

Presenter Notes Learning Center

This guide will walk you through presenting the module. These are suggestions, so please use the materials as you see fit but with integrity to the module as developed. This professional development module includes PowerPoint slides, these presenter notes, and supporting materials.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Presenter PowerPoint Slides
- LCD projector and speakers
- Handouts as indicated in Appendix A:
- Chart Paper/Markers
- Highlighters
- Chart for Group Norms
- Chart for Module Outcomes

BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

- This is the 3rd in a series of Full-Day Kindergarten Professional Development Modules
- The content is designed to be delivered in a 6.5 hour training.
- Suggestions for other timeframes (either shorter or longer) are available.



SLIDE 1: TITLE SLIDE

Welcome

- Introductions
- Overview
- Learning Outcomes
- Group Norms

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**SLIDE 2:
WELCOME**

Introductions:

- Begin by giving participants background information on yourself.
- Find an efficient method of introducing participants. (Try to not spend a long time with this.)
- Review norms (Add a slide or create a poster. Use your professional judgment on which norms to include.)

Introduce Topic:

- Learning Outcomes (may want to make a chart that lists these)

**SUGGESTED TIMEFRAME:
Slides 1 – 5: 30 Minutes**



Learning Outcomes

- Understand the definition and rationale for the use of learning centers
- Understand multiple definitions of play and the variety of ways that play can serve as an effective vehicle for learning in kindergarten
- Develop strategies for
 - setting up the environment for effective use of learning centers
 - planning for learning centers
 - management of learning centers
 - conducting meaningful assessments through learning centers
 - considering alignment of standards through learning centers
- Understand the role of intentional planning and teaching in the use of learning centers
- Consider general differentiation guidelines for centers

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**SLIDE 3: OPTIONAL SLIDE
LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Agenda

- Definition: What is a learning center?
- Rationale for the use of Learning Centers
- Play as a vehicle for learning in kindergarten
- Explore Learning Centers
- Strategies for Effective Use of Learning Centers
 - Setting Up the Environment
 - Planning for Learning Centers
 - Management of Learning Centers
 - Assessment through Learning Centers
- Intentional Planning and Teaching in Learning Centers
- Plan, Do, Review
- Differentiation Guidelines

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**SLIDE 4:
AGENDA**

- Review the day’s agenda
- Provide brief overview

Learning Centers?

Quick Write:

- What is your definition of a learning center?
- How do learning centers differ from learning stations? Or do they?
- Why should learning centers be a major vehicle for learning in a kindergarten environment?

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SLIDE 5: LEARNING CENTERS

Quick Write

- Allow time for individual to think and write about their own personal definition of a learning center and why learning centers should be a central part of a full-day kindergarten classroom.
- See Presenter Handout for information to emphasize.

HANDOUT

- Quick Write: Learning Centers What are They?
- What is a Learning Center Definition?
- Presenter Notes** for presenter only

LEARNING ACTIVITY:

“What is a Learning Center?” Activity

- Read the definitions of a learning center
- At your table group, discuss and determine what commonalities there are in the definitions, including your own
- Read the WA state legislation for full-day kindergarten
- Discuss how learning centers meet the criteria outlined in the legislation
- Share Out

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SLIDE 6: WHAT IS A LEARNING CENTER?

Activity:

- Participants will consider various definitions of a learning center and determine the commonalities within the definitions
- After reading the WA state legislation for full-day kindergarten, groups will discuss how learning centers might meet the criteria outlined in the state statute.
- Need to be familiar with the RCW 28A.150.315 of WA legislation

HANDOUT

- What is a Learning Center Definition?
- WA Full-Day K Legislation

SUGGESTED TIMEFRAME:
Slides 6 – 7 : 15 Minutes 

What is a Learning Center?

- Based on children’s interests
- Variety of carefully selected hands-on materials
- Are engaging
- Promote independence and autonomy
- Integrated across the curriculum and include multiple standards and goals
- Utilizes play
- Provides choice

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SLIDE 7: WHAT IS A LEARNING CENTER?

