

## **LEARNING CENTER**

<p><u>Kind of center:</u></p> <p>We have chosen to create a <u>dramatic play center</u> inspired by the four seasons (fall, winter, summer, and spring).</p>	
<p><u>Group members:</u></p> <p>Amy Cross, Dolores Petrecca, Stefania Tangredi and Alessia Vigna</p>	
<p><u>Objective(s) of your Center- What was your motivation to creating this center?</u></p> <p>We have chosen to create a dramatic play center because of its flexibility. As the children lead their play, they will bring in unique experiences and discoveries made across centers and curricular areas. Dramatic, make-believe experiences provide opportunities for children to develop tools of the mind which foster empathy, and social skills. Despite their age, children enter the classroom with big emotions; dramatic play allows children to work through these emotions and their internal conflicts. These pretend play opportunities foster children's global development and build skills which they will carry beyond the play center. We believe that as educators we are responsible for cultivating an environment where children can explore their curiosities. Additionally, we believe that students should see their curiosities, strengths, and interests reflected in the environment. Hence, we chose to focus on a theme incorporating the four seasons, as all cultures hold their unique view/connection to nature; thereby seamlessly integrating student representation and diversity in the classroom.</p>	
<p><u>Activities (with a brief description provided at your center.) 1 activity per person)</u></p> <p>Documentation tools present throughout the center: disposable cameras, note pads/clip boards with writing materials, tablets (for recording)</p> <p><u>1. Fall Feast Creations</u></p>	

For this part of the drama center, students will get the chance to run their bakery. There will be different roles students can take in this center, such as the baker, the shopper, and the cashier. The baker will be in charge of creating the food for the center. The menu items include apple pie, pumpkin muffins, and apple cider. The “ingredients” for these foods will be basic arts and crafts materials. The students will have two options: the first one would be for the students to explore the materials and create bakery items that fit their heart’s desire. The second option would be for them to use challenge cards. Challenge cards include specific recipes that will be available for students who want to use them, but they are free to create any recipe they like. The cashier will be in charge of providing for the shopper. Finally, the shopper will buy the food. They will do this by using fake “fall bucks.” With this center, students will learn to engage in imaginative role play, socialize with their peers, practice communication and social skills, and strengthen fine motor skills and creativity by creating the foods using hands-on approaches. Students will get to use different arts and crafts materials along with aprons to make them feel as though they are really working in a bakery.

## 2. Ice Ice Radio

The objective for this activity is for children to engage in pretend play while promoting language development. In this environment, students will have access to the technology and props they need to create their very own radio broadcast. Students will have a bin of loose parts and materials that they can create sound effects with, such as paper or jars of rice. The children can document their news reports using video cameras. They can also plan out or document their play by drawing or writing (for the more advanced students) on clipboards. Students can create any type of broadcast they want, or they can use story cards for inspiration. The story cards cover different emotions, weather forecasts, traffic, and clothing items for children to create their broadcasts. The students are provided with headphones, microphones and winter clothing to spark their imagination for their dramatic play.

## 3. Blooming Buds Spring Flower Shop

The objective of this activity is for the children to participate in pretend play while promoting numeracy development. In the environment the children will have access to various materials to provoke curiosity. The flower shop specifically will have fake flowers organized in transparent boxes and bags. The children will also have access to loose parts (including leaves, wood pieces, yarn, and ribbon). The children will use newspaper, felt, and wax paper to create their own vases. They can use ribbon, yarn, sticks, and rocks to add to their bouquets. The children are invited to role play a florist and client. The children will have access to a flower menu card, with prices where they can select from the flowers they would like in their bouquets. In the center the children will have access to challenge cards which have different patterns, numbers, shapes, and emotions. For instance, the children can pick up a card which shows one pattern repetition, they will be invited to create their bouquets using the pattern and add what comes next/complete it. The students can also explore how their floral creation would differ for someone who is happy versus sad.

Once their bouquets are completed the client will have to pay the florist. The children will have access to price tags they can add to their bouquets; their clients will have access to Seed Dollars (\$1-\$10) where they will pay for their bouquets. The children will practice their number recognition and counting skills in this practice. The children can pay with the corresponding bill, or they can practice their addition skill too by experimenting with joining numbers. The children can also sort their flowers by size, or colour using egg cartons or bins to keep their flower shops organized! Throughout this station the teacher will set up posters of Indigenous sacred plants and flowers which have been pre-discussed in the classroom. The poster will have a photo of the plant/flower and describe its importance in Indigenous culture. This will foster students thinking about why flowers and land are important and how we can take care of our land, because our land helps us grow.

