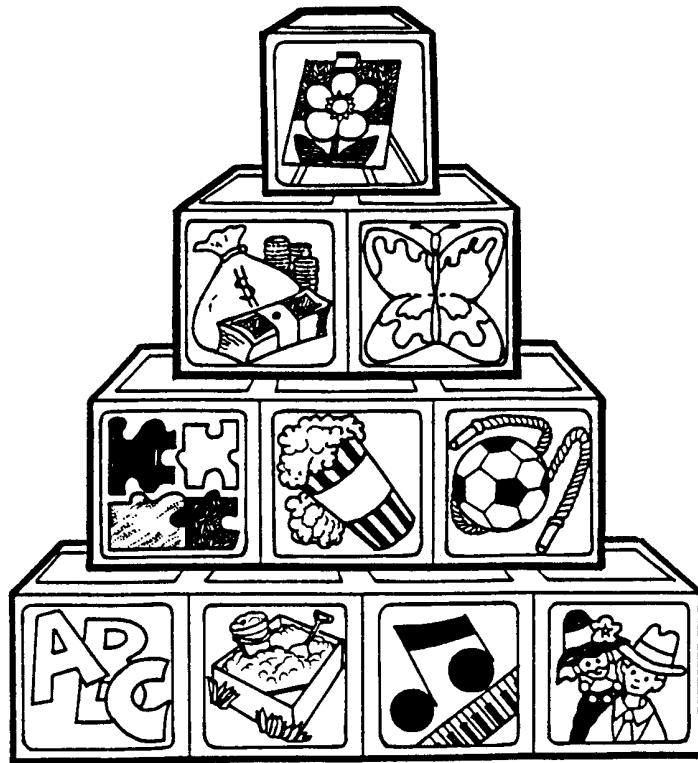


# Learning Centers

through the

# Year

## for Primary Classrooms



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# Introduction

*Learning Centers Through the Year for Primary Classrooms* is an ideal resource for establishing learning centers in your classroom. It provides all the directions and patterns necessary to set up ten learning centers for every month of the school year—September through June. These 100 activities will keep children actively and enthusiastically involved in independent learning activities.

## What Is A Learning Center?

A learning center is an area in a classroom where one or more children can participate in activities designed for enrichment and review of current learning, and for reinforcement of the skills being taught. A learning center coordinated with the curriculum enhances those skills and learning.

A center can consist of games, activities, manipulatives, or reading materials. A listening center with special equipment such as a tape recorder with headphones, a computer, calculator, or typewriter may constitute a center. As new topics are introduced or areas of special interest develop, new centers may be created. Rather than serve as primary instruction, a learning center supports what is taught in the classroom. A center provides an alternative to the traditional concept of seatwork. It allows the student an opportunity to independently practice skills and assume responsibility for learning, while freeing the teacher to work with small groups or individual students.

A learning center should not serve as a place where children can merely spend their “free” time. A successful center has a clearly stated task or objective for each activity. Children should have the opportunity to use the centers daily.

## Why Should I Use Learning Centers?

Children learn best when they are actively involved in learning. Manipulating math materials, writing and publishing their own stories, creating plays, exploring the world through maps and globes, or reviewing new vocabulary words are just a few of the learning center activities that get students involved, hands-on. Centers accommodate different learning styles which, in turn, give students an opportunity to become more involved in their own education. As children become more self-motivated, they strengthen their self-esteem. Since many center activities have no right or wrong answers, student creativity abounds.

Learning centers also help children learn how to work independently. As students want to find the answers for themselves, they become more responsible for completing tasks, checking them, and cleaning up. As patterns for using the centers are established, organizational skills develop.

The nature of the learning center gives students freedom to learn on their own. They begin to think more critically and solve problems. Specific activities may require higher levels of thinking, as well as providing an environment that is conducive to this kind of learning.