Activity Wrap-up

- Share the commonalities of the definition on the slide.
- Ask for others they may have discussed
- Briefly discuss the connection to the WA state legislation.

Why Learning Centers?

We are all affected by our environments. Our physical surroundings affect how we feel, how comfortable we are, how we relate to others.

For young children the environment is particularly important. Thoughtful arrangement of the indoor and outdoor environments will support your goals for children.

(Dodge & Collier, 2000)

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SLIDE 8 & 9: WHY LEARNING CENTERS?

- Informational slides with background research

Why Learning Centers?

Early childhood classrooms are not physically arranged in desks and rows, they are typically centered around the use of learning centers.



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SUGGESTED TIMEFRAME: Slides 8 – 17 : 40 Minutes



Why Learning Centers?

Group Activity:

- Read your Learning Center Benefit Example
- List and describe several ways in which kindergartners benefit from engaging in learning center experiences based off of your example
- Compare those with your own ideas from the Quick Write
- Share your thoughts with the large group

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HANDOUT

- Student Benefits to Learning Center Activity Strips
- Quick Write from earlier
- Scholastic Article, "Learning Centers, Part 1: Why They're Important."-1 for trainer (Located in Resources)

LEARNING ACTIVITY:

SLIDE 10: WHY LEARNING CENTERS?

Group Activity

- Allow 10 mins
- Participants will each take one or two benefits slips depending on size of group.
- May want to do this as a partner activity
- There are 15 strips.
- Strips should be cut out and put in a small manilla envelope.
- Print one copy of the Scholastic Article for the presenter to use as a reference.
- The link to the article is included in Tips for Teachers resource.

Why Learning Centers-Speed Share

As the Benefit Examples flash on the screen, participants that discussed that benefit will share their examples.

Learning centers allow children to use up excess energy.

Learning centers allow children to relax.

Learning centers allow children to take risks without fear of failure.

Learning centers allow children to be themselves.

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SLIDE 11: WHY LEARNING CENTERS?

Speed Share

- Allow 15 mins
- protocol to share out benefits in a timely fashion.
- Each benefit is set up to transition in and out.
- If transitions are lost in download of ppt, then they will need to be added back.
- Meant to have about a 1 min share of each benefit.
- Set timer if needed

Why Learning Centers-Speed Share

Learning centers allow children to be self-disciplined by exploring in their own way and intentionally directing their own learning.

Learning centers allow children to be self-motivated by concentrating on things that interest them intensely.

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SLIDE 12 – 15:

WHY LEARNING CENTERS?

Speed Share

- Continue with rapid sharing of the student benefits to learning centers

Why Learning Centers-Speed Share

Learning centers allow children to freely choose and experiment with materials that they find interesting.

Learning centers allow children to investigate, explore, and discover things that are new to them and make connections with things they already know.

Learning centers allow children to role-play in order to understand and make sense of the real world and their personal experiences in it.

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Why Learning Centers-Speed Share

Learning centers allow children to understand the social world, develop communication skills, and build relationships.

Learning centers allow children to be independent.

Learning centers allow children to face positive challenges and gain self-esteem through success.

Learning centers allow children to feel satisfied by completing purposeful activities.

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Why Learning Centers-Speed Share

Learning centers allow children to express themselves.

Learning centers allow children to see things through another person's point of view by working together to create, construct, and build.

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Why Learning Centers?

- Learning centers make sense, especially when one considers recent research findings about how children learn.
- Learning is enhanced through talking and doing.
- Learning is embedded when it is personal, and when the learner feels some control over the learning.

(Sumner School District, WA, 2013)

SLIDE 16 & 17: WHY LEARNING CENTERS?

- Wrap-up
- Information taken from Sumner School District Kindergarten Guide

Why Learning Centers?

- Learning is maximized when there is low stress and moderate challenge.
- Assessment is more realistic when the learner is observed using skills in an authentic context.
- Elements of fun, play, and socialization increase the chance that learning will be long term.

