

Spring 2002

## Centers for Promoting Emergent Literacy in the Primary Grades

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CENTERS FOR PROMOTING  
EMERGENT LITERACY IN THE PRIMARY GRADES

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A Project Report  
Presented to  
the Graduate Faculty  
Central Washington University

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Education

In Partial Fulfillment  
Of the requirement for the Degree  
Master of Education  
Master Teacher

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By  
Elizabeth Greaves

May 14, 2002

## ABSTRACT

### CENTERS FOR PROMOTING EMERGENT LITERACY IN PRIMARY GRADES

By

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May 2002

The purpose of this project was to design classroom Literacy Centers incorporating the Washington State Essential Academic Learning Requirements that promote emergent literacy skills in primary level children. Using Literacy Centers to enhance a child's ability to read, write, listen, and communicate is the focus of this project. The centers are intended to be a hands-on and authentic method of learning for young children. The review of relevant literature shows that this option provides positive experiences in a primary level classroom. Adaptable center plans are included as well as management and assessment suggestions.

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## Chapter One: Introduction

### Overview

Early literacy skills are essential in making sure that all children can read, write, listen, and communicate effectively (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). Schools play a vital role in presenting a child with appropriate tools and methods to gain these skills. It will be shown that literacy centers (areas in the classroom that are teacher prepared to encourage and enhance literacy skills) can provide an option for teachers to impart high quality, genuine experiences for young learners.

In the classroom, literacy centers should have goals. Some goals may support the increase of reading, writing, listening, and communication skills. According to Gordon (2000) students should be able to use centers to help recognize letters by name, sound and use, and distinguish sounds in words. Centers help a child understand words, how they work, and what they mean. Experiences increase comprehension and reflection, as well as develop fluency in voice and expression. Centers increase the application of literacy in life-like situations and students should gain a positive attitude and interest in learning. Also, centers provide literacy experiences that develop independence and engagement in learning. These goals furnish a focus for classroom experiences during literacy center time.

Teacher prepared classroom environments should allow students to use what they know from previous experiences, what they have learned from direct instruction by the teacher, and permit that child to practice these skills daily (Heibert, 1988). Teachers monitor and assess students to make sure that they

are using the environments to meet set goals. Then teachers can modify and create new activities to continue development of strengths and overcome weaknesses that are observed in students.

### Purpose

The purpose of this project was to design classroom centers incorporating the Washington State Essential Academic Learning Requirements (Commission on Student Learning, 1999), that promote emergent literacy skills in primary level children.

### Limitations/Focus

Limitations to the findings of this project include:

1. The project is designed for early elementary grade students, with specific detail to grade 1 students, including second language learners and gifted students.
2. The project is intended to be used in a self-contained classroom with 15 to 25 students.
3. The project will include a minimum of 35 adaptable classroom center plans.
4. The focus will be on reading, writing, listening, and communicating.

### Definition of Terms

Functional literacy. A level of reading and writing sufficient for everyday life but not for completely independent activity (Harris & Hodges, 1995).

Phonological awareness. Awareness of the constituent sound of words in learning to read and spell. This includes syllables, onsets, rimes, and phonemes (Harris & Hodges, 1995).

Literacy. A continuum of skills, including both reading and writing, applied in a social context (Gray, 1956 as cited in Harris & Hodges, 1995; UNESCO, 1957 as cited in Harris & Hodges, 1995).

Emergent Literacy. This perspective examines changes over time in how the child thinks about literacy and in the strategies the child uses in attempts to comprehend or produce written language (Teale, 1995 as cited in Harris & Hodges, 1995).

Reading Readiness. The readiness to profit from reading instruction beyond the beginning reading level. Usually associated with basal reading programs (Harris & Hodges, 1995).

Center. A location within a classroom with different instructional material with clearly defined objectives for their use stated for the learner, specific directions for reaching the objectives, provisions for different ability levels, and self-checking evaluations (Harris & Hodges, 1995).

Conventions of Print: Conventions used in print language such as direction rules, space formats, and punctuation signals for new sentences (Clay, 1993).

### Summary

Center use in the classroom is one way to enrich the teaching of reading, writing, listening, and communication skills using an authentic hands-on method. Centers provide real life activities to help young learners use his or her own

experiences and interests. The next chapters in this project are designed to provide a literature review to base this premise upon and give teachers a design to follow while implementing literacy centers in their own classrooms.

Conclusions and recommendations will follow.



## Chapter Two: Review of Literature

### Introduction

Children use strategies that are familiar to them to make meaning out of words and letters. They talk, listen, read, and write in an individual developmentally appropriate style in order to make sense of the world around them. Authentic situations help young learners to grasp this emerging literacy that is presenting itself in the world around them. Teachers have choices in supporting young children as they acquire these emerging literacy skills and as they continue building them. According to Fountas and Pinnell (1996), literacy based centers are one approach to doing this in the early childhood classroom .

This literature review is divided into sections on language and literacy, classroom environments, and literacy centers. Discussed with literacy centers are the topics of management and assessment of centers.

### Language and Literacy

There are two views of thinking when it comes to how children gain language skills: reading readiness and emergent literacy. A person who believes in the reading readiness approach believes children need to be five to six years old to take advantage of this strategy. The instruction should be sequential, systematic, unemotional, and no judgements should be put on the teaching of skills. Reading and writing are based on the sounds letters make. In contrast, a teacher that teaches language skills by the emergent literacy technique believes that children's literacy develops early in life through exposure to literacy activities. In addition, with emergent literacy, reading and writing develop together, children

actively use and engage in a variety of self selected activities to develop their skills, and they use background knowledge to move from familiar to unfamiliar activities (McMahon, Richmond & Reeves-Kazelskis, 1998). This project focuses on the emergent literacy approach.

Children learn to make meaning of words in many different ways. Fountas and Pinnell (1996) suggest most language development occurs in the home before a child reaches school age. Many things occur in the home and in the community to promote early literacy. Children hear rhymes, poems, and songs through the radio and television. Stories are also read to the children and they see parents and friends modeling reading with a variety of written materials. Children like to share reading and pictures with others. They like reading or pretending to read to themselves. Children like to watch while others write and to try writing, too. Signs are noticed and read, and the child recognizes his or her name. Then connections start to be made between the things a child knows, like the letters in his or her name, and other letters, and words they see within the environment.

This early learning leads to new strategies in language development. Children start to understand that language is made up of sounds and that some are part of words that we speak and others are not. Communication uses sounds and clusters of sounds to make meaning. Children also learn that language is made up of words and the words have meaning. Clusters of words can be put together to make messages. A person's voice can then be used to emphasize emotion and meaning (Pinnell & Fountas, 1998).

Learning continues at home, but also starts to happen at school as the child grows. When the child reaches school age, he or she continues to build on the skills that have been acquired and develops new strategies for learning literacy (Indrisano & Chall 1995). In preschool and kindergarten more specific language skills develop. Letters are given names and children begin to write letters. Understanding directionality of letters and words begins to take place. Children learn that some letters are tall and others are short, and some have loops, tails, curves, dots, and lines that cross them. Letters come in a specific order and some are used more frequently than others. Letters can also be in large or small print. They can be in different colors or styles but they always mean the same thing. Letters are then put together to make words (Pinnell & Fountas, 1998). Formal instruction can then take place once the concepts of print exist.

Learning about print is an experience that happens to people differently. The most important word that a child can learn is his or her name. Then by associating those letters with sounds, a child can start to see that other letters are similar to the ones in his or her name and make more in depth connections to other words. Children begin to see that the world is full of print and a child's natural tendency is to look for printed material and search for meaning (Pinnell & Fountas, 1998).

Reading and writing take place simultaneously. Children are frequently learning how words work, hearing sounds, constructing messages and analyzing words while they are reading and writing. This process of building up and

breaking down words is easier for a child to visualize in writing than in reading (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). It is a difficult job at times for a child to do this with letters but the right stimulating environment can help in the development of these skills. Heibert (1988), states that this environment should build upon the background knowledge that a child brings with him or her to the school setting.

There are some important considerations when developing instructional strategies for early literacy. The program should include activities for awareness of print, knowledge of the relationship between speech and print, text structures, phonological awareness, letter naming, and writing (Van Kleeck, 1990). Each of these areas is interrelated and happens concurrently. Children process these areas based on their developmental level at the time. Some areas of language are developed early while others continue to increase in proficiency throughout the early learning years. Children also participate in reading and writing long before their skills are perfected (Heibert, 1988).

Specific strategies for making meaning in reading also occur at this time. Children start to predict what will happen in stories and take risks with reading. They begin to see themselves correcting mistakes they have made when they are reading. The strategies a child uses are becoming more ingrained and the child has more confidence to try to figure out words. Children are also learning about the conventions of print and are able to see clearer connections between reading and writing. They begin using syntax and grammatical features to figure out the language they are learning. Comprehension about what is being read also starts to develop and a child can start to make meaning and reflect on what

he or she has read or has written (Education Department of Western Australia, 1994a).

Oral language is just as important to consider as reading and writing when it comes to literacy. Throughout the day, at home and at school, a child is orally exploring and constructing meaning of words. Children ask questions and make statements about the world around them. They begin to elaborate and explain, listen, respond, share, play, and repeat messages they receive. Adding communication and listening into the study of literacy is essential for a balanced literacy approach (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

According to a study conducted by McMahon, et al. (1998) children learn language and literacy skills best through active engagement, using past experiences, and actually using the skills they have acquired. Reading, writing, listening, and communication emerge when children are allowed to freely explore and experiment with print in as many ways as possible. It is also noted that this type of emergent literacy atmosphere may help teachers become more aware of the interrelationship of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and in planning activities that highlight each of these modes (Morrow & Rand, 1991).

### Classroom Environments

The areas in the classroom that help extend literacy are areas where children can experience and play with materials. When creating this environment, it is important to consider the child's point of view and the experiences that the surrounding community provide. These classroom areas can be created with the purpose of having students interact, express themselves,

validate things that happen, and interact with text (Neuman & Roskos, 1990 and Strickland & Morrow, 1989).

According to Neuman and Roskos (1990) there are four details that should be considered with respect to setting up a classroom that is conducive to literacy learning. First, each area should have its own features and be set apart from other areas. Next, the classroom areas should be labeled and a variety of print should be present in each area. Third, each area should have a specific literacy goal. And finally, noisier areas should be physically set apart from quieter, independent areas.