# Introduction *(cont.)*

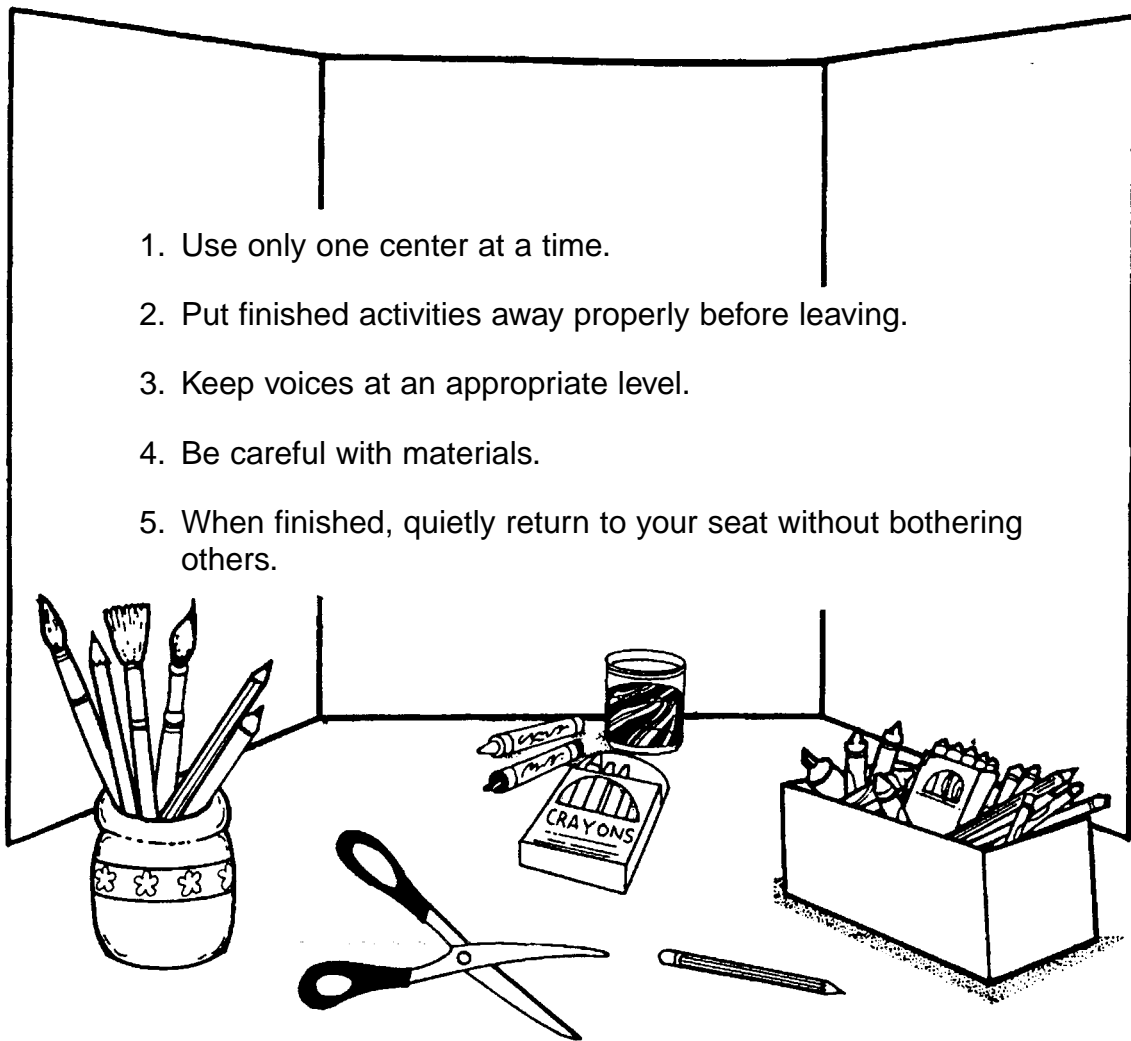
## How Do I Set Up A Learning Center?

The organization and set-up of learning centers are keys to developing a successful program in your classroom. Where and how you place your centers is important, remembering that they must be useable within your classroom. They may be set up on walls, in corners, behind partitions, on tables, on desks, or even in storage bins. Consider storage before arranging the room because centers must be accessible to students. Some centers may require an arrangement of equipment and materials where there is a water source, electrical outlet, or a special light. Wall space around the room is usually a good place to set up learning centers. With such an arrangement children are spread out around the room so crowding doesn't take place. Flexibility is your most important asset in setting up centers.

## How Do I Use A Learning Center?

Your first job is to introduce the learning center to the students. Let them know what the centers are for, and how to use and take care of them, including cleaning up. This should be repeated every time new centers are introduced. Plan to spend some time at the beginning of each month explaining the proper procedures to follow at the centers. Tell children what is expected of them. It may be helpful to post procedures and rules near each center. Some general rules include:

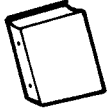
1. Use only one center at a time.
2. Put finished activities away properly before leaving.
3. Keep voices at an appropriate level.
4. Be careful with materials.
5. When finished, quietly return to your seat without bothering others.



# Introduction *(cont.)*

## What Learning Centers Should I Use?

*Learning Centers Through the Year* makes it a snap to set up ten learning centers in your classroom. One hundred center activities are included in this book. For each month of the school year you have ten centers:



### Reading

Here, students have the opportunity to reinforce reading readiness, reading skills, and enjoy some of their favorite stories.



### Games and Puzzles

At this center your students play games that reinforce skills, allow students to challenge each other to games, and have fun completing various types of puzzles.



### Math

Students learn math skills using a variety of techniques emphasizing manipulatives.



### Science

Students find an opportunity to question and experiment using hands-on activities at the science center.



### Seasonal Special

A highlight of the month or season allows your students to research or create a project appropriate to the time of year when they work at this center.



### Art

Many opportunities to explore various mediums are available when children enjoy art as a creative outlet.



### Drama and Stories

Giving children a chance to express themselves orally through several types of activities are available here, as are stories children can both enjoy and learn from.



### Social Studies

Finding out more about the world we live in, the people in our communities, and how we get along highlight this center.



### Writing

Expressing oneself through writing, including various forms of poetry and narrative, are among the activities found here.



### Hands-On

Getting to experience the manipulation of many different materials allows for student growth in several areas of development.