#### 4. A Day at the Beach

The goal of this center is to encourage children to develop their fine motor skills, engage in sensory exploration, and participate in pretend play through a beach themed activity. Children will pretend to spend a day at the beach, building sandcastles and creating other unique sculptures. Although castles are a fun starting point for the children, they are not limited to *only* creating them. Using kinetic sand, a very moldable, sand-like material, and Play-Doh, the children will build sandcastles and/or sculptures by themselves, in pairs, or small groups. The sand will be placed in a clear labeled bin, allowing the children to see through the container and view their work through multiple perspectives. They will also have a water box/container, where they may place objects and play around with different materials in the water, offering a sensory-rich experience. Children will have access to a multitude of objects/materials, all labeled with pictures and placed in clear containers, to use in/for their sandcastle creations and water exploration. Students are free to explore the materials and use them however they wish, however, here are some examples as to what they *can* use them for:

- Sticks: Children may use the sticks as decoration in their sandcastles or sculptures. They may use the sticks to draw designs in the sand/clay.
- Seashells: The children may use the seashells to decorate their sandcastles or sculptures. They may use the seashells to make patters in the sand/clay, either placing them on the material or stamping them.
- Rocks: Children may use the rocks to decorate their sandcastles or sculptures. They may use the rocks to stamp patterns in the sand. They may also put the rocks in the water and explore the sensory experience of rocks in and out of the water – thinking about the weight and the texture.
- Shovels and rakes: Children may use the shovels to scoop up the sand and place it where they wish in the sandbox and may use the rakes to design patterns in the sand. They may also use shovels to scoop the water in the water box.
- Cups: Children may use the cups as molds to create tiers in their sandcastles. They may use the cups to scoop water, and the objects they put in the water.

The children will also have access to beach towels and sunglasses, to further enhance their pretend beach day experience.

As an additional part of the activity, students can use challenge cards and create their sandcastles based off the letter, shape, or number they pick from the pile. For example, if they pick an “A” letter card, they may build a sculpture of something that starts with the letter and/or sound. If the number “1” is chosen, they may place one rock in the water bin. If the “square” card is chosen, they may mold the sand/clay into a square and add it to their creation. Since this activity has no end goal, students may destroy their castles and sculptures whenever they wish to start over.

Pre-school competencies covered and how:

**Language:**

Oral:

- Throughout the center, students will have the opportunity to interact with each other during dramatic play. For example, one student will roleplay as a florist, and another will be the customer, or one student will be a radio host to interview another. These activities develop the students’ oral language competency as it allows students to use their mother tongue to communicate, speak with other children while playing, and ask questions. Furthermore, the students will listen to other children when they express themselves and show that they understand oral messages through answering questions or completing requests (e.g. Student 1 asks, “Can I have the yellow flower?”, and student 2 responds by handing them the yellow flower).

Written

- Throughout the center, students will have the opportunity to recognize indications of writing. The center includes posters and story/challenge cards that expose them to the written word. The story/challenge cards, menus, posters, and menus available at the center will also help students understand that written language conveys meaning as the words will have pictures next to them (e.g. Card with picture of mittens is labelled “Mittens”). Students will also

have the opportunity to distinguish numbers from letters when they are roleplaying in the flower shop, bakery, and beach by paying for flowers, following recipes, or pulling challenge cards. Finally, students will imitate writers by writing in their own way and/or use letters when attempting to write when documenting or planning their play (e.g. Writing down their scripts before doing a broadcast).

### **Physical and Motor Development:**

#### **Motor Skills:**

- The activities in this center focus on fine motor skills, coordination, and sensory-motor exploration. In the “Fall Feast Creations” section of the center, fine motor development is promoted through scooping, pinching rolling and manipulating the small craft materials as ingredients. Role-playing in this section also encourages movement and coordination as children move between areas, like from the kitchen to the counter. In the “Ice Ice Radio” section of the center, the children will develop their fine motor skills while handling small props and sound-effect tools. Using the clipboards, pressing the record button, and dressing up in winter gear and accessories will support hand-eye coordination as well as self-care skills, as they are putting on clothing items independently. In “Blooming Buds Spring Flower Shop”, children will continue to develop their fine motor skills and precision, as they are manipulating (cutting, wrapping, arranging) flowers, ribbon, and felt. Hand coordination will also be supported through the organization and scooping of objects by size and/or colour. Finally, in “A Day at the Beach”, a rich, fine motor experience is offered, as children will be digging, molding, stamping, scooping, and pouring – which all support finger and hand strength and coordination. Sensory-motor coordination is also developed by the water play and texture exploration. Shovel, rakes, and cups will also support tool use and manipulation.