When the classroom environment is well planned and designed, specific literacy advancements can be made (Morrow & Rand, 1991). Literacy becomes a routine that children can work with and expand upon. Reading, writing, listening, and communicating become more connected and interrelated. Literacy becomes more active rather than a sitting at a desk and following a teacher's directions. Children learn a place in society and begin to explore nontraditional roles (Neuman & Roskos, 1990). Children also learn about written language in a room that is rich in print materials of all kinds. Learning about language can also be considered a social activity. Children need to be given plenty of opportunities to share all of the new things they have discovered about print with their peers and their teacher. Children also learn best when they are responsible for their own learning and the environment in which it takes place (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

A print rich classroom tends to have certain items that contribute to literacy learning. There should be many examples of books in the room, both fiction and nonfiction, big books and small, written by many authors, including the students themselves. In addition, name charts, a word wall with words the children have collected from different sources, alphabets, dictionaries, and other student and teacher made items or examples should be included. Also, pocket charts can be used to hold a variety of written items like poems, songs, rhymes, and other things including classroom developed graphs. Pictures should be associated with as many words as possible to show the connection between print and real items (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

#### Classroom Literacy Centers

Literacy centers provide one way of using a print rich environment for children to freely explore reading, writing, listening and communicating in a classroom. A classroom using centers should have an area where small groups can meet, space for large groups to meet, and independent work areas. Centers in a classroom can be permanently located in a certain area or be portable so that they can be moved to different places around the room as space is needed. Permanent centers can be on shelves, desks, tables, at computers, or in a certain area on the floor. Portable centers can be housed in tubs, drawers, carts, or on shelves to be moved elsewhere. Depending on the center, it can be a permanent addition to the list of centers used, or it can be changed based on seasons, holidays, or themes being studied (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

All areas in the classroom that are aimed at expanding literacy do not have to be directly concerned with picture books and language arts activities. It is important to integrate other disciplines such as drama, science, social studies, art, math, and health into the classroom so that children get to see a broad use of language and learn that literacy and reading don't have to simply come from a picture book (Babcock, Hartle, & Lamme, 1995). At the same time, a teacher needs to constantly be reviewing the environment that he or she has created to make sure that the students are not being overloaded by information (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). Most of the time, some simple reorganization can alleviate many of the presentation problems.

Based on emergent literacy information, a teacher should have several goals for centers in the classroom. Gordan (2000) outlined essential goals for literacy centers:

1. To recognize letters by name, sound, and use.
2. To distinguish sounds in words.
3. To understand words, how they work, and what they mean.
4. To increase comprehension and reflection.
5. To develop fluency in voice and expression.
6. To build strong writing skills.
7. To understand the structure of language.
8. To increase application of literacy in life-like situations.
9. To gain a positive attitude and interest in learning.



10. To provide literacy experiences that develop independence and engagement in learning. (p. 28)

With the establishment of these goals to guide a teacher in creating centers for literacy, a teacher can, "Provide meaningful, engaged, active learning opportunities so that children can transfer the knowledge" (Gordon, 2000, p. 29).

Planning for centers is the next step. Fountas and Pinnell (1996) suggest that centers work best if a teacher does not have to create new ideas every day and if the centers are introduced one at a time, while demonstrating, modeling, and allowing for practice at a center before it is used fully. Centers should have organized and labeled items that are neat in appearance and an adequate supply of materials that might be needed. Children should know the specific tasks that are expected at each center and be familiar with the routine as to how the center works.

In a study conducted by Dunst (2000) of parents and caregivers of preschool children, it was found that activity settings were related to higher interest and competency among the children. His findings suggested, based on parent input, that when areas of a classroom were set up with the child's interests in mind, then the children were more engaged. This engagement led to greater competence and eventually to a child's sense of mastery of skills. The result suggested to teachers that it is important to use interests of the children that are being taught to form activities for the students. Also, it is important to provide a variety of opportunities for children to practice preexisting skills, work on forming ideas, and explore social and nonsocial settings.

The kinds of literacy centers that a teacher makes for his or her classroom should be determined mostly by student interest, existing physical layout of the room, curriculum ideas or themes, and/or time constraints on the classroom. One specific center that should be included is a library center. In a study by Morrow and Weinstein (1982) a comfortable, inviting library or book area in the classroom was found to be a very important addition to classroom centers. In this study, the researchers compared pre and post data on how many times students used the library area of a classroom during free-play time. The researchers concluded that when teachers spent extra time reading to the students and using other language activities connected to books, then the number of children engaging in reading in the library area by choice increased. As part of the study, the physical area around the libraries also was made more friendly and inviting to the students by adding comfortable places to sit and other things associated with books, like stuffed figures and flannel boards.

Management of Centers. There are many techniques that a teacher can use to manage the use of literacy centers in his or her classroom. One technique is to use a work board. Fountas and Pinnell (1996) state that a typical work board will have the names of the children participating and also picture icons of the routine center areas in the classroom. The children can be placed in groups and the groups rotate from center to center or the students can rotate individually depending on the teacher and the student level. The icons on the board should be large and simple, indicate only one activity, and be paired with a printed word so the picture/word relationship can be stressed. The work board should also

have a flexible way of rotating tasks or children's names on the board. Children can be rotated among the centers by the teacher at set intervals or individuals can rotate when finished at one area and are ready to go on to the next. Other techniques for management of centers also include clothespins on strings, Popsicle sticks in library book pockets on a chart, or self selection without any charts. This organization is strictly up to the teacher familiar with the skills, behaviors, and attitudes of the students in his or her classroom.

The next step in management is to introduce the center. This is the time when the teacher gives the students formal instruction on the use of the center. It is important to give a mini lesson on the exact goals that are expected at the new center. Then the teacher and chosen students need to model the expected behavior and goals that are being taught. Children need to have time to practice the activities at the new center and the teacher then has time to extend activities and redirect any behaviors. At this time it is also important to listen to the children and allow for social interactions to take place naturally (Rybczynski & Troy, 1995). Once the centers are practiced and students are able to use them more independently, behavior problems rarely occur.

It is also up to the teacher to determine how long children stay at each activity. Enough time needs to be allowed to make the goals routine and challenging for the students, but a teacher must also be looking for boredom and other inappropriate off task behaviors that might signify too much time at that center. A teacher could use any type of signal for students to move between

centers or the child could decide when he or she is finished with an activity and move on (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

Centers generally do not take much time on the teacher's part once they have been set up in the classroom. The teacher's main job, after the initial set up and introduction, is monitoring and assessment. Both are naturally occurring events in a primary classroom. Some teachers also use the time during centers to meet with small groups for guided reading, testing, individual instruction, or other instructional activities (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

Assessment. Assessment of centers can range from very formal testing by the teacher, to an informal check sheet by each student, to teacher observation and anecdotal records on weekly or daily performance. Formal evaluation, conducted by the teacher, could include the Written Language Awareness Test, the Boehm Test of Basic Concepts, or the Metropolitan Readiness Test along with other age appropriate tests of language skills. These tests are designed to indicate if certain skills about language have been mastered (Taylor, Blum & Logsdon, 1986).

An informal assessment by the teacher could include having a check sheet of specific skills that are being watched for on a clipboard. The teacher actively observes the students and checks for demonstrated skills (Sloane, 1998/99). This could easily be adapted to a district adopted language curriculum or to the Washington State EALRs (Commission on Student Learning, 1999).

Another way to assess progress on language and literacy skills is to have the students assess themselves. One way to do this is to have a daily or weekly

evaluation that the students fill out. A daily evaluation could ask items about following directions, completing activities, quality of work, listening, working with a group, individual goals for the future, and what specifically the child did to complete each of the main goals of reading, writing, listening, and communicating. This evaluation sheet could be very simple for early primary students and more writing intense for later elementary students. Another self evaluation tool is a journal. The teacher would simply have the students write an evaluation of what they did during center time and how effectively the time was used (Glazer, 1995).

Whatever type of assessment is used, it is important for teachers to have evidence of learning during this time. It can turn into choice time alone if goals are not developed, achieved, and new goals set. For this to be truly educational, a teacher must be accountable to students, parents, administrators, and themselves in creating this type of atmosphere (Glazer, 1995).

### Summary

In conclusion, a classroom that is rich in print and includes many hands-on, authentic language activities for young children to engage in, and will help these children become more literate at their individual developmental rate. Literacy centers can be designed to meet this need. It is important to consider many factors in setting up, implementing, managing, and assessing these areas in the classroom. The literacy gains have been shown to be significant.

Chapter three of this project includes a description of how the centers were started, designed, and put together in a classroom. Chapter four, the

project, will provide specific center designs that are aligned to the EALRs and ready for classroom use. Chapter five will give recommendations for future use of literacy centers in the classroom.

## Chapter Three: Design of Project

### Introduction

The purpose of this project was to design classroom centers incorporating the Washington State EALRs (Commission on Student Learning, 1999) that promote emergent literacy skills in primary level children. This is important because it provides a teaching strategy that can work well in diverse classrooms and learning strategies that can be adapted to work with many student learning styles.

### Personal Experiences

I became interested in using centers to teach literacy skills when I attended a Goals 2000 workshop through E.S.D. 105 several years ago. I attended several Saturday workshops in which I learned the techniques and procedures for implementing these types of centers. I was so motivated to start working with centers that I set out right away to implement them and put them into practice in my kindergarten classroom and eventually modified them to fit my first grade class. The instructor and my mentor Janis Heigl, made the learning experiences for the teachers occur in a similar fashion to how students would learn through centers. It was hands-on and wonderful way to learn. I knew right away that my students would feel the same way. As a result of this experience I set about implementing literacy centers in my classroom. I have 10 to 15 centers happening in my classroom at all times. I start with just a few and add and subtract them as we go along during the school year. I use more than 25 centers as the year progresses, depending on the developmental level of my students,

how much I must motivate them, and whether they are self-managers of their own behavior. My students have enjoyed them very much and I have seen remarkable growth in language skills over time.

### Organization

This project is organized into individual centers. The description of each center includes the EALRs (Commission on Student Learning, 1999) that are covered, the center objective, materials needed, and the procedure that can be followed to implement the center. Some centers are used frequently because they are very general and can be modified throughout the school year and others are more specific to certain areas or times of the year and are not used as frequently. All centers have all been field tested in classrooms somewhere.

I chose the criteria listed above as part of the discussion of each center because I felt that primary teachers in Washington State would need to know what EALRs (Commission on Student Learning, 1999) were worked on in specific centers. A modified lesson plan is felt to be adequate so that a teacher could implement the centers and could adapt to the specific needs of his or her classroom design and time constraints. They are also meant to be general enough so that they can be used in preschool classes and in as high of a grade as a teacher feels that the desired outcomes can be achieved.

### Synthesis

One way to encourage language and literacy development is by providing young children with an environment that is print rich and full of exciting activities where they can practice reading, writing, listening, and communicating. The



review of literature asserts that reading and writing take place together. When children can practice these developing language strategies in a non-threatening place with their friends to work with them and their teacher to guide them, then emergent literacy interactions can take place. In this way, students are free to choose the situations where they can practice learning about language rather than sitting in front of a basal reader trying to absorb information that may not fit their learning style or developmental level. I have used literacy centers for several years now and have seen shy six year olds turn into articulate, both in written language and verbally, seven year olds without the worksheets, reading groups, and daily teacher directed lessons. I find it very fulfilling to give this choice to my students and wish that I had been given these options when I was a very shy six year old.

As mentioned before, the centers included in this project are specifically targeted at reading, writing, listening, and communication. Some centers are mathematical in origin but the main assessed skills are language-based.

### Summary of Resources

Before the activities were developed, a review of literature was conducted. Literacy, classroom environments, and centers were the targets of the review. Most of the information found was in professional journals, teaching resource books, library resources, Educational Resources Informational Center, and on the internet. These resources have valuable information and excellent strategies for helping teachers use centers in their classrooms.

