

PLAY-BASED CENTERS

Play-based centers are based on the belief that kids learn best through play. Children take part in a wide range of play-based activities, including pretend play, and teachers respond with educational lessons. Kids also develop their problem-solving, cooperation, conflict resolution and social skills.

BOOK CENTER As children explore books on their own or with an interested adult, they begin to notice that print goes from left to right and top to bottom, that pictures often tell a story, and that the story stays the same as it is read over and over. Listening, paying attention, sequencing, and thinking skills are all being used as children enjoy a story. Children become acquainted with new vocabulary words and the style of formal written English as they listen to stories. Children can practice book-handling skills, retell stories by "reading" the pictures, and develop a love of reading by having the chance to interact with books regularly.

PUZZLES/GAMES/TABLE-TOP TOYS Children enjoy playing with small toys at tables or on the floor. Controlled movements of the fingers and hands enable children to master the muscles necessary for writing. As children work with colors and patterns, they develop visual discrimination and memory. When children pretend about things that they built, they are taking their first steps in the use of symbols, which are important as they begin to read and write.

BLOCK CENTER As a child builds with blocks, she/he is developing control of the small muscles of fingers and hands as blocks are added to a structure. Perceptions of size, weight, and shape are developing; language skills growing as children discuss what they are building. Cooperation and planning among children develops as they work together toward a common goal.

HOUSEKEEPING AREA The Housekeeping area allows boys and girls the opportunity to use their imaginations and "try on" various roles from the adult world. Through play, children try to make sense of the events happening around them and deal with the emotions surrounding them. Social skills grow as children choose definite roles in the "play" of the day whether it be playing house, school, doctor, at a restaurant environment, etc.

SCIENCE/MATH INTEREST CENTERS Children can interact with materials on their own or in small groups as they explore items at these interest centers. Counting shells, sorting leaves by size or shape, classifying rocks by type are examples of activities young children can do here. Adults provide names of items and ask questions such as: "How are these alike?" "Different?" "Is this bigger?" "Smaller?" Children's interest grows as they think about everyday items in new ways.

ART CENTER Art materials that are freely accessible to children allow them to make choices, interact with a variety of materials, and learn to think creatively. The process of working with the materials is more important than what is actually made. Choices are made as children select paper, particular colors of paint, and experiment with the way they are applied. The children develop a vocabulary of describing words such as: soft, hard, squishy, smooth, rough, striped, and checkered.

CIRCLE TIME We have Circle Time every day where we discuss the date and numbers on the calendar. Say the Pledge of Allegiance Anthem. We also talk about holidays, announce any special birthdays, point out any anniversaries, and other items important to that day. The weekly theme is introduced along with the numbers, letters, colors, shapes and seasons. The themes have activities associated with them such as story-telling and meals will also correspond with themes. Music is played too so the children can sing songs, dance, and have finger plays.

