

Areas of interest

[Literature](#), [Play](#)



First of all I think it is important to define what we consider to be an important learning environment before we establish what learning centers are placed within our classroom, and the age range that will be attending. The learning environment should always meet the children's developmental needs. It should make all children including ones with special needs -feel secure, comfortable and a place where they belong. The interest areas should allow the children choices to explore, make things, experiment, and pursue their interests. The choices should include " quiet zone" areas for reading, art activities, and games. Areas should also be set for block building, dramatic play, woodwork, sand and water (discovery table) for active engagements. All the interest areas should accommodate a few children at a time, in a well defined space, so that children can focus on their work, and the play can be more complex. Interest areas work in a good way when the materials you use are attractive, inviting, and relevant to the children's culture and experiences. The areas should not be overwhelming or frustrating to the child, but it should challenge their thinking. Interest areas should be labeled, and all things should have a designated home, so children can share in clean up time. My interest areas are catered towards pre- school to kindergarten. I found it difficult to choose just 3 areas of interest, but I decided that I would use a block area, dramatic play and a discovery area in my setting. What do children learn in the block area? I chose the block area because children learn best when they are encouraged to explore, interact, create and play. The block area provides many opportunities for children to make their own constructions with materials that are open ended. Children can be energetic and active in the block area. Children use their imagination

and invent anything they choose. Children want to be able to test things out for themselves without being told what to build and how to build. Block building provides an excellent opportunity for children to develop language. Blocks encourage children to make friends and cooperate. They can use role play with manipulative props, children can learn how it feels to be powerful or weak, learning empathy and sympathy for others, Blocks function on many different levels as an educational and learning experience for a child. Blocks stimulate imagination and creativity, in reconstructing in their own worlds, contribute to self- confidence by allowing a child to have control and feel a sense of accomplishment. Block play also involves math and science pre-number skills i. e size, shape, matching, classification, experimenting in balance, estimate area, measure and work with mathematical relationships. Block promotes every area of development physical, social, language, emotional and social development. It also aids in literacy, math, science, social studies, art and technology. The " Dramatic Play area" Dramatic play areas are designed to inspire creative and imaginative play. This is an area that aids children to break through the restrictions and reality of everyday life. Children pretend to be someone or something other than who they really are. They make up situations and actions that go along the role in which they are acting. Children deepen their understanding of the world and develop skills that will help in the real world. Children take on roles that they have to negotiate and life situations roles that they find worrying them. Children learn empathy in the play area developing social and emotional skills. Children use physical development in this area as they use their small muscle skills during dress up and practice hand and eye coordination.

Children develop cognitively as they pretend and use creative images from the past to reenact the situation. They learn from one and another as they share ideas and solve problems together. Language development is developed through roles, reading and writing props to suite the situation. The play area can expose children to information about the world as you bring in different props and incorporate social studies. The dramatic play is a very beneficial area and I believe all classrooms should provide one. " The discovery zone" Children always wonder about the world around them. The discovery area is a place to find these answers. The discovery area sparks curiosity and wonder using new and interesting materials. This is an area where children can use their senses to touch, feel, see, smell and taste. Children respond using their thinking skills to investigate and explore. Children work together as they explore, make discoveries and solve problems. Living things can be implemented into the classroom. The children's fine motor skills are used as the children explore and test experiments. They can also strengthen their gross motor skills as they explore the wonders of nature outside. Children use their process skills and ask questions about the experiments and topic of interest. Children can organize their thoughts through comparison, counting and measuring. They also report their findings or conclusions through drawings, and models. This is an area which really promotes scientific concepts. I think by selecting these three areas of interest the children gain a wonderful amount of knowledge through creative ways. The children are able to explore, develop and create through learning in ways that they believe is fun!!! Children at

this age do not realize the amount of learning taking place in an environment that is seen in their eyes as warm, energetic and safe.