### Overview of Project

This project consists of descriptions of activities that can be used in classroom centers to help develop emergent literacy skills in young children. Each activity includes the Essential Academic Learning Requirement (Commission on Student Learning, 1999) that is the most closely related to the specific topic, objectives, materials, and a procedure for the center. In the next chapter, a detailed teacher's guide will be provided with technical details and individual center analysis.

## Chapter Four: The Project

### Overview

The purpose of this project was to design classroom centers incorporating the Washington State Essential Academic Learning Requirements (Commission on Student Learning, 1999) that promote emergent literacy skills in primary level children.

Literacy Centers are an effective way to include reading, writing, listening, and communicating in a primary classroom. The design of the center will dictate which of these goals are worked on. The teacher's management of the centers will include modeling and observation to catch any problems that may occur.

There are several options in assessment for the teacher and the students.

These items and the literacy center designs will be included in the next part of Chapter Four.

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## Literacy Center Teacher Guide

### Introduction

This project is based on my individual style of design and implementation of literacy centers in my first grade classroom. Many sources, including research and best practices used in other teacher's rooms, have been included for the development of my style and the center designs. What works for me may need to be modified for others as it should be for all adaptable teachers.

### Literacy Centers

Centers that are based on literacy skills are simple to implement in a primary classroom setting. The skills covered are not meant to be very specific (i.e. only contractions), but are very broad topics that can occur in many different situations. They can be based on ideas from different sources and adapted to a range of grade levels. They should not replace formal language and literacy teaching but supplement those lessons. Centers meet a wide range of learning styles and can help in individualizing instruction to the specific students in a classroom. They also help to satisfy Essential Academic Learning Requirements (Commission on Student Learning, 1999) and district objectives for language and literacy.

### Literacy Centers in the Classroom

Literacy centers can fill any time slot in a teacher's busy day. They can be used daily or just a few times a week. The most important thing to remember about fitting centers into a schedule is that they are not time fillers. They have specific goals and objectives and the teacher needs to make regular

assessments to make sure that these goals are being met. These are also important times for a teacher to touch base with his or her students on an individual level. Testing can be conducted, students can receive individualized instruction, and important contact time with students can be accomplished during this time period.

### Starting Literacy Centers

Centers can be started at the beginning of the school year or at any time into the year. For district curriculum reasons, centers do not start in my classroom until the second quarter of the school year. Whenever it is decided to start centers, it is important to begin small and work up to several centers at a time.

To introduce a center, physically take the students over to the area in the classroom where they will be allowed to explore this center. Then model the center for the students. Next, have several students model this for the class. Discuss appropriate and inappropriate behavior while using this center and the goals the students should be working on when they are involved with this particular center. Then let the students participate in that center with very close supervision from the teacher. The next day it is important to review the center, its goals and objectives, and the expectations with the students again. Depending on the grade and center design, it may need to be reviewed and supervised for several days before the students can be allowed to use it independently. Even then, modifications may need to be made at a later date.



Flexibility is important at the centers. The students work on individual goals but they often have choices in how they achieve them. If a center has a game at it, part of the student's goal may be to read the rules and play the game cooperatively with a group. These same students could also make up their own rules and play the game as they work on communication and problem solving in a small group. If the teacher wants the students to follow the rules as written, they need to communicate this to their students. Once again, the flexibility and adaptability of a center is up to the teacher and the class using it.

Once a couple of centers are introduced and the children can work independently at them, then a center can be added every week or two. It is still important to model, model, model each center if the expectations you have for that center are to be achieved. A teacher can also take centers away when they are used less frequently by the students.

#### Goals of Literacy Centers

The goals that a teacher has for specific centers can be based on many different criteria. They may include district curricular goals, state learning goals, federally mandated goals, or teacher dictated goals based on best practices used by other teachers. My goals are specific to the EALRs (Commission on Student Learning, 1999) for reading, writing, listening, and communicating. Even though there are mathematically oriented centers included, their specific goals are literacy based. It is up to the individual teachers and districts to establish the goals for classroom based literacy centers.

### Management of Literacy Centers

There are many published ideas on managing centers in a classroom. Some teachers like to assign centers to students and rotate them on a daily basis. A pocket chart with center names and student names can easily manage this if the teacher decides to do the center selection.

Another management device allows the students to choose the centers they wish to visit during a specific time period. Charts made out of tag board and library pockets can accomplish this easily. One chart should have each child's name on it and another chart should have the icon of the specific center they wish to go to along with several Popsicle sticks with mini icons taped to the top of them stuck inside. At a designated time during the day, possibly as part of their entry task, each student puts a designated number of center sticks in his or her name pocket designating the centers they wish to go to that day. With specific rules, like not attending the same center two days in a row and not removing sticks once they are put in their individual pockets, a teacher can make sure that the students are getting a variety of choices in center selection. A teacher can also put in a "Teacher" stick if a meeting with a student or group of students is required for that day.

Whatever management tool that a teacher selects, it is important to realize that the classroom will be noisier than if typical reading groups are happening. Students will be moving, communicating with peers and you, and discovering language and literacy in an experimental mode. If centers are appropriately

modeled, the teacher can choose the range of noise, but it will be louder than the average classroom.

### Assessment of Literacy Centers

Just like managing centers, assessing centers is an individual choice of the teacher as well. The most important thing is that some type of assessment tool is used or the centers may not be meeting the objectives the teacher has set out.

Assessment can be formal or informal. Formal assessment can be conducted with standardized literacy tests. A district's special services personnel should be able to help locate specific testing devices for a teacher's goals and objectives. Less formal assessment can include daily check sheets filled out by the students or journal entries about what they did, who they did it with, and the student's evaluation of the center's effectiveness at helping them reach their goals. Also, teacher observation on a daily basis can help evaluate if the objectives are being fulfilled by each student. A name sheet on a clipboard and a quick walk through the room during center time, and a teacher can make anecdotal records of the activities being conducted and the goals being met. I use daily check sheets the students fill out, daily observation, and journal entries as formative assessments, and monthly interviews as my preferred summative assessment technique.

### Literacy Centers Ideas

The following is a group of literacy centers that are ready for classroom use. They have been organized by specific EALRs (Commission on Student

Learning, 1999) but are in no specific order of introduction in the classroom.

Centers can be introduced based on the availability of materials, the season, or any other order that a teacher feels like introducing them. I usually start with very broad centers that many students can work at during a specific time, then work toward more specific centers.

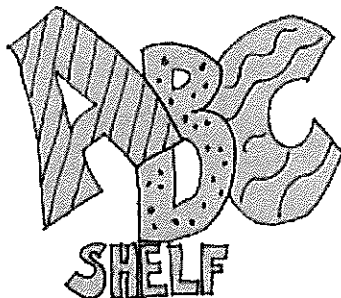
I hope you enjoy your time individualizing instruction and watching your students love learning.

Center Plans  
**Center Plans**

Center Plans  
**Center Plans**

Center Plans  
**Center Plans**

Center Plans  
**Center Plans**



Name of Center: ABC Shelf

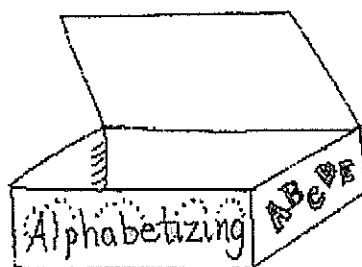
EALRs worked on: Reading (1.1, 1.2, 3.2, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3)  
Communication (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.2) (See Appendix at end of Chapter 4)

Objective: The student use manipulative letters to increase their phonemic awareness, letter identification, sound identification, and communication skills.

**Materials:**

- Cards and card games
- Word flips and wheels
- Magna Doodles
- Wipe off boards
- Magnetic letters
- Foam letters and shapes
- Any purchased or teacher made alphabet activities

Procedure: Have alphabet and phonics materials available on a shelf or other area. Allow students to explore these activities as they choose. This center can be used to reinforce alphabet skills and for encouraging communication between students as they work together to play games, work with letters, and manipulate alphabet oriented activities.



Name of Center: Alphabetizing

EALRs worked on: Reading (1.1, 3.1, 3.2) Writing (1.1, 2.2, 2.3) (See Appendix at end of Chapter 4)

Objective: The student will be able to write 5 to 10 self selected words in alphabetical order.

Materials:

- Word cards

- Handout to list words in order (included)

- Pencils and other classroom supplies

Procedure: The teacher will make approximately 100 word cards of words that the students use in the classroom. They will be placed in a box with a handout of a list they will make. The student draws 5 to 10 cards and then puts them in alphabetical order and then writes the words in order on the handout. They may do as many lists as they wish any place in the room that is convenient.

# Alphabetizing



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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# Alphabetizing



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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Name of Center: Animal Facts

EALRs worked on: Reading (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.5, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1,) Writing (1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3) (See Appendix at end of Chapter 4)

Objectives: The student will be able to read information about animals in magazines and write one fact they learned about the animal on a card.

Materials:

Magazines about animals  
(examples: Zoobooks, National Wildlife Federation publications, Highlights publications, etc.)  
Printed cards (master included)  
Story rings  
Pencils

Procedure: Teacher supplies the student with appropriate magazines with details of animals. Students choose one animal to research and writes one fact of their choice on a ring of cards.

Animal fact

Name of animal: \_\_\_\_\_

Fact: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Animal fact

Name of animal: \_\_\_\_\_

Fact: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Animal fact

Name of Animal \_\_\_\_\_

Fact: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Animal fact

Name of animal: \_\_\_\_\_

Fact: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Center: Art Center

EALRs worked on: Reading (3.2) Communication (1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 3.3) Art (1.1, 1.4) (See Appendix at end of Chapter 4)

Objective: The student will be able to read the written directions for a small art project and assemble the project correctly.

Materials:

- Small art projects

- Written instructions

- Materials to complete projects such as glue, markers, crayons, pins, etc.

Procedure: Teacher assembles all necessary parts to do a small art project and provides written instructions for putting the project together correctly. Projects may be pre-made also with instructions included. Students are given all of the necessary materials to put the project together and they may choose any area appropriate for the materials used.

Name of center: Big Books

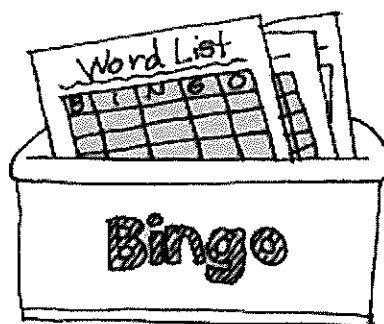
EALRs worked on: Reading (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.3, 4.3) (See Appendix at end of Chapter 4)

Objectives: Students will be able to self select big books and read for pleasure or to gain understanding of a concept.

Materials:

Classroom selection of big books (fiction and nonfiction)

Procedure: Teachers will provide students with big books. Students can take books any place in the classroom to read individually or with a friend. A library area is a good place for big books to be stored and accessed.



Name of Center: Bingo

EALRs worked on: Reading (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 3.1, 3.2) (See Appendix at end of Chapter 4)

Objective: The students will be able to identify words on a Bingo game based on teacher presented word lists.

