

LEARNING CENTERS

Helpful Hints

- Young children learn best by doing and by using all five senses. Provide plenty of time for exploring and don't be quick to do things for them.
- Use this rule: If activity ingredients are wet, use them on a table. If they are dry, place them on the floor.
- Avoid clogged glue bottles. Cut an egg carton apart, leaving two cups together. Barely cover the bottom of one cup with glue and place two cotton sticks in the other. Place one pair of cups between every two children. No cleanup is needed; just throw away.
- For water play, cover tables with bath towels. Use items to pour, funnel, mix, and pump. (Make a pump by cutting the bottom from a hand-pump soap bottle.)
- Make butcher aprons from old oilcloth tablecloths, using bias tape or ribbon ties. The teacher should wear an apron around water or paint too.
- Set up portable hand-washing areas. Cut a shower curtain into pieces to use under dishpans. Add motel soap, little sponges, old hand towels, and an inch or two of water.
- Place a shower curtain or oilcloth on the floor under sand, soil, rice, beans, corn, or cornmeal. Lift sides and funnel the contents into a container when finished. Play with these dry ingredients with scoops, berry baskets, funnels, and measuring cups. Store everything in an old suitcase that lies flat.
- Activities should grow with the child. For instance, let a child begin pounding with a wooden peg bench, then try pounding golf tees into Styrofoam with a wooden hammer. Advance to a real hammer and nails to actually build something.
- Place nature items on cotton in greeting card boxes with plastic covers. Tape or glue in items that are especially fragile. This allows children to observe without damaging.
- Fill empty food boxes (gelatin, cereal, macaroni and cheese) with paper and cover with clear adhesive paper. This makes them sturdy and permanent for home living grocery play.
- Use classroom bulletin boards as learning centers. Children will be more attracted to them if they participate in putting them together or can manipulate them in some way.