Teaching Reading K-2 Workshop

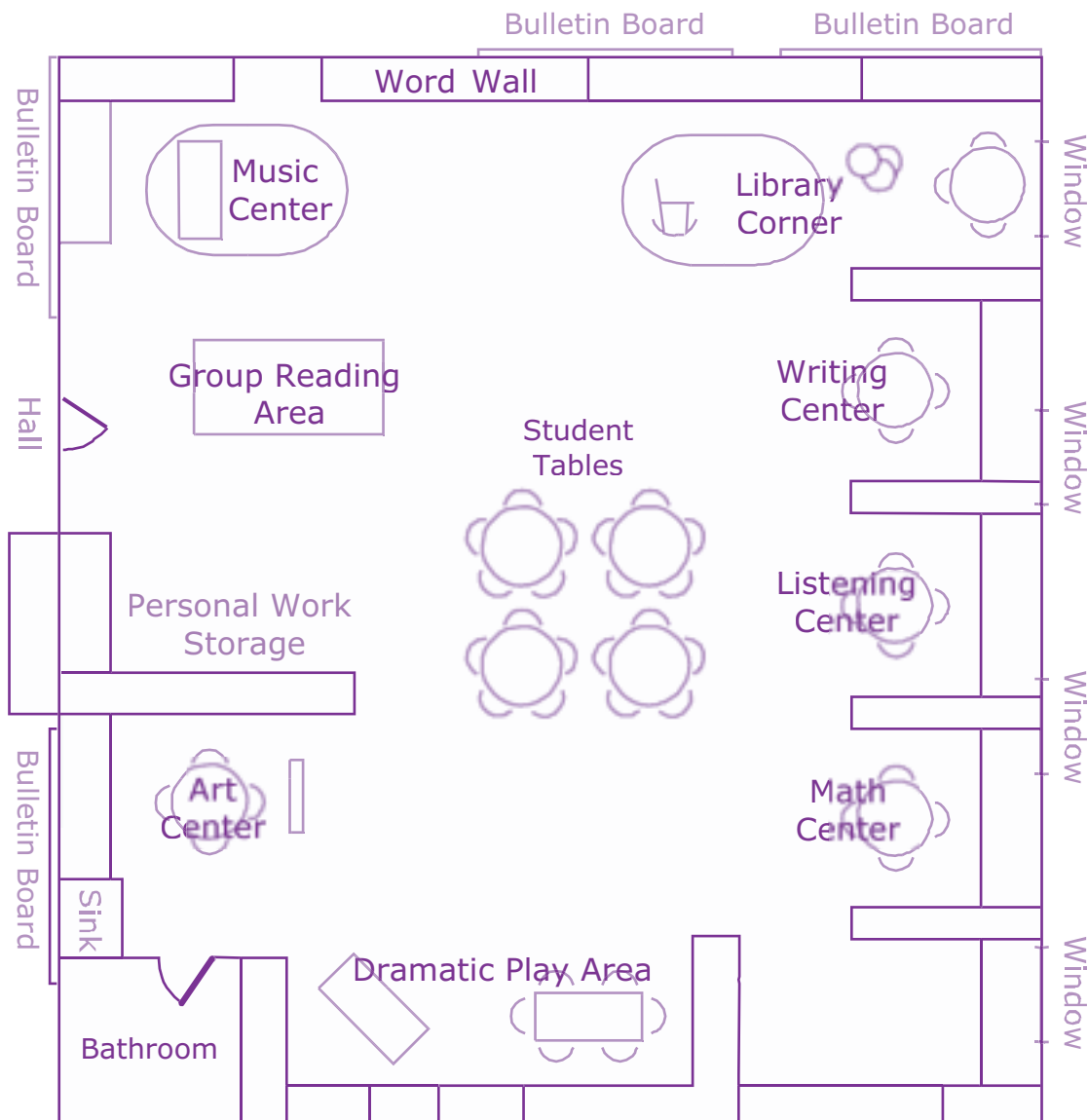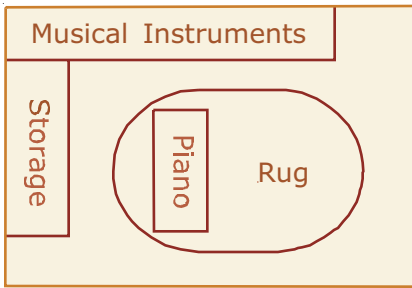# Explore a Classroom

Use this activity to explore a classroom environment and discover the routines for each area of the classroom.