**Materials:**

Bingo cards, pre-made or laminated blank card for the students to write the words on

Word cards

Chips to mark spaces

Washable markers if necessary

Procedure: The teacher will provide pre-made Bingo cards or blank cards for the students to write their own words on. The teacher will also provide word cards for the words to be chosen for the game. The students have a card selector and players. The game proceeds until a player gets all of one column filled with chips. The students must read the words to the selector and confirm the win. This game can also be done with mathematical concepts if desired.

# Bingo Card

B	I	N	G	O

Name of Center: Bookmarks

EALRs worked on: Reading (1.1, 1.3, 2.2, 3.2) Arts (1.1, 1.2, 4.1, 4.2) (See Appendix at end of Chapter 4)

Objective: The students will be able to follow the directions to make a bookmark.

Materials:

Copies of designed bookmarks or supplies for independent bookmarks

Glue

Markers

Procedure: The teacher will make available to the students the supplies necessary to make bookmarks, either copies of ready to assemble ones or the paper and supplies for the students to make up their own designs. The students will work on bookmarks at an appropriate place in the classroom for the supplies provided.

Name of Center: Book tubs

EALRs worked on: Reading (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.3, 4.3) (See Appendix at end of Chapter 4)

Objective: Students will be able to self select books for pleasure reading, read stories, and use pictures to form meaning from the stories.

Materials:

Classroom tubs of books, magazines, and information sources of different levels, types, genres, authors, and illustrators.

Procedure: The teacher will provide a wide variety of books and other sources for the students to read individually. They may choose different places in the room to read. A library area can also be used for this center rather than books in tubs.



Name of Center: Buddy Reading

EALRs worked on: Reading (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.3, 4.2, 4.3) Communication (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.2) (See Appendix at end of Chapter 4)

Objective: The student will be able to read a book of their choosing with another person, concentrating on content and style while reading.

Materials:

Books of all types

Procedure: The teacher will provide pairs of students the opportunity to read together from books of their choosing. Students will read aloud and ask each other questions about the stories. A library area is a good place for this to happen in the classroom.

Name of Center: Calendars

EALRs worked on: Reading (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.5, 2.1, 2.2, 3.2)  
Math (3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.2, 4.3, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3) (See Appendix at  
end of Chapter 4)

Objective: The students will be able to construct and  
interpret a weekly and monthly calendar.

Materials:

- Laminated copies of blank monthly and weekly  
calendars
- Laminated number cards
- Laminated days of the week cards
- Water washable markers
- Examples of old calendars

Procedure: The teacher will provide the students with blank  
laminated calendars, number cards and cards for the days of  
the week. The students construct their own calendars for a  
month of their choosing, putting the days of the week and  
the dates in the correct places. The students may use the  
number cards or write on the laminated copies with water  
washable markers. The teacher will provide old calendars for  
the students to use as examples.

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

# Dates

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

## Days of the Week

Sunday	
Monday	Tuesday
Wednesday	Thursday
Friday	Saturday

Name of Center: The Card Shop

EALRs worked on: Reading (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 3.2) Writing (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3) (See Appendix at end of Chapter 4)

Objective: The student will be able to select and write a card to another member of the class.

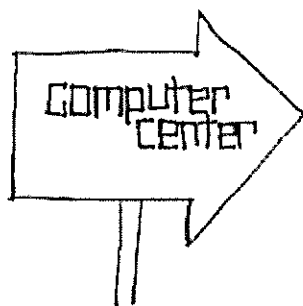
**Materials:**

Fronts of old greeting cards

Construction paper

Markers, pencils, and other classroom supplies

Procedure: The teacher will provide fronts of old greeting cards for the students to glue onto folded construction paper to make their own greeting cards. The students will then "send" the card to someone in the class.



Name of Center: Computers

EALRs worked on: Reading (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 4.1, 4.2) Writing (1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3), Communication (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.2), Math (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3), Technology (1, 2, 6) (See Appendix at end of Chapter 4)

Objective: The student will engage the computer on various skills and communicate with others on computer related tasks.

Materials:

At least 1 computer

Student centered software for different tasks

Headphones

Procedure: Allow students to work on the computers to accomplish tasks that you choose for them such as a specific language skill, or that are self selected like a story, dictionary program, or writing and illustrating program. Any type of computer will do as long as appropriate software comes with it.

Name of Center: Digging through the Dictionary

EALRs worked on: Reading (1.2, 3.1, 3.2) Writing (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3) (See Appendix at end of Chapter 4)

Objective: The student will be able to find a self-selected word in the dictionary and complete a handout about the word.

Materials:

- Children's dictionaries

- Handout on dictionary skills

- Pencils and other classroom supplies

Procedure: The teacher will make available to the students copies of children's dictionaries, word cards, and a handout for identification of the selected words. The students will choose a word randomly from a tub, find the word in the dictionary, and complete the information on the handout.



# Digging through the Dictionary

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

My word is \_\_\_\_\_

I found my word on page \_\_\_\_\_

The guide words are

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

My word means

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Here's a sentence using my word.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Center: Door Hangers

EALRs worked on: Reading (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 3.2) Writing (1.1, 1.2, 1.3 2.1, 2.2, 2.3) (See Appendix at end of Chapter 4)

Objective: The student will be able to construct a door hanger with a message of their choosing on it.

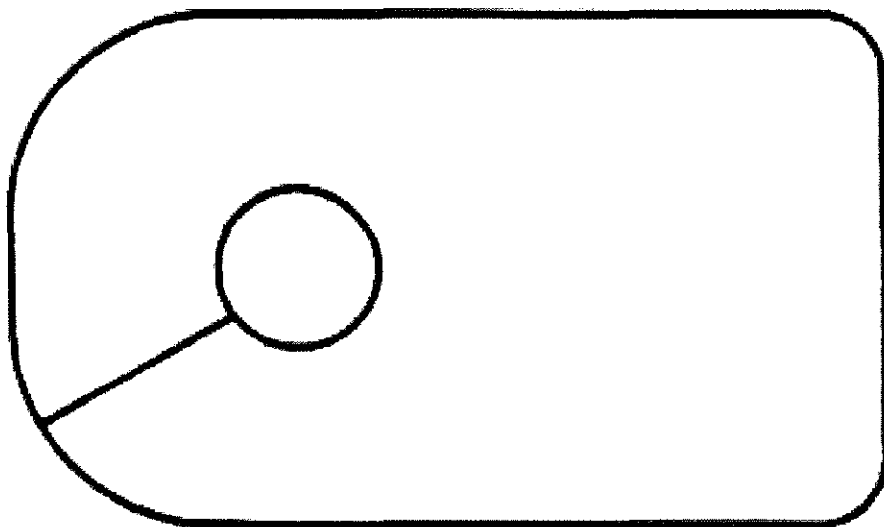
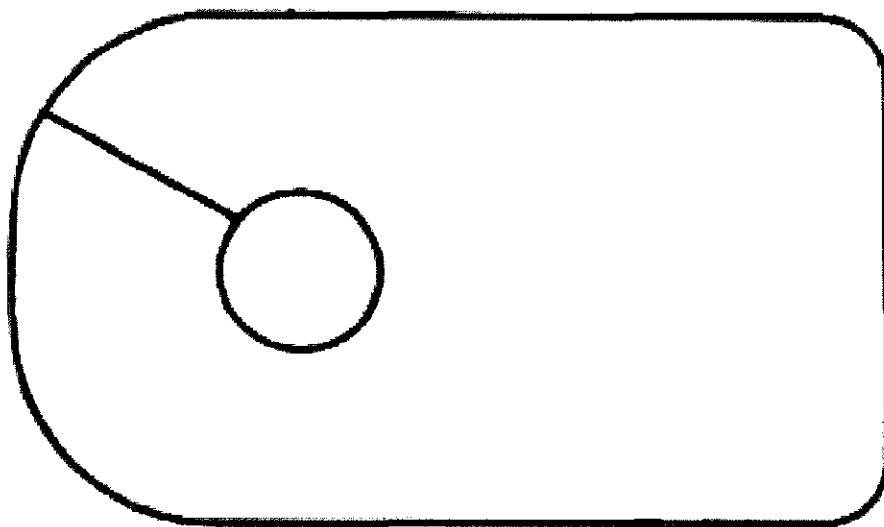
Materials:

- Door hanger copies (included)

- Markers, crayons, and other classroom supplies

- Examples of messages that could be used

Procedure: The teacher provides copies of blank door hangers on tagboard. The students cut out one copy and decorate it with any message they would like to. They may make it for themselves or for someone else. Students will be encouraged to make friendly messages.



Name of Center: Drama

EALRs worked on: Reading (1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 3.2, 3.3) Writing (1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3) Communication (2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3) (See Appendix at end of Chapter 4)

Objective: The student will be able to practice dramatic play opportunities for themselves and the class.

Materials:

- Clothes to dress up in
- Paper and pencils to write scripts
- Puppets

Procedure: This center may be used in several ways. The students will be encouraged to write scripts for plays they make up themselves or they can use scripts of plays they have already worked on in class. The students may act these plays or they may do puppet shows. The teacher encourages the students to have written dialog for their performances. The students need to have time to practice and then perform for the class or some other group.

Name of Center: File Folder Games

EALRs worked on: Reading (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 4.1, 4.2) (See Appendix at end of Chapter 4)

Objective: The student will be able to self select pre-made file folder games and complete the skills that the game focuses upon.

Materials:

- File folders

- Game activities, either pre-made or teacher made

- Storage bags for pieces

(See resources in Ch. 4 for file folder activity books)

Procedure: The teacher prepares file folder games of various subjects and content areas all with a reading or pre-reading skill. The students may take the basket of games anywhere in the room appropriate for playing a variety of games by themselves or with a friend. The teacher may select specific games for them to play or it may be self selected by the student.

Name of Center: Games

EALRs worked on: Reading (1.3, 1.5, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2)  
Communication (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3)  
(See Appendix at end of Chapter 4)

Objective: The student will participate in games that are familiar or not familiar to them while reading directions, communicating with other participants, and working out problems that might occur.

Materials:

Games specific to age range and of varying skill levels.  
Checkers, tic-tac-toe, Chutes and Ladders, etc.

Procedure: After introducing each game and how to play each one, allow the students to self-select games which they would like to play, encouraging appropriate playing and communicating with other players.

