts and oral and meaning vocabulary

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## Art Center

- observation, recording, and creative focus
- activities center around representing things in the child's world.
- provides additional opportunities to build language concepts and represent objects through different media

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## Learning Centers Month by Month

- Basic Activities
- Teacher's Role
  - Interact with students
  - Collect information
- Standard Materials
- New Materials
  - Books!!!
  - Writing supplies
- Suggested Activities

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## Learning Centers Themes

- All About Me
- Friends
- My Family
- School
- Plants
- Animals
- Dinosaurs
- Farm Animals
- Water
- Weather
- Living and Non-living
- Colors
- Transportation

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## Problem Solving

- Are the centers interesting and challenging?
- When did I last change center activities?
- Do children need/want more choice and control?
- Are centers tied to themes and curriculum?
- What about projects?

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