(Sumner School District, WA, 2013)

Break

- 15 Minutes



SLIDE 18: OPTIONAL SLIDE BREAK

Play as a Vehicle for Learning in Kindergarten

Play is when children actively explore their worlds, construct ideas they are beginning to understand, and create imaginary situations based on their real-world experiences.

(Phillips & Schinz, 2013)

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SUGGESTED TIMEFRAME:
Slides 19 – 27 : 30 Minutes 

SLIDE 19: PLAY AS A VEHICLE FOR LEARNING IN KINDERGARTEN

- Research Information

NOTE: This slide is to help make the connection between play and the “what” and the “why” of learning centers... when play is used as a powerful vehicle for Learning...making connections to children’s interests and to learning standards

Play as a Vehicle for Learning in Kindergarten

- The word *play*, is not referring to a period of chaos or a period when anything goes.
- It is a time when students can make independent choices, learn from others, and express themselves while exploring the classroom.
- Play is not just recreation... [centers] are set up for students to practice various academic skills in fun and creative ways.

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SLIDE 20 & 21: PLAY AS A VEHICLE FOR LEARNING IN KINDERGARTEN

- Continued
- Research Information

Play as a Vehicle for Learning in Kindergarten

- The kindergarten school day should include **extended time for play**. Children do best and learn best when their **education blends play with academics** (Levin, as cited in Miller 2009).
- Play helps children acquire higher-order thinking skills, including generating testable hypotheses, imagining situations from another’s perspective, and thinking of alternative solutions (Engel 2010).

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Play as a Vehicle for Learning in Kindergarten



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SLIDE 22: PLAY AS A VEHICLE FOR LEARNING IN KINDERGARTEN

- Video clip 5:19 long
- Briefly Discuss afterwards
- Video source:
<http://www1.easternct.edu/cece/e-clip-importance-of-play/> Eastern Connecticut State University Center for Early Childhood Education.
- Source link is include in slide notes in case the link is lost.

The Teacher's Role in Play

TPEP

Children need certain strategies and skills, such as making decisions, carrying out plans, cooperating and sharing with others, and problem-solving, in order to play and learn independently. As the teacher, your job during center time is to:

- Observe
- Listen
- Ask questions
- Show what to do when help is needed
- Support first attempts
- Participate in activities
- Talk and have discussions with your students
- Help your students make discoveries and connections
- Share your knowledge and expertise

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NOTE: Please advise participants that a document called Teacher's Role in Play will be listed as a resource on the Teacher Tips page. The trainer may want to make a copy and read the article before the training. It is included in the handouts.

SLIDE 23: THE TEACHER'S ROLE IN PLAY

- Ask the question, "So now that we know the importance of play in young children's learning, what is our role as a teacher?"
- Review information provided on the slide.
- SUGGEST: that participants consider how the teacher's role in play might be connected to TPEP criteria. Record their thoughts on the TPEP/Learning Standards connections handout.

HANDOUT 

- **Teacher's Role in Play**-1 copy for trainer only (Located in Resources)
- **TPEP/Learning Standards Connections**

Connection Between Self-Regulation and Play

“For most of human history, children played by roaming near or far in packs, large and small. Younger children were supervised by older children and engaged in freewheeling imaginative play. They were pirates and princesses, aristocrats and heroes.