Name of Center: Light Switch Covers

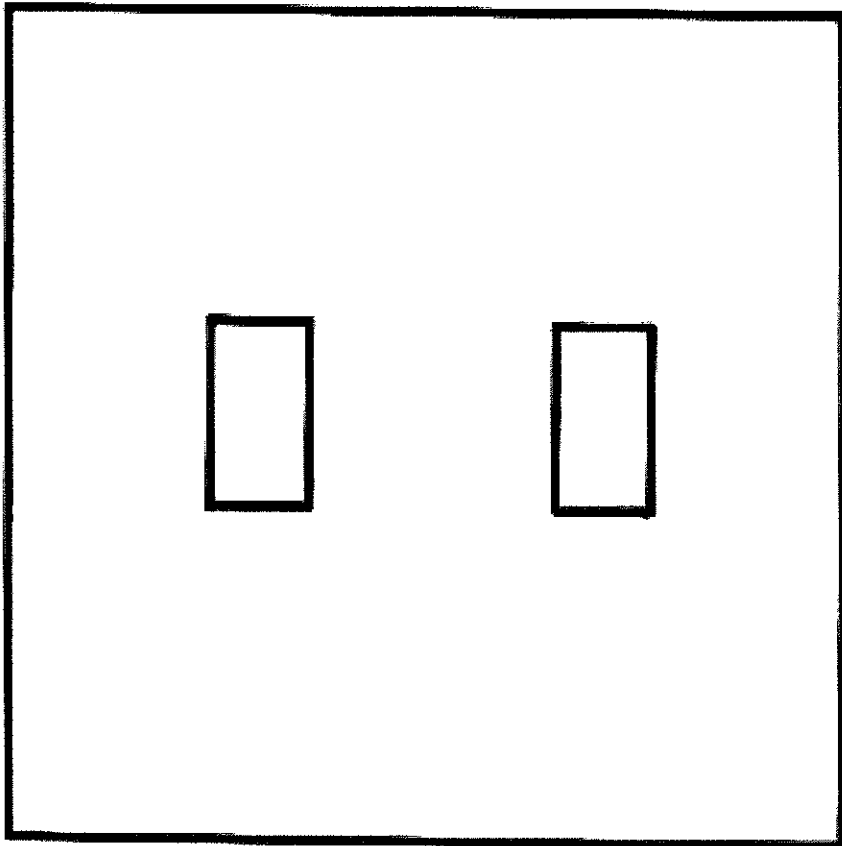
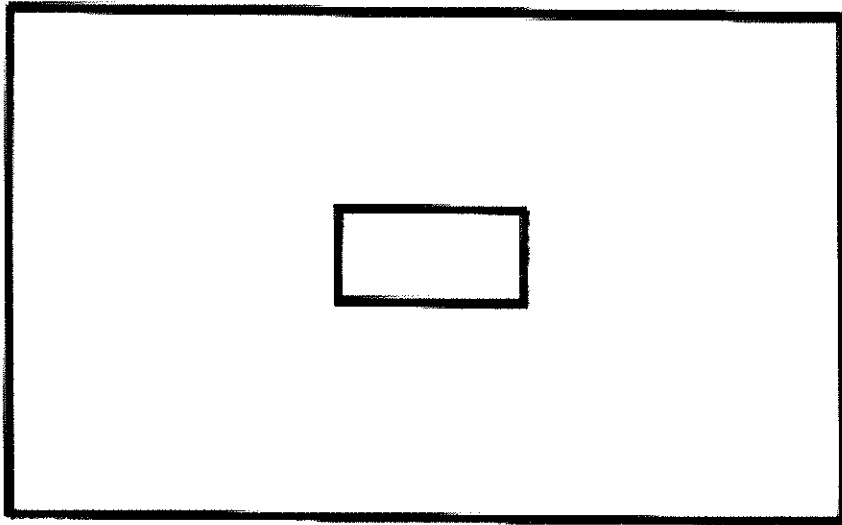
EALRs worked on: Reading (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 3.2, 3.3)  
Writing (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3) (See Appendix at end of Chapter 4)

Objective: The student will be able to construct a light switch cover with an appropriate message on it.

Materials:

- Blank tag board light cover templates (included)
- Markers, crayons, pencils and other classroom materials
- Tape

Procedure: The teacher will provide the blank light switch cover templates copied on tag board. The students will then design a message to put on the cover and illustrate the cover to go with the chosen message. The teacher will encourage friendly messages.





Name of Center: Listening Center

EALRs worked on: Communication (1.1, 1.2), Reading (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.3) (See Appendix at end of Chapter 4)

Objectives: The student will listen to a recorded book and read along as he or she listens to the story.

Materials needed:

- Books with recorded tapes
- Tape recorder
- headphones

Procedure: Have an area in the classroom with a tape recorder set up. Provide books/tapes for students to choose and read independently or in small groups.

Name of Center: Long Stories

EALRs worked on: Writing (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3) (See Appendix at end of Chapter 4)

Objective: The student will be able to write a story of their choosing on an adding machine paper roll.

Materials:

Adding machine paper rolls

Pencils, markers and other classroom supplies

Procedure: The teacher will provide the students with adding machine paper rolls. The students may write stories on the long rolls of paper and illustrate the stories.

Name of Center: Magazine Cut-ups

EALRs worked on: Writing (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3) (See Appendix at end of Chapter 4)

Objective: The student will be able to make a magazine collage and write describing words next to the pictures.

Materials:

- Old magazines to be cut up

- Scissors, glue and other classroom supplies

- Construction paper

Procedure: The teacher will provide old magazines to be cut up and glued on construction paper. The students will cut pictures as they desire and place on construction paper. The students will then label their picture. If desired, the students can then write a story about their picture and attach it to the back.

Name of Center: Mobiles

EALRs worked on: Reading (1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3)  
Writing (1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3) Arts (1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 4.1)  
(See Appendix at end of Chapter 4)

Objective: The student will be able to construct a mobile to represent a fiction or nonfiction story or book.

Materials:

- Construction paper
- Other types of paper
- Hangers
- Yarn
- Markers, glue, scissors, and other classroom materials
- Fiction and nonfiction books

Procedure: The teacher will provide materials for the students to construct a mobile based on fiction or nonfiction book that we have read together or that they have read independently. The students can choose the type of media they would like to use for their mobile. The teacher will provide support and direct the items represented on the mobile if needed.

Name of Center: Name Flip Books

EALRs worked on: Reading (1.1, 1.2, 2.2, 2.3, 3.2, 3.3)  
Writing (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3) (See Appendix at end of Chapter 4)

Objective: The student will be able to construct a flip book of the letters in their name.

Materials:

- Construction paper

- Crayons, markers and other classroom supplies

- Alphabet pictures

Procedure: The teacher will provide the supplies necessary to make a flip book. The students will write their name on the folded paper and cut the paper dividing the letters in their name. Each letter is flipped up in turn and an identifying picture is placed underneath the letter. This can also be done with adjectives and the students can write someone else's name on top, or with an area of study like the ocean, jungle, or science concept.

Name of Center: Never Ending Story

EALRs worked on: Reading (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.3) Writing (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3) (See Appendix at end of Chapter 4)

Objective: The student will be able to write in narrative form and continue the next page in a story.

Materials:

Several copies of pre-made books with blank pages (included)

Pencils, crayons, and other classroom supplies

Procedure: The teacher will provide several copies of blank books of the story frames. The first student to choose this center will start the narrative story on the first page and make an illustration. The next students will read the proceeding pages and choose the next available page to add on to this story that has already begun, writing a paragraph and adding an illustration. The story will be completed when all of the pages are filled.

# Never-Ending Story

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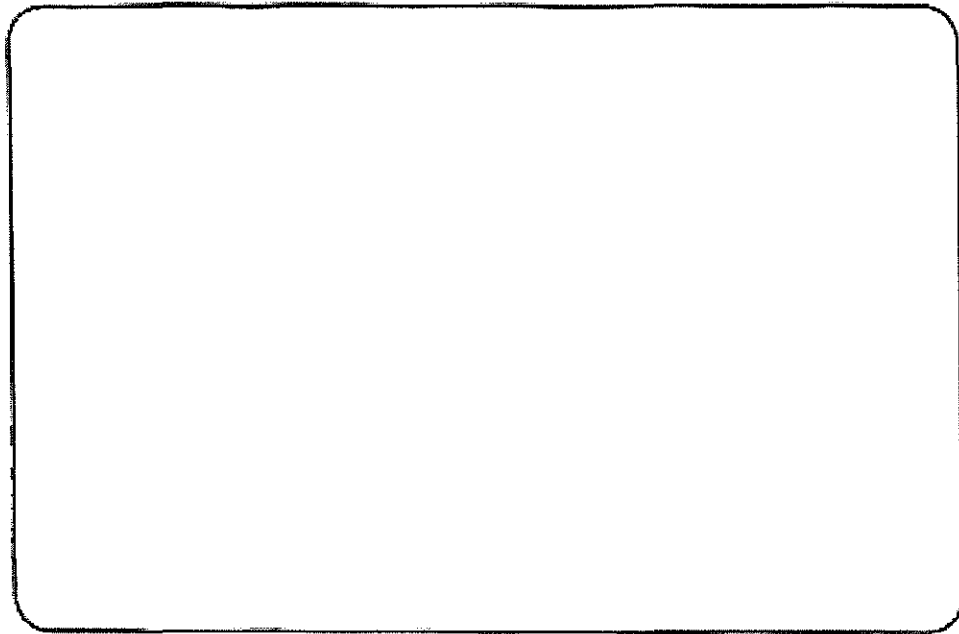
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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Center: Overhead Projector

EALRs worked on: Reading (1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 4.2, 4.3) Writing (1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 4.2) Communication (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3) (See Appendix at end of Chapter 4)

Objective: The student will use the overhead projector to create new writing items and project it or use teacher created writing and finish the tasks or make additions or changes to it.

**Materials:**

Blank transparencies

Teacher created transparencies of poems, word searches or other items.

Overhead projector

Water based overhead markers

Other manipulatives as needed

Procedure: Allow students to independently use created or independently created transparencies on the overhead projector to read, write or create and communicate with peers.



Name of Center: Pocket Chart

EALRs worked on: Reading (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3)  
Writing (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3) Communication (1.1, 2.1,  
2.3, 2.4, 3.1) (See Appendix at end of Chapter 4)

Objectives: 1) The students will be able to use a pocket chart to read and interpret stories and poems. 2) The students will be able to use a pocket chart to construct words, phrases and sentences.

#### Materials

Pocket charts, regular and mini  
Sentence strips, blank and pre-written  
Markers, scissors  
Pre-made letters, clusters, onsets, rimes, prefixes and  
suffixes  
Pointers

Procedure: The teacher will provide pocket charts and all necessary materials for the students to write with and on in order to make stories and poems for the pocket charts. The teacher may also provide pre-made letter, cluster, onset, and rime cards for the students to work on individual words, phrases and sentences. The students read the charts they have created and those of others.

Name of Center: Poems

EALRs worked on: Reading (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 2.3, 3.1, 3.3) (See Appendix at end of Chapter 4)

Objective: The students will be able to select poems from a container and read, interpret and analyze them.

Materials:

- Copies of favorite poems, both published and class written

- Storage container

- Cardboard cubes if desired

Procedure: The teacher will provide copies of favorite poems for the students to read and enjoy. They may be placed on cardboard cubes for the student to use also. The students choose poems they desire to read and enjoy by themselves or with a friend.

Name of Center: Read and Write the Room

EALRs worked on: Reading (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2)  
Writing (1.1, 2.2, 2.3) (See Appendix at end of Chapter 4)

Objective: The student will be able to read words displayed in the classroom and write a list on paper using the words they have found in the room.

Materials:

Classroom word walls, charts, posters and displays

Clipboard and paper

Pencils, markers or other classroom supplies

Pointers

Procedure: The teacher will provide an abundance of words and charts available in the classroom. The students use the pointers to find words that they like and write them on their writing clipboard and paper. They may copy charts, posters, words, songs, poems, or any other words that they like and choose.

Name of Center: Reading journal

EALRs worked on: Reading (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 4.3) Writing (1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3) (See Appendix at end of Chapter 4)

Objective: The student will be able to read a story of their choosing, analyze the story, and write a small book report in a reading journal for the whole class to access.