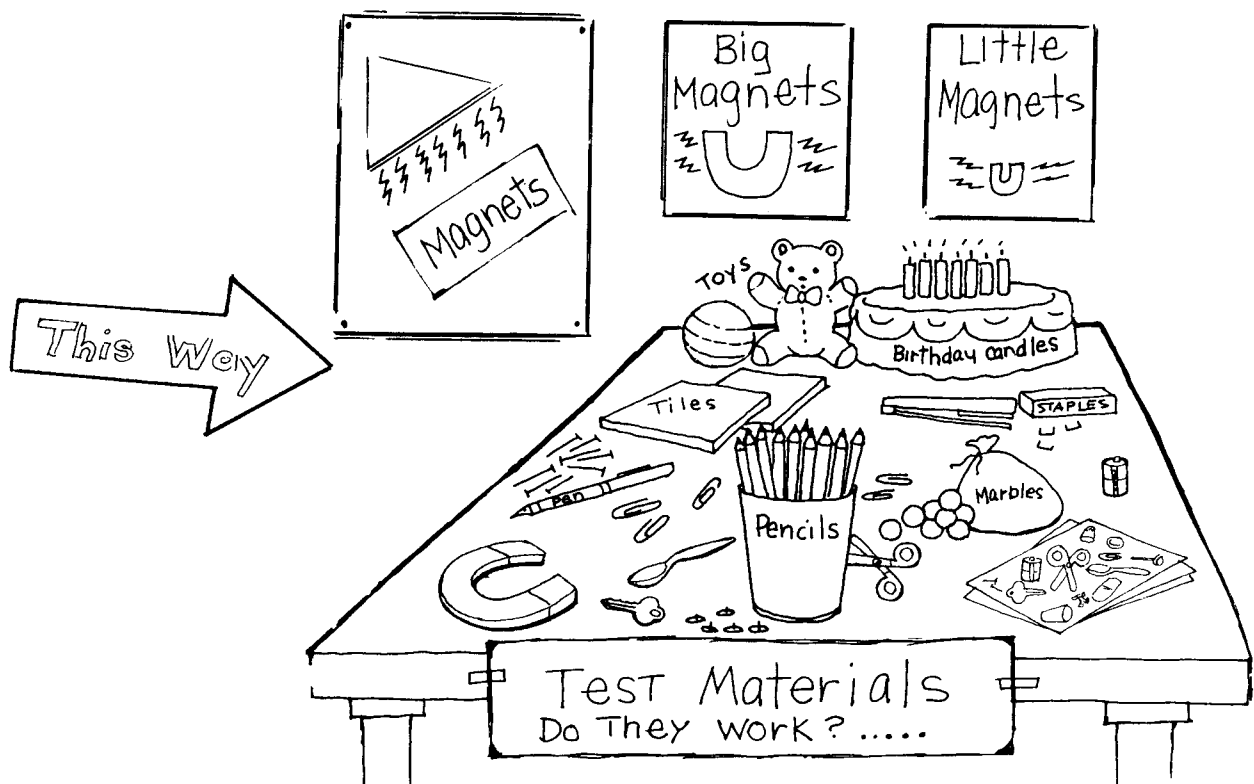
# Introduction *(cont.)*

## How Do I Manage Learning Centers?

How do you know which student belongs at which center? Develop some classroom management systems. See the center management section beginning on page 356 for some ideas.

Schedule a time each day for your learning centers. Only you will know how much time in your classroom day to devote, but this may vary. A rotation system may work well for you; have some children working at centers and others working with you. The important thing is to keep track of the centers children have completed.

Make your learning centers look inviting. Decorate them, put up pictures or colorful signs to identify them. Use the materials in this book. They are all reproducible and should be assembled prior to setting up the centers. Durable materials are the best; whenever possible, use heavy paper and laminate. Remember, the materials will be used over and over again and must be strong enough to withstand normal use and handling by students.



The enthusiasm for and results of using learning centers are well worth the time and effort required to set them up. They offer an avenue for reaching each child. Learning centers can play an important part in the daily schedule for primary children. Your children will learn by doing, and enjoy learning while it is taking place.

# Beginning Sounds

## Purpose

Given beginning sounds, the student can identify pictures that begin with those sounds.

## Materials

- 6 large manilla envelopes
- Baseball Billy
- Laughing Lucy
- Dancing Dolly
- Spaghetti Sammy
- Noisy Nettie
- Mighty Mike
- Pictures on pages 15–20

## Preparation

Reproduce, color, and cut out the pictures of Baseball Billy Boy, Laughing Lucy, Dancing Dolly, Silly Sammy, Noisy Nettie, and Mighty Mike on pages 9–14. Glue one each onto a manilla envelope. Cut out the pictures that begin with B, L, D, S, N, and M.

## Instructions

Children play only one game at a time. Have them find the pictures that begin with the sound they are looking for. Have them place those that begin with B in the envelope with Baseball Billy, L with Laughing Lucy, D with Dancing Dolly, S with Spaghetti Sammy, N with Noisy Nettie, and M with Mighty Mike.

## Clean-Up

Put all game parts in the correct envelope.



# Baseball Billy