But, while all that play might have looked a lot like time spent doing nothing much at all, it actually helped build a critical cognitive skill called executive function” (Spiegel, 2018)

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SLIDE 24: CONNECTION BETWEEN SELF-REGULATION AND PLAY

- Research on executive function and play
- Informational

Connection Between Self-Regulation and Play

“Executive function has a number of elements, such as **working memory** and **cognitive flexibility**. But perhaps the most important is **self-regulation**—the ability for kids to control their emotions and behavior, resist impulses, and exert self-control and discipline. Executive function — and its self-regulation element — is important” (Spiegel, 2018)

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SLIDE 25: CONNECTION BETWEEN SELF-REGULATION AND PLAY

- Research on executive function and self-regulation
- Informational

Connection Between Self-Regulation and Play

TPEP

Research Shows:

- Intentional play experiences highly effective in supporting development of self-regulation
- Embedding self-regulation in activities, especially play, works better than teaching as separate, stand-alone activity
- Teacher need to intentionally plan for play

Mature Dramatic Play:

- 3 types of interactions that lead to self-regulation
 - Regulation by others
 - Regulation of others
 - Self-regulation

SLIDE 26: CONNECTION BETWEEN SELF-REGULATION AND PLAY

- Continued information on self-regulation and play
- Informational
- Make the connection between TPEP Criteria 5 and have participants use handout for notetaking.
- SUGGEST: Participants to consider how self-regulation and play might be connected to TPEP, in particular Criteria 5-Fostering and managing a safe, positive learning environment.

HANDOUT 

- [TPEP/Learning Standards Connections](#)

Connection Between Self-Regulation and Play



SLIDE 27: CONNECTION BETWEEN SELF-REGULATION AND PLAY

- Video
- Begin video at 33:26 and watch until 39:35
- Discuss briefly after watching
- Video from BC Ministry of Education Full Day Kindergarten Exemplar Videos (4 part series) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JlAnjOlclog> Link is included on the Tips for Teacher Resource page

Plan, Do, Review

TPEP

- Sequence Strategy as part of daily routine
- That allows children to anticipate:
 - What they will do
 - How they will proceed
 - What materials they will use
 - Once work session is over, children need time to reflect:
 - On how they did
 - What they will do next time
 - Where they will store their projects
 - What they might want to do differently
 - For children to become responsible, independent learners, they must be provided time and support to plan ahead and follow through

NOTE: Information adapted from NC Guide for the Early Years pages 74–75

SUGGESTED TIMEFRAME:
Slides 28 – 30 : 30 Minutes



SLIDE 28:
PLAN, DO, REVIEW

- Informational
- Routines strategy suggested to use with children before, during, and after learning center time
- SUGGEST: that participants consider how engaging children in a Plan, Do, Review process on a daily basis might be connected to TPEP criteria. Record their thoughts on the TPEP/Learning Standards connections handout
- NOTE: Review plan is a great way to include Student Data (Criteria #6) for TPEP.

HANDOUT 

- [TPEP/Learning Standards Connections](#)

Plan, Do, Review

- Specific Strategies for Planning and Reviewing
- Modeling:
 - Teacher describes what the child is doing
 - Asks child to tell about work at review time
 - Oral:
 - Spend time before to describe what they will do including where work will be done and what materials will be used
 - Group:
 - Adult and children plan together
 - Written:
 - Child represents their plans and reviews on paper
 - Pantomime:
 - Children act out their plan or review

SLIDE 29:
PLAN, DO, REVIEW

- Continued
- Informational

Plan, Do, Review Activity

Partner Activity:

- Review:
 - Plan-Do-Review description
 - Plan-Do-Review handout
- Discuss the following:
 - Do you currently use a strategy like this in conjunction with your learning centers?
 - If so, compare and contrast
 - Importance of the strategy for your children and its implications in regards to self-regulation
 - What can you take away from this strategy that you could incorporate into your own classroom?