Materials:

Reading journal (page included)

Books of the students choosing

Pencils

Procedure: The teacher will provide the student with books appropriate for their levels and a journal with pre-made pages that ask questions about the story. The students read a favorite book and make an entry on an available page for the whole class to access when they choose books to read. A library area in the classroom is a good place to use this center.

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of the book:

\_\_\_\_\_

Who were the main characters:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I liked the book because:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name of Center: Science

EALRs worked on: Writing (1.2, 1.3, 2.2, 2.3) Science (1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1) (See Appendix at end of Chapter 4)

Objective: The student will be able to apply scientific inquiry skills to analyze a container of materials and write a description of what they have observed in a journal.

Materials:

Tubs of thematic scientific materials (items from the seashore, forest, items related to animals, items related to magnets, dinosaur related items, etc.)

Scientific tools (magnifying glass, toothpicks, etc.)

Journals and pencils

Books related to thematic tub materials

Procedure: The teacher will provide the students with a tub of materials to be analyzed scientifically depending on the season or the theme being studied. The students will then spend time looking at the items in the tub and investigating them with scientific tools like magnifying glasses. After investigation, the students will write in a science journal about their observations and conclusions they have made based on their discoveries and background knowledge.

Name of Center: Shape Books

EALRs worked on: Reading (1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3)  
Writing 91.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3) (See Appendix at end of Chapter 4)

Objective: The students will be able to write a short book on different shaped paper representing an analysis of a book they have read or definition of a term.

Materials:

Different shaped note pads or cut outs

Markers, pencils, glue and other classroom supplies

Yarn

Book binder if needed

Procedure: The teacher will provide different shaped note pads or copied cut outs of different shapes for the students to write their "book" on. The students will either choose to do a summary of a story they have read or choose a term and define it. The books will then be published in the class book tubs for all of the students to enjoy.

Name of Center: Sign Language Stories

EALRs worked on: Reading (1.1, 1.3, 2.3, 3.3) Writing (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.3) (See Appendix at end of Chapter 4)

Objective: The student will be able to write a short story using cut out diagrams of sign language letters.

Materials:

Cut out sign language letters

Paper

Glue, pencils, markers and other classroom supplies

Procedure: The teacher will provide cut out sign language letters and paper. The students will then construct a story using the sign language alphabet for their stories. They may choose to keep the English representation of the correct letter with the hand sign or not.



# Manual Alphabet

Name of Center: Stamp a story

EALRs worked on: Reading (1.1, 2.2, 3.3) Writing (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3) (See Appendix at end of Chapter 4)

Objective: The student will be able to write a story using stamps and ink.

Materials:

- “Once upon a time” story starter sheets (page included)
- Misc. stamps of letters and objects
- Stamp pads of different colors
- Markers

Procedure: The teacher will provide the students with story started sheets with “Once upon a time” written on them. The teacher will also provide a variety of letter stamps and other common shapes for the students to use while writing a story as well as colorful stamp pads. The center is set up to be used for narrative writing but could easily be modified for other genres. Students work at a table that is easily washed.

NEW YORK AND

NEW YORK

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Name of Center: Stamp Collector

EALRs worked on: Reading (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.5, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2)  
Writing (1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3) Social Studies – Geography  
(1.1) (See Appendix at end of Chapter 4)

Objective: The students will be able to identify the origin of a selected stamp, and approximate the location of the country on a world map.

Materials:

- World wide stamps

- Map of the world (handout included)

- Atlas' or globes

- Glue, pencils, and other classroom supplies

Procedure: The teacher will supply the center with various stamps from around the world and atlas' so the students can identify the country of origin. The students will then place the stamp on a handout and identify the approximate location of the country of origin.

# Stamp Collecting

---

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**What country is your stamp from?** \_\_\_\_\_

**Find the country on a world map. Then, answer these questions.**

1. What bodies of water touch this country?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What is the bordering country to the north?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. What is the bordering country to the east?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Is this country north or south of the equator?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Use the back of this recording form to draw a detailed picture of your stamp.

Name of Center: Star Center

EALRs worked on: Communication (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3) Arts (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4) (See Appendix at end of Chapter 4)

Objectives: The student will communicate with others as he or she works on an independent art project.

Materials:

Change as project changes

Teacher chooses quick art projects based on theme or specific curriculum topic

May include paints, paper, tubes, reproducible materials, pipe cleaners, coffee filters, etc.

Procedure: Teacher will teach students to do particular activity based on studied items. The students will then explore with the medium used and the techniques needed to accomplish the project.

## Survey the Class

Favorite Color					
red	/	/			
blue	/	/	/		
green	/				
pink	/	/	/	/	

Name of Center: Survey the Class

EALRs worked on: Reading (1.1, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2) Writing (1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3) Math (1.1, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.3, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 5.2, 5.3) Communication (1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 3.1, 3.2) (See Appendix at end of Chapter 4)

Objective: The student will be able to make a graphic survey of a topic of their choice of the students in the class.

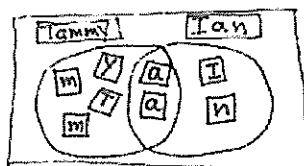
Materials:

Graph paper or chart paper

Clipboards

Pencils, markers, and other classroom supplies

Procedure: The teacher will make graph paper available for the center. The students will choose a topic to survey the class (ex. Favorite color or type of pizza). They will then conduct their survey, make a graph to represent their results, and report their findings to the class.



Venn Fun

Name of Center: Venn Fun

EALRs worked on: Reading (1.1, 3.1, 3.2) Math (1.1, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 5.2) (See Appendix at end of Chapter 4)

Objective: The student will select names of two people in the classroom and place each letter in a Venn diagram in the correct spots.

Materials:

Large laminated Venn diagrams with 2 or 3 circles

Letter cards

Water washable markers

Procedure: The teacher will provide the students with large 2 circle Venn diagrams that have been laminated and letter cards. The students will then select 2 names or words to compare and write the words above each of the circles. The students will then use the letter cards to place the letters in the correct circles representing if the letter goes in one circle or the area where the two circles come together. The center can be modified to include Venn diagrams with 3 circles also.



Name of Center: Writing Table

EALRs worked on: Writing (1.2, 1.3, 2.1-2.3, 4.1, 4.2),  
Communications(1.2, 1.3, 2.1-2.5, 3.1-3.3, 4.2), Reading  
(1.1, 1.2) (See Appendix at end of Chapter 4)

Objectives: The student will use a variety of tools to write cards, letters, banners, etc. to demonstrate an ability to write for pleasure and for different audiences.

Materials needed:

- Different types/colors of paper
- Various markers, stamps, colored pencils
- Tape, staples, stencils

Procedure: Put supplies on a special desk or other area in the classroom specifically for the writing center. Allow students to write, and explore different media and production devices to write and communicate.

A W D F H I J  
K O M O P Q R  
T R U W Y Z P  
A D B C E F U  
S E A R C H Z  
G K L N O R Z  
S U V X Z A L  
B D F G J K E  
I M A F O O S

Name of Center: Word Search

EALRs worked on: Reading (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 4.1),  
Communication (1.1, 1.3, 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1, 4.2)  
(See Appendix at end of Chapter 4)

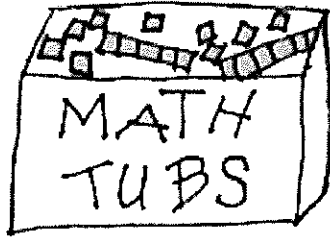
Objective: The student will complete word searches and review common words.

Materials:

Word searches: Pre-made and copied or teacher made for specific goals like spelling words.

Writing devices, preferably erasable

Procedure: The students have self selection of word searches based on spelling words or other topics. They may work at a desk either independently or with others.



Name of Center: 1 2 3 Shelf

EALRs worked on: Communication (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1, 4.2), Math (1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3)  
(See Appendix at end of Chapter 4)

Objectives: The student will communicate with others as he or she expands on the mathematical skills that they have been presented. Skills include patterning, counting, addition and subtraction, geometry, measurement, and problem solving.

Materials:

Classroom math tubs including but not limited to:  
Pattern blocks, unifix cubes, sorting  
manipulatives, tangrams, blocks, etc.

Procedure: Allow students to work freely on chosen tubs while encouraging them to communicate about the items they are using. Encourage problem solving. May tie into a writing activity if the teacher wishes.

Assessment Tools

# Assessment Tools

Assessment Tools

# Assessment Tools

Assessment Tools

# Assessment Tools

Assessment Tools

# Assessment Tools

# Self Assessment

## I read something

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday

## I wrote something

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday

## I listened to something

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday

## I communicated with someone

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday



Literacy Center Interview

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

What is your favorite center and why?

What is your least favorite center and why?

What goal is easy to do and which is hard to do for you?

Literacy Center Interview

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

What is your favorite center and why?

What is your least favorite center and why?

What goal is easy to do and which is hard to do for you?

## READING BENCHMARKS: FIRST GRADE

STUDENT:

TEACHER:

BENCHMARK	Date Introduced	Date Practiced	Date Mastered
Tracks left to right, top to bottom, word by word			
Names upper and lower case letters			
Uses knowledge of letter/sound association to predict text			
Uses picture to predict and confirm text			
Uses knowledge of word patterns when decoding			
Uses prior knowledge and experiences to build understanding of print			
Demonstrates knowledge of sentence/language structure:			
capitalization			
punctuation			
vocabulary			
verb tense			
Uses and discusses strategies used to make sense of familiar and unfamiliar text:			
rereads			
self-corrects			
adjusts speed			
Begins to use sight word vocabulary			
Recognizes and responds to a variety of literature read aloud			
narrative			
realistic			
fantasy			
recount			
songs			
letters			
diaries			
rhyme and verse			
Identify literary devices			
dialogue			
mood			
exaggeration			
humor			
Retells a simple story			
setting			
characters			
plot			
main idea			
beginning, middle, end			
Aware of parts of non-fiction text			
pictures			



labels			
dictionaries			
atlas			
encyclopedia			
computer resources			
Aware that information can be gained from different types of books			
Makes predictions in, inferences in, and comparisons of stories read aloud			
Reads and responds to labels, directions and captions			
Aware of documents used in career settings			
Aware of reading goals, record keeping, and personal reading levels			
Explores, self-selects and shares favorite books			

## WRITING BENCHMARKS: FIRST GRADE

Student:

Teacher:

BENCHMARKS	Date	Date	Date
	Introduced	Practiced	Mastered
Tracks left to right, top to bottom, word by work			
Names upper and lower case letters			
Uses knowledge of letter/sound association to predict text			
Uses picture to predict and confirm text			
Uses knowledge of word patterns when decoding			
Uses prior knowledge and experiences to build understanding of print			
Demonstrates knowledge of sentence/language structure:			
capitalization			
punctuation			
vocabulary			
verb tense			
Uses and discusses strategies used to make sense of familiar and unfamiliar text:			
rereads			
self-corrects			
adjusts speed			
Begins to use sight word vocabulary			
Recognizes and responds to a variety of literature read aloud			
narrative			
realistic			
fantasy			
labels			
recount			
songs			
letters			
diaries			
rhyme and verse			
Identify literary devices			
dialogue			
mood			
exaggeration			
humor			
Retells a simple story			
setting			
characters			
plot			
main idea			
beginning, middle, end			
Aware of parts of non-fiction text			
pictures			

dictionaries			
atlas			
encyclopedia			
computer resources			
Aware that information can be gained from different types of books			
Makes predictions in, inferences in, and comparisons of stories read aloud			
Reads and responds to labels, directions and captions			
Aware of documents used in career settings			
Aware of reading goals, record keeping, and personal reading levels			
Explores, self-selects and shares favorite books			