Bulletin Board   Bulletin Board

Word Wall

Bulletin Board

Window

Music Center

Library Corner

Window

Hall

Group Reading Area

Writing Center

Student Tables

Window

Personal Work Storage

Listening Center

Window

Bulletin Board

Art Center

Math Center

Sink

Dramatic Play Area

Window

Bathroom

Musical Instruments

Storage

Piano

Rug

Music Center:

Environment
The music center includes a selection of instruments that the children can play themselves. Model the use of each instrument, as well as the correct way to remove and store them. Words and pictures of songs can decorate the walls.

Routine
Literacy and language skills are developed as children read words to songs or write in response to a song or musical piece. Music projects are another opportunity for children to research and write about their musical interests.

Language Arts Manipulatives | Bookshelves

Pillows

Rug

Rocker

Table

Book Shelves
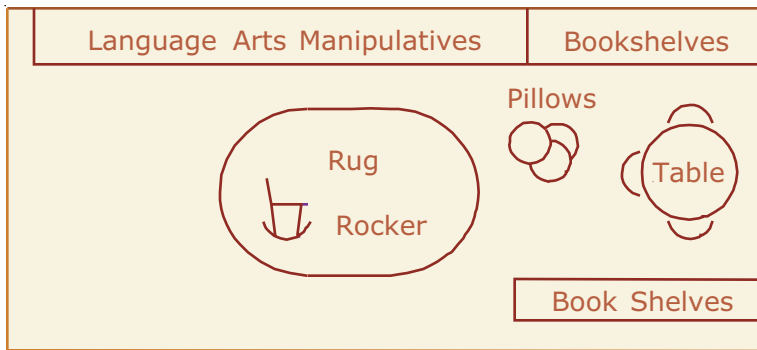
**Literacy Center: Library Corner**

Environment
The library corner should include
a large selection of children's literature, sorted into topics, genre, and reading level.

Comfortable rugs, pillows, and chairs will attract children to the area.

Routine
Show children how to take out books, where to use them, and how to put them away.

Demonstrate how to share books with a partner or how to turn pages carefully. Set up an easy borrowing procedure for children to take books home.
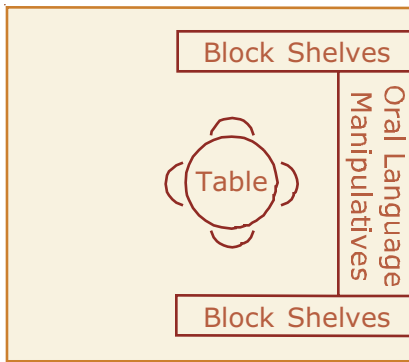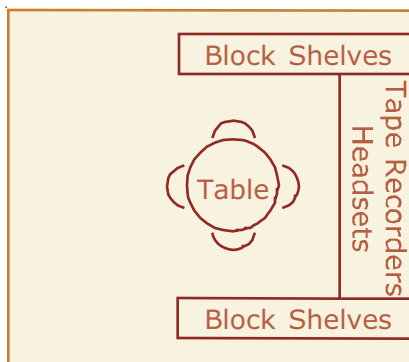
Literacy Center: Writing Center

Environment
The writing center provides a defined writing space and a range of writing materials (pencils, graphic organizers, individual journals). Materials should be labeled and stored in specific places.

Routine
Children write in response to their reading, classroom activities, or own experiences. Provide regular journal writing times. Use graphic organizers to help children sequence their own stories. Confer with children about their writing.

Diagram: Block Shelves (top), Oral Language Manipulatives (right), Table (center), Block Shelves (bottom)

Listening Center

Environment
The listening center has tape recorders and headsets, on which children can listen to books-on-tape. Copies of these books should also be placed in the center. This center could include tape recorders for children to record and listen to their own reading of favorite stories and poems.

Routine
Model how to use the headsets and tape recorders to listen to tapes and record own-readings. Literacy and language skills are developed as children listen to tape-recorded stories while following along with the text. Hearing their own read-ings, helps them develop reading fluency and expression.
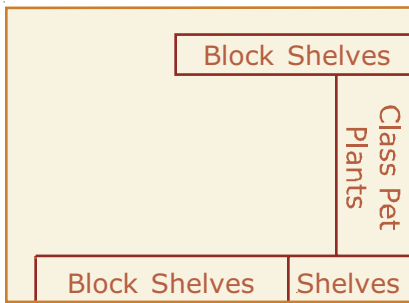
Diagram: Block Shelves (top), Tape Recorders Headsets (right), Table (center), Block Shelves (bottom)
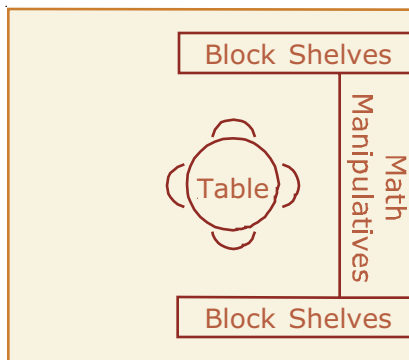
Math Center

Environment
The math center is stocked with mathematical instruments and materials used to measure, weigh, count, compare shapes and build models. These should be labeled and stored in specific places. There is also ample space to use all materials in the center.