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LEARNING ACTIVITY: 

**SLIDE 30:
PLAN, DO, REVIEW**


Activity

- Participants review the description and handout
- With their partner, participants discuss the points from the slide
- Approximately 15 mins

NOTE: Handout from Bellingham SD Kindergarten Guide titled Bellingham Plan Do Review Description

HANDOUT 

- [Bellingham Plan Do Review Description](#)

Exploring Learning Centers 

Divide into 10 small groups:

- Explore assigned learning center with your partners to consider:
 - the organization and materials
 - questions to promote thinking
 - what children and teachers can do in the center
 - ways to differentiate
- Use poster to record ideas for sharing
- One member records electronically
- Share out

Groups: 1) Blocks, 2) Creative Art, 3) Science/Discovery, 4) Books/Reading, 5) Outdoors, 6) Dramatic Play, 7) Mathematics, 8) Sand/Water, 9) Writing, 10) Safe Space/Privacy

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LEARNING ACTIVITY: 

**SLIDE 31:
EXPLORING LEARNING CENTERS**

Activity:

- Participants will split up into 10 small groups
- Share out.
- EMPHASIZE: participants should consider materials and organization briefly and FOCUS on Questions to Promote Thinking, What Children and Teachers Can Do, and Ways to Differentiate
- Make sure all have time to share

NOTE: You may want to assign one member/group to take notes electronically so you can easily send out the information to all participants.

SUGGESTED TIMEFRAME:
Slides 31: 50 Minutes 

HANDOUT 

- [Learning Center Exploration Recording Sheet](#)
- [TPEP/Learning Standards Connections](#)
- [See Appendix A for the materials' list for setting up centers](#)

Lunch

- 1 Hour



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SLIDE 32: **OPTIONAL SLIDE LUNCH**

Learning Centers



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SLIDE 33:
LEARNING CENTERS

- Participants will watch a video clip on learning centers from NJ Dept of Ed(Part 2) link below:
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qe2qcsNO_Qs
- Video is 11:55 min long
- Can add notes from their work before lunch

SUGGESTED TIMEFRAME:
Slides 33 – 35: 75 Minutes 

Scenarios



Work in same learning center groups to:

- Read scenario
- Discuss and answer the following questions:
 - What learning is happening?
 - What learning standards are being developed?
 - What can the teacher do to scaffold and extend the learning?
 - What data can you gather through observational assessment during the learning center experience?
- Record your answers on the chart paper/electronically

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LEARNING ACTIVITY: 

SLIDE 34:
LEARNING CENTER SCENARIOS

- Work in same groups as before lunch
- Read center scenario
- Discuss points on slide
- Record thoughts on chart paper
- Divide chart into 3 sections-same as handout

HANDOUT 

- [Learning Center Scenario Recording Sheet](#)
- [Learning Center Scenarios](#)

Scenarios Gallery Walk



Take a walk through the “gallery of scenarios” to see what your colleagues have written about each of the 10 learning centers

Add ideas that come to mind on any of the charts

Jot down your “take away” ideas on your individual recording sheets

SLIDE 35: SCENARIO GALLERY WALK

- Participants will walk through the gallery of center scenarios’ posters
- Additional thoughts will be added
- Take Away notes will be recorded on handout



- [Learning Center Gallery Walk Take-Aways](#)

Break

- 15 Minutes



SLIDE 36: OPTIONAL SLIDE BREAK

Strategies for Effective Use of Learning Centers

Activity:

- Work with a partner in one of the strategy areas to read through information on that area.
- Add other strategies or suggestions.
- Be prepared to share with out with your table group.

Areas:

- Organizing
- Planning
- Managing
- Assessing

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LEARNING ACTIVITY: 

**SLIDE 37:
STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE USE OF
LEARNING CENTERS**

- Partner activity
- Need 4 partnerships (total of 8 people)
- Each work in one area(of 4) to learn about to learn effective strategies
- Add other ideas
- Share with table group
- Each table will share each area

NOTE: Each partnership only needs handout pages for their area. Tell participants complete handout will be on Tools for Teacher section

HANDOUT 

- [Strategies for Effective Centers](#)

Intentional Planning and Teaching **TPEP**

- Flexibility and responsiveness are needed to meet the range of learning needs of each group of children.
- This requires careful planning based on knowledge of:
 - the children in the classroom
 - developmental expectations and the special needs of each child
 - the children's interests
 - content of the discipline areas
 - defined expectations/objectives/standards for this age range
 - ways to organize for instruction
 - the context of family, school, and community