## COMMUNICATION BENCHMARKS: FIRST GRADE

Student:

Teacher:

BENCHMARK	Date Introduced	Date Practiced	Date Mastered
Exhibits appropriate audience behaviors for short periods			
appropriate questions, comments and feedback			
eye contact			
non-verbal cues			
listening without interrupting			
Makes meaningful interpretations of visuals (i.e. graphics and videos)			
Identifies elements of read-alouds (facts, opinions, main idea, meaning)			
Recognizes and responds to simple directions and instructions			
Begins to ask questions to clarify content, meaning, and information			
Uses language and resources to explain, sequence, compare, discuss and reason			
Responds to prompts to communicate for different audiences and variety of purposes			
narrative speech			
descriptive speech			
topic-related speech			
Uses appropriate speaking qualities			
rate of speech			
voice projections			
speech fluency/expression			
posture/eye contact			
Begins to use increasingly conventional sentence structure, grammar, and vocabulary			
Uses words, drawings, a media resource to share ideas			
Uses appropriate conversation skills			
Uses communication skills to work as an effective member of a group			
Uses the language of negotiation			
interacts verbally			
makes plans with a partner			
problem solves			
invites interaction			
speaks with empathy			
Begins to use established criteria to evaluate and improve students own communication			
Offers and uses feedback to improve communication			
Develops and awareness of the form and intent of various forms of mass communication			
newspapers			
magazines			
cartoons			
advertisements			
Identifies different ways people communicate			

READING DEVELOPMENT PROFILE

PHASE 1: ROLE PLAY READING

LOOK WHAT I CAN DO	not yet	sometimes	always
Hold the book the right way up			
Turn the pages by myself			
Talk about the pictures			
Point to the words			
Read my name, point to the first letter of my name in other words			
Know the meaning of some signs I see in the streets, shops and classroom			
Choose a favorite book			
Talk about and tell favorite stories			
Join in with songs and rhymes			
Know when someone has left out a bit of a favorites story			
Know which page a favorite bit comes from			
Tell stories to myself, saying things like "once upon a time" or "happily ever after"			
Look at a book and tell a story to myself, using the pictures to help me			
Talk about people, animals or things in books which are like family, pets, or things I know			
I like:			
Having stories read to me			
Telling stories to myself, other people or pets			
"Reading" books			
Joining in telling the stories as they are read to me			
Hearing stories again and again			
<b>PHASE 2: EXPERIMENTAL READING</b>	<b>not yet</b>	<b>sometimes</b>	<b>always</b>
Point to some words and say what they mean			
Understand that a story in a book is always told in the same words			
Point to some letters, especially those in my name			
Tell people what some signs and notices say			
Uses words like book, chapter, word, letter, number			
Understand that I have to speak slowly if someone is writing down what I say			

Tell people what a story is about			
Retell a story and remember to say who it is about and what happened			
Say or sing most of the alphabet			
Tell the sound that some letters stand for			
Point to words as they are read			
Talk about how the people and animals in books are like or not like the people and animals I know			
Find a word which fits a gap in a story			
Sometimes I know what a word is by looking at the first letter			
Ask if I don't understand something			
Make good guesses			
I like:			
Reading			
Listening to stories			
Joining in and acting out stories			
Choosing books			
<b>PHASE 3: EARLY READING</b>	<b>not yet</b>	<b>sometimes</b>	<b>always</b>
Reads some words in books and find the same words in other places too			
Think of sensible words to fill gaps in a story			
Read the stories or sentences that I have written or dictated			
Tell what a story was about after it has been read and remember special bits about the people and what they did			
Sound out words that I don't know			
Go back and read a bit again if I forgot what it's about			
Use pictures to help me read			
Guess what a word might be about			
Guess what a word might be if I'm not sure			
Point to words as I read them if I am reading something hard			
Use words I can see around me or words I know I have read before to help me learn			
Tell if words sound the same, like 'zoo' and 'you' or look the same like 'door' and 'floor'			
I like:			
Having-a-go at reading new words			
Listening to stories			
Talking about stories			
Choosing books			
Reading for fun			
Reading to find things out			

PHASE 4: TRANSITIONAL READING	not yet	sometimes	always
Think of things I already know about a topic when I'm reading a book			
Tell other people what a book was about, whether it was a story or a book of information			
Give people more detailed information about a book if they ask for it			
Tell people what I think about a book and whether I agree or disagree with what it says			
Tell people why I think the way I do about a book			
Guess what is going to happen in a book and say why			
Tell when I've made a mistake and put it right			
Have-a-go at reading words I don't know			
Talk about how a story or an information book is put together			
Sounds out words			
Read some words which I can't sound out, because I know how the letter go together			
Break a word down into syllables			
Guess a word because I know another one like it			
Understand why capital letter, full stops, commas, exclamation marks and speech marks are used			
Use my voice to show the meaning when I read aloud			
Tell when an author is trying to make me think about something his or her way			
I like:			
Reading for my own pleasure			
Reading to find things out			
Having-a-go at books which are interesting but a bit hard			
Talking about books and the way they make me feel			
Particular books and authors			
Comparing one book with another			
Thinking about whether a book is like real life or whether it's just the way the author sees it.			
PHASE 5: INDEPENDENT READING	not yet	sometimes	always
Feel as if I've experienced things when I've really only read about them			
Work out a new idea or piece of information from a book			
Understand that different people will read things differently and try to see their points of view			
Tell when an author is trying to brainwash me			
Find the main idea and key information in a book			

Point to ways authors have used language to show that something is important, funny or sad, etc.			
Describe how different texts are written in different ways, e.g. a report, a mystery story			
Make a good guess about the meaning of an unknown word by making sense of what is being said			
Uses my imagination to create more meaning for myself			
Use my knowledge about how different texts are constructed to help me understand them			
Predict what might happen next			
Suggest why things might happen			
Summarize a text			
Draw conclusions			
Make inferences			
Describe how the purpose of a book dictates the way it is written			
Use my knowledge of the subject, the context, the sound letters represent, word derivations, and the way a sentence is written to help me			
Understand that I read different texts in different ways			
Read-on and read-back to make sense of a passage I don't understand			
Know when I am unable to understand something and ask for help			
Visualize events and characters			
I like:			
Reading books by my favorite authors and trying others as well			
Recommending books I've enjoyed to my friends			
Telling why I did or didn't enjoy a book			
Being left in peace when I read			
Researching information			
Finding out about things and experiences which I'm not sure about			
Pretending I'm part of a story or one of the characters			

Adapted from:

Education Department of Western Australia, 1994



WRITING DEVELOPMENT PROFILE

LOOK WHAT I CAN DO

not yet

sometimes

always

PHASE 1: ROLE PLAY WRITING			
Have-a-go at writing on my own			
Try to write some letters of the alphabet			
Try to write my own name			
Write 'messages' or 'lists'			
Read' my own 'writing'			
Point to where writing starts			
Point to pictures			
Point to words when I read			
Talk about things I am writing			
Talk about some signs I see in shops or in the street			
I like: 'writing' just for fun showing people what I can write listening to stories joining in with stories as they are told listening to my favorite stories and rhymes			
PHASE 2: EXPERIMENTAL WRITING	not yet	sometimes	always
Have-a-go at writing on my own			
Tell others what I have written			
Try to write lists, stories, messages, signs, cards, and letters			
Write about things I can do			
Writes some letters from the alphabet			
Say the alphabet and point to each letter			
Sound-out some words as I write them			
Write some words correctly			
Point to each word as I say it			
Copy some words I need			
Leave a space between each word			
I like: writing for myself and other people telling people about my writing seeing my writing pinned up for everyone to read showing other people what I have written reading stories and having them read to me reading stories and having them read to me telling about things I have done and places I have been			

<b>PHASE 3: EARLY WRITING</b>	not yet	sometimes	always
Choose interesting things to write about explain why I am writing			
Writes recounts, procedures, stories, letters, lists, labels, signs, and other interesting things that I need to write			
Find some parts of my writing that need to be improved			
Mark some words in my writing that I am not sure of			
Talk about my plans for writing			
Re-read my writing to make sure it makes sense			
Use our class checklist to help me edit my work			
Share my ideas for writing			
Listen to other people's writing and make suggestions to improve it			
Sound out words			
Use word banks and class charts to help me with my spelling when I write			
I like: writing for fun being able to finish my writing to see others enjoy my stories showing others what I write talking about what I am going to write			
<b>PHASE 4: CONVENTIONAL WRITING</b>	not yet	sometimes	always
Write for different purposes and audiences			
See the difference between books that are written to give factual information and books that tell a story			
Plan my writing so that I develop the main idea and include supporting materials that adds information and interest			
Brainstorm to see what I already know about a topic			
Make notes and gather information from things that I read			
Classify the information I have and decide whether I need to find more information in a particular area before I start writing			
Organize my writing using headings and sub headings			
Write a main sentence and add relevant information to develop a paragraph			
Make sure that one paragraph logically leads to the next			
Choose a story title that will make the reader want to read on			
Include all the necessary details to set the scene of a story			
Include dialogue to develop the plot of a story or to give the reader more information about a character			
Develop characters that are believable by including interesting details about their personalities, actions and reactions			
Build up excitement in a story by including interesting details			
Use repetition for emphasis			

Talk about ways that published authors 'hook' readers and keep them interested			
Use adverbs and adjectives to elaborate for the reader			
Uses the following punctuation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- capital letters for proper nouns, titles and start sentences</li> <li>- question marks</li> <li>-exclamation marks</li> <li>- apostrophes and contractions</li> <li>- apostrophes for possession</li> <li>-quotation marks for dialogue</li> <li>- brackets to include additional information</li> </ul>			
Combine short sentences to form a more interesting sentence			
Proof read and revise my own writing using our editing checklist			
Cut and paste text to reorder the ideas and clarify meaning			
Use a dictionary to check my spelling			
Choose better words for commonly overused ones like said or nice			
Set personal goals to improve my writing			
Keep records of what I have written using a writing log			
<b>PHASE 5: PROFICIENT WRITING</b>	not yet	sometimes	always
Select text forms to suit different purposes and audiences			
Read as a writer			
Plan before I write			
Explain why I make decisions about what to include in my writing			
Write from different points of view			
Brainstorm to see what I already know about a topic			
Make notes and gather information from things that I read then classify the information appropriately			
Organize writing using headings and sub heading where appropriate			
Make sure that one paragraph leads logically to the next			
Write a main sentence and add relevant information to develop a paragraph			
Include all the necessary details to set the scene of a story			
Include dialogue To develop the plot of a story or to give the reader more information about a character			
Develop characters that are believable by including interesting details about their personalities, actions, and reactions			
Build up excitement and suspense in a story by including intriguing details			
Use different ways to 'hook' readers and keep them interested in reading on			
Use technical vocabulary appropriate to particular subjects and topics			
Use a wide range of precise vocabulary to elaborate for the reader			
Select particular words or phrases for their shades of meaning			

