

Why Do We Use Literacy Centers?

Literacy Centers:

- allow teachers to engage in explicit, focused, guided reading or skills groups without interruption;
- provide opportunities for independent practice of literacy skills;
- facilitate one-on-one instruction, observation, and evaluation of student progress;
- elicit students' exploration, application, understanding, and extension of skills and strategies;
- develop student responsibility for constructing, practicing, and recording new knowledge;
- cover a wide range of skill levels, learning styles, and interests; and
- facilitate the development of self-monitoring, problem-solving and collaboration.

Should I Have Goals and Objectives for Literacy Centers?

Developing literacy centers should be a well thought-out process, one that addresses state literacy standards and the overall goals of the classroom teacher.

Students in literacy centers should:

- be actively involved and focused;
- understand what is expected;
- learn to manage materials and be held accountable for tasks;
- be able to work cooperatively and independently;
- practice skills and strategies that are developmentally appropriate and based on ongoing assessment and teacher observation;
- have the opportunity to work on differentiated instructional tasks;
- focused on meaningful extensions of learning that are focused on literacy.

Keep it simple and manageable!

Avoid busy work and worksheets!

What Will I Need for Literacy Centers?

A well-organized literacy center system should have the following components:

- signs and/or labels for each center;
- preparation time;
- task board or work board to designate center rotation and assignments;
- explicit, illustrated directions;
- adequate storage and classroom space (shelves, tubs, cubbies, carts, Ziplock bags, baskets, etc.);
- established routines for retrieval and storage;
- materials that address learning styles and abilities (differentiated instruction!)
- signals for clean-up;
- accountability;
- modeling by the teacher; and
- choice!

What are the Students' Responsibilities ?

Students will:

- be respectful of the sanctity of the guided reading group;
- not interrupt the learning environment or be disruptive;
- attempt to problem solve and work independently before seeking assistance;
- respect the materials in the centers and realize that "if you abuse it, you lose it" is the standard rule;
- be held accountable for their time in the center;
- stay focused and on task for the duration of the center time;
- be responsible for all materials that they use in the center;
and
- be ready to reflect and share their discoveries with others.