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**SLIDE 38:
INTENTIONAL PLANNING AND
TEACHING**

- Informational slide
- Remind teachers to consider the implications to Learning Standards and for TPEP and add to their handout

SUGGESTED TIMEFRAME:
Slides 37 – 39: 30 Minutes 

HANDOUT 

- [TPEP/Learning Standards Connections](#)

Intentional Planning and Teaching

TPEP

- Intentional Teachers:
 - include assessment in the planning process.
 - integrate and promote meaningful learning in all domains not just academic ones.
 - create a varied and balanced program where every child can be successful.
- Elements of Good Intentional Teaching:
 - High Expectations
 - Planning and management
 - Learning-oriented classroom
 - Engaging Activities
 - Thoughtful questioning
 - Feedback

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SLIDE 39: INTENTIONAL PLANNING AND TEACHING

- Informational slide

Differentiation

General Learning Centers Differentiation Guidelines:

- Make flexible enough to accommodate children's varying abilities and interests.
- Provide opportunities for self selection and direction
- Involve all areas of development
- Utilize exploration through the senses
- Provide tools in each center to design success for all (ex. - picture clues, pencil grips, whisper phones)
- Assign mentor buddies
- Label items
- Take into consideration children's readiness, interests, and learning profile

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SLIDE 40: DIFFERENTIATION

- General differentiation guidelines
- Informational slide

SUGGESTED TIMEFRAME:
Slides 40 – 41 : 30 Minutes



Differentiation Activity

TPEP

- Skim article, "Differentiating Learning Centers"
- Review the general differentiation strategies presented in the article and throughout the day
- Choose the category of learners that is of most interest to you:
 - Special Needs
 - ELL
 - Highly Capable
 - Developmentally Delayed
- With others in your small group:
 - Discuss the general strategies
 - Generate ideas that would apply to how to differentiate learning center activities based on your group's category
 - Share out

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LEARNING ACTIVITY: 

**SLIDE 41:
DIFFERENTIATION**


Activity

- Participants should choose one of the categories and join that group.
- Please modify category names to meet the needs of your participants, district.
- Then they choose one of the categories and join that group
- Discuss strategies and ways to modify for the specific category
- Share out.
- EMPHASIZE: Participants need to think about how they can scaffold learning that takes place in the learning activities used to meet the needs of all students.

HANDOUT 

- Differentiation Strategies for Learning Centers
- TPEP/Learning Standards connections

What's Happening in the Block Center?



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**SLIDE 42:
WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE BLOCK CENTER?**

- Wrap-up and reflection for learning centers

SUGGESTED TIMEFRAME:
Slides 42 – 45: 30 Minutes 

What's Happening in the Block Center?

<p>Learning Standards and 21st Century Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sizes & Shapes • Dimensions & Proportions • Measurement • Balance • Sorting and Classifying • Numeration Skills (counting, sets, more/less, etc.) • Letters/Sounds • Cultural/Global Awareness • Creativity • Decision-making skills • Problem-solving skills • Negotiation • Leadership skills • Active listening 	<p>Building Vocabulary: tall, taller, tallest, similar, different, long, longer, longest, positional words, height, length, construct, collaborate, structures</p> <p>Preparing for Life: problem-solving, collaboration, teamwork, metacognition, negotiation, planning, communication skills</p> <p>Learning: All domains-cognitive, physical, social and emotional Developmentally appropriate through hands-on experiences</p>
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SLIDE 43: WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE BLOCK CENTER?

- Wrap-up and reflection for learning centers
- Review the benefits of learning centers by focusing on what learning can occur in a block center

Closing and Reflection

1. Revisit your original definition of learning centers and the reasons why they are important.
2. Articulate why using learning centers is an important vehicle for learning in kindergarten:
Create a brief response to a principal's question about the validity of learning center time in your classroom.

SLIDE 44: CLOSING

- Bring session to a close by having them reflect on the slide questions



- Learning Center Module Closing Reflection