Use correct punctuation - capital letters for proper nouns, titles, and to start sentences - question marks - exclamation marks - apostrophes and contractions - apostrophes for possession - quotation marks for dialogue - brackets to include additional information			
Use a dictionary or a spell check program to check my spelling			
Cut and paste text to reorder and clarify meaning			
Proof read and revise my own writing			
Set and review personal goals to improve my writing			

Adapted from:

Education Department of Western Australia, 1994

Appendix  
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## ESSENTIAL ACADEMIC LEARNING REQUIREMENTS

# READING

### 1. The student understands and uses different skills and strategies to read.

To meet this standard, the student will:

- 1.1 use word recognition and word meaning skills to read and comprehend text  
*such as phonics, context clues, picture clues, and word origins; roots, prefixes, and suffixes of words*
- 1.2 build vocabulary through reading
- 1.3 read fluently, adjusting reading for purpose and material
- 1.4 understand elements of literature -- fiction  
*such as story elements, use of humor, exaggeration, and figures of speech*
- 1.5 use features of non-fiction text and computer software  
*such as titles, headings, pictures, maps, and charts to find and understand specific information*

### 2. The student understands the meaning of what is read.

To meet this standard, the student will:

- 2.1 comprehend important ideas and details
- 2.2 expand comprehension by analyzing, interpreting, and synthesizing information and ideas
- 2.3 think critically and analyze authors' use of language, style, purpose, and perspective

### 3. The student reads different materials for a variety of purposes.

To meet this standard, the student will:

- 3.1 read to learn new information  
*such as reading science and mathematics texts, technical documents, and for personal interest*

- 3.2 read to perform a task  
*such as using schedules, following directions, filling out job applications, and solving problems*
  - 3.3 read for literary experience  
*in a variety of forms such as novels, short stories, poems, plays, and essays to understand self and others*
  - 3.4 read for career applications
4. **The student sets goals and evaluates progress to improve reading.**
- To meet this standard, the student will:
- 4.1 assess strengths and need for improvement
  - 4.2 seek and offer feedback to improve reading
  - 4.3 develop interests and share reading experiences

## WRITING

1. **student writes clearly and effectively.**  
To meet this standard, the student will:
  - 1.1 develop concept and design  
develop a topic or theme; organize written thoughts with a clear beginning, middle, and end; use transitional sentences and phrases to connect related ideas; write coherently and effectively
  - 1.2 use style appropriate to the audience and purpose  
use voice, word choice, and sentence fluency for intended style and audience
  - 1.3 apply writing conventions  
know and apply correct spelling, grammar, sentence structure, punctuation, and capitalization.

**2. The student writes in a variety of forms for different audiences and purposes.**

To meet this standard, the student will:

- 2.1 write for different audiences
- 2.2 write for different purposes  
*such as telling stories, presenting analytical responses to literature, persuading, conveying technical information, completing a team project, explaining concepts and procedures*
- 2.3 write in a variety of forms  
including narratives, journals, poems, essays, stories, research reports, and technical writing
- 2.4 write for career applications

**3. The student understands and uses the steps of the writing process.**

To meet this standard, the student will:

- 3.1 prewrite  
generate ideas and gather information
- 3.2 draft  
elaborate on a topic and supporting ideas
- 3.3 revise  
collect input and enhance text and style
- 3.4 edit  
use resources to correct spelling, punctuation, grammar, and usage
- 3.5 publish  
select a publishing form and produce a completed writing project to share with chosen audience

**4. The student analyzes and evaluates the effectiveness of written work.**

To meet this standard, the student will:

- 4.1 assess own strengths and needs for improvement  
analyze effectiveness of own writing and set goals for improvement
- 4.2 seek and offer feedback



# COMMUNICATION

**1. The student uses listening and observation skills to gain understanding.**

To meet this standard, the student will:

- 1.1 focus attention
- 1.2 listen and observe to gain and interpret information
- 1.3 check for understanding by asking questions and paraphrasing

**2. The student communicates ideas clearly and effectively.**

To meet this standard, the student will:

- 2.1 communicate clearly to a range of audiences for different purposes
- 2.2 develop content and ideas  
develop a topic or theme; organize thoughts around a clear beginning, middle, and end; use transitional sentences and phrases to connect related ideas; speak coherently and compellingly
- 2.3 use effective delivery  
adjust speaking strategies for a variety of audiences and purposes by varying tone, pitch, and pace of speech to create effect and aid communication
- 2.4 use effective language and style  
use language that is grammatically correct, precise, engaging and well-suited to topic, audience, and purpose
- 2.5 effectively use action, sound, and/or images to support presentations

**3. The student uses communication strategies and skills to work effectively with others.**

To meet this standard, the student will:

- 3.1 use language to interact effectively and responsibly with others
- 3.2 work cooperatively as a member of a group
- 3.3 seek agreement and solutions through discussion

**4. The student analyzes and evaluates the effectiveness of formal and informal communication.**

To meet this standard, the student will:

- 4.1 assess strengths and need for improvement  
assess own and others' communication strengths and needs and set goals for improvement
- 4.2 seek and offer feedback  
seek and use feedback to improve communication; offer suggestions and comments to others
- 4.3 analyze mass communication
- 4.4 analyze how communication is used in career settings

## **MATHEMATICS**

**1. The student understands and applies the concepts and procedures of mathematics.**

To meet this standard, the student will:

- 1.1 understand and apply concepts and procedures from number sense  
number and numeration, computation, and estimation
- 1.2 understand and apply concepts and procedures from measurement  
attributes and dimensions, approximation and precision, and systems and tools

- 1.3 understand and apply concepts and procedures from geometric sense  
properties and relationships, and locations and transformations
- 1.4 understand and apply concepts and procedures from probability and statistics  
probability, statistics, and prediction and inference
- 1.5 understand and apply concepts and procedures from algebraic sense  
patterns, representations, and operations

**The student uses mathematics to define and solve problems.**

To meet this standard, the student will:

- 1.6 investigate situations  
by searching for patterns and using a variety of approaches
- 1.7 formulate questions and define the problem
- 1.8 construct solutions  
by organizing the necessary information and using the appropriate mathematical tools

**2. The student uses mathematical reasoning.**

To meet this standard, the student will:

- 2.1 analyze information  
from a variety of sources; use models, known facts, patterns and relationships to validate thinking
- 2.2 predict results  
and make conjectures based on analysis of problem situations
- 2.3 draw conclusions and verify results  
support mathematical arguments, justify results, and check for reasonableness of solutions

**3. The student communicates knowledge and understanding in both everyday and mathematical language.**

To meet this standard, the student will:

- 3.1 gather information  
read, listen, and observe to access and extract mathematical information
- 3.2 organize and interpret information

- 3.3 represent and share information  
express and explain mathematical ideas using language and notation  
in ways appropriate for audience and purposes
4. **The student understands how mathematical ideas connect within mathematics, to other subject areas, and to real-life situations.**

To meet this standard, the student will:

- 4.1 relate concepts and procedures within mathematics  
use conceptual and procedural understandings among content strands,  
and use equivalent models and representations
- 4.2 relate mathematical concepts and procedures to other  
disciplines  
identify and use mathematical patterns, thinking, and modeling in  
other subject areas
- 4.3 relate mathematical concepts and procedures to real-life  
situations  
understand the connections between mathematics and problem-  
solving skills used every day at work and at home

## SCIENCE

1. **The student understands and uses scientific concepts and principles.**

To meet this standard, the student will:

- 1.1 use properties to identify, describe, and categorize  
substances, materials, and objects, and use characteristics to  
categorize living things
- 1.2 recognize the components, structure, and organization of  
systems and the interconnections within and among them
- 1.3 understand how interactions within and among systems  
cause changes in matter and energy

**2. The students knows and applies the skills and processes of science and technology.**

To meet this standard, the student will:

- 2.1 develop abilities necessary to do scientific inquiry
- 2.2 apply science knowledge and skills to solve problems or meet challenges

**3. The student understands the nature and contexts of science and technology.**

To meet this standard, the student will:

- 3.1 understand the nature of scientific inquiry
- 3.2 know that science and technology are human endeavors, interrelated to each other, to society, and to the workplace
- 3.3 skills to organize and express science ideas  
use effective communication strategies and tools to prepare and present science information

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## Chapter Five: Summary, Conclusion, Recommendations

### Summary

Literacy centers are an effective way to teach emergent literacy to young children. With appropriate goals, modeling, management, and assessment of these centers, they can prove to be fun, hands-on, and authentic ways to get to a more exciting way of learning than sitting and doing work out of a basal. The information collected in the review of related literature and best practices, showed that when children are presented with genuine literacy situations, they will learn as effectively if, not more effectively, as when presented with teacher directed literacy lessons.

Literacy centers can be directed toward different goals based on required evaluations by the teacher. Goals can be based on Washington State EALRs (Commission on Student Learning, 1999), district goals, grade level goals, or personal best practices of the teacher. With many choices available, the students can work on different goals and use their preferred learning style to complete their goals. Assessment of centers is once again a teacher choice with many different options available. Centers are easily managed and are exciting for the students. The teacher has many choices in activities and they are adaptable to different grades and situations. These options encourage students to explore and become life-long literacy learners.

### Conclusions

Literacy centers can help students meet literacy goals but they can also help teachers have more time to work independently with their students on

different literacy, language, and reading goals. The time dedicated to centers can easily be used to individualize instruction for all students. Struggling students can benefit from having review and reteaching time, average students can get assistance with skill advancement and practice, and advanced students can get enrichment activities that normally a teacher wouldn't have time to do with individuals or small groups based on time constraints in the classroom. This individualization can go even further with helping students make use of their best learning styles or intelligences. So while the students are benefiting from hands-on, real literacy situations, the teacher has time to work independently with targeted students as well.

### Recommendations

Literacy centers are effective in teaching literacy skills. According to relevant literature, it has been shown that use of this type of center is effective in teaching literacy to young children. When given the appropriate choices, a teacher can guide his or her student's learning that in turn allows them to make literacy selections that are appropriate for their own needs.

Related literature gives a teacher many choices in techniques and centers that can easily be adapted to any classroom. This emergent literacy method could be used in regular classrooms, English as a Second Language rooms, resources rooms, and just about any primary or preprimary classroom. A creative and flexible teacher can adapt the center skill level to their situations and see their students thrive as I have.

I recommend that teachers who are not afraid of having a little noise in their classrooms, and are willing to take the time to set up, model, manage, and assess this type of learning environment, try this technique. Students look forward to centers every day, they work intently on their goals, work hard to manage themselves while working at centers, and self-assess honestly every day. For the teacher, it gives them a chance to work individually or in small groups with students who need assistance or enrichment of skills. Literacy centers are easy for the teacher to prepare, maintain, manage, and assess. They fit easily into state, district, and personal literacy goals for students. And most of all, they are fun, authentic situations for literacy learning to take place.

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