### **Emotional Development**

#### **Self-Knowledge:**

- In role play activities, the children will recognize their own needs and characteristics by learning about their interests and strengths. The children will negotiate role play scenarios with peers and make decisions regarding their play; thereby expressing their own emotions. They will bring in their own experiences, and work through their emotions within play, thereby expressing their emotions. In play scenarios, and when sharing materials the students may disagree, thereby building their self-regulation skills.

**Self-Confidence:**

- The children will explore their own autonomy when leading negotiating and taking on different roles during their play. The children will lead their creations, and experiences throughout the center, thereby responding to the environment and scenarios with confidence.

**Social Development:**

**Sense of Belonging:**

- The children will discuss play scenarios, and share materials with their peers throughout all centers, thereby showing openness to others' ideas/space. The children will participate in group ideas when creating or role playing. For instance, the students will participate in a group role play where two students may act as florists, and the others as the client. The students will collaborate with others across the center, for instance, they will collaboratively use story cards and construct a news report.

**Social Skills:**

- The students will share and respect material across the play center, thereby complying with the rules of classroom conduct. Through their play activities, the students will build a make-believe narrative which may extend beyond several days, thereby forming connections with others. During their role play activities, students will explore mutual curiosities and interests, deepening the connections with their peers. The children will resolve conflicts by navigating group dynamics with the intention to benefit all members of the group. For

<p>instance, when baking pies in the fall bakery, the peers will share ingredients or co-decide ingredients for their pie. While interacting and navigating group dynamics the children will build their self-regulation skills. For example, if children are co-creating a sand villa, they will share the space and develop an understanding of how others' needs differ from their own.</p> <p><b>Cognitive development:</b></p> <p><u>Thinking skills:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The students will acquire new knowledge by engaging in pretend play that mirrors real-life experiences, such as running a bakery, making bouquets, or reporting on the weather. Students will use new mathematical language/ concepts learned when reading price tags and using pretend money. The students will use reasoning skills to solve problems, such as determining how many Seed Dollars they need to purchase a specific bouquet. Finally, students will use their imagination to create different scenarios, such as a radio host or customers at a bakery.</li> </ul> <p><u>Strategies:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The students will take action by deciding which materials to use and how to use them. For example, a student picking certain ingredients to create an apple pie or the material used to build a sandcastle. The students will explore different actions by testing out all materials provided to see which one they enjoy the most. For example, a child uses a stick and seashell to make patterns in the sand and compares the two. Finally, they will explain the actions taken by simply talking to those around them to explain their reasoning. For example, a student said, “I only used red apples (pom poms) for my pie because I don’t like yellow and green apples.”</li> </ul>	
<p><u>Evidence &amp; brief rationale of at least 3 of the following considerations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Several Reggio Emilia environmental principles</u></li> <li>• <u>Loose parts maker space approaches</u></li> <li>• <u>Indigenous knowledges and understanding</u></li> <li>• <u>Language development</u></li> </ul>	



- Numeracy development
- Documentation done by children

### 1.Documentation done by children

- Documentation done by students is essential to develop an accurate understanding of student's unique strengths, interests, backgrounds, and curiosities. As teachers, we will use this student-led documentation to cultivate an environment reflective of their children's individuality. The children will have access to sketch books, clipboards, tablets for recording and digital/disposable/polaroid cameras. In the Ice Ice Radio activity, the children can use the class tablets to record their weather report. The children can use tablets, and cameras to document their bouquet, sandcastle, and bakery to take photos of their processes and creations. The children can use the clipboards to draft their own recipes, draw models for their floral, sand, and bakery creations.

### 2. Numeracy development

- The students will practice their number recognition, counting, geometry and pattern skills. At the flower shop, the students will practice their pattern skills through their floral creations, using seashells and additional loose parts to decorate their sand creations. The children will have access to "challenge cards" that suggest different shapes the students can make out flowers and sand. This will build the children's shape recognition skills. They will also practice number recognition and addition skills when purchasing/ordering baked treats and floral creations. Specifically, the students can match price tag numbers to seed dollars or fall bucks. The children will also practice their number recognition skills through the challenge card which suggests the number of decorative parts children should add to their sand/water creations.

### 3.Language Development

- Throughout the center, the children will communicate, negotiate their roles, and discuss play scenarios which promote oral language development. The students will have access to challenge cards with different letters; they can choose to create sand figures or bakery treats inspired by that letter. In the Ice Ice Radio show, the children will develop their oral language skill through shared

<p>conversation. They will also have access to story challenge cards, which include weather details, winter clothing, traffic reports, and emotions. The children can use these cards as inspiration for their news reports. The children will develop their written language skills by using clipboards to take small notes on their weather reports. The children can use the emotion cards throughout the center, for instance, they can create a bouquet of flowers or treats for someone who is sad, teachers can facilitate student learning to think about how it would differ when creating a bouquet for someone who is happy.</p>	
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