Routine
Children develop and practice their math skills with specific tasks or open-ended exploration. Literacy and language skills are developed as children answer math problems, or write in response to a math activity.

Diagram: Block Shelves (top), Math Manipulatives (right), Table (center), Block Shelves (bottom)

Diagram 1 (top left)

Block Shelves

Class Pet Plants

Block Shelves | Shelves

Science Center

Environment
The science center includes a wide range of tools and materials for scientific experimentation and nature observations. The center comprises of a large work space, as well as a space to keep timely experiments safely. All tools and materials should be labeled and stored.

Routine
Teachers conduct science experiments with the class and also allow children open-exploration of science and nature. Literacy and language skills are developed as children describe the experiments and record their predictions and observations. A further activity may be to tally and graph data recorded.

Diagram 2 (middle left)

Storage

Bed

Food Shelving

Table

Dolls | Sink | Stove | Refrigerator
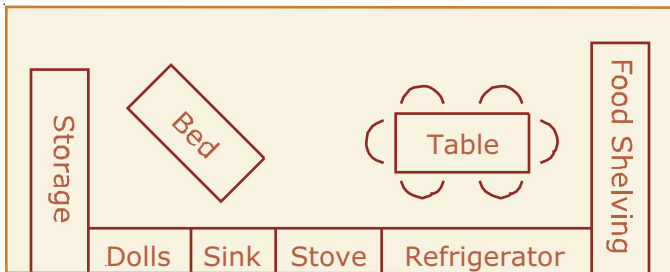
Dramatic Play Area
(Mostly for Kindergarten classrooms)

Environment
The dramatic play area models real-life environments. Whether the center is a store, an office, or a kitchen, it is important to include objects and artifacts that encourage and develop language and literacy skills.

Routine
Dramatic play centers simulate real-life situations that encourage children to learn through interactive play.
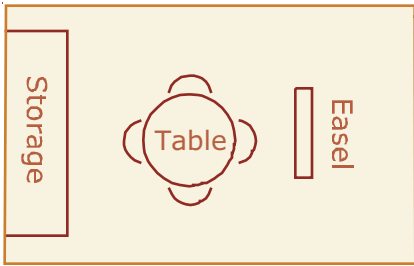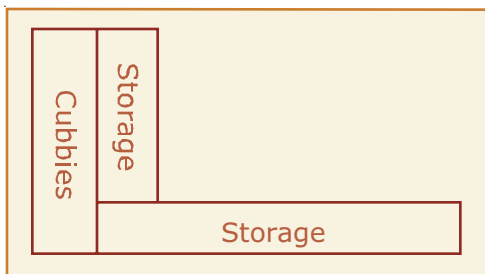
Other Centers: Art Center

Environment
The Art Center provides a place and materials for a variety of activities, including painting, drawing, collage, or plasticene clay or Play Dough modeling.

Routine
Often, art projects involve a response to the stories or poems introduced in read-aloud, shared-reading, or guided-reading sessions.

Personal Work Storage

Environment
Children need space to keep current and finished work that you will use to assess their progress. Some storage suggestions for individual work are daily writing folders, hanging files or portfolios, and personal reading boxes. The individual folders can be stored in labeled tubs, plastic crates, or boxes made from cereal cartons.

Routine
Teach students procedures for retrieving and storing their material and work.

Group Reading Area

Environment
The group reading area provides space for small group and individualized instruction. The conference table allows the teacher to sit on one side while a group of students sit on the other. This area can include pocket charts for sentence strips, boards for word analysis work, and record-keeping folders.

Routine
The group reading area is impor-tant for teacher-guided interaction and for skill development. These activities allow the teacher to track children's progress and provide the necessary supportive instruction.

Bulletin Board

Bulletin Board

Bulletin Board

Bulletin Board

Bulletin Boards

Environment
Bulletin Boards provide a place for teachers to display songs, poems, word walls, and other useful literacy material. They then become a place for children to display their work, making the classroom their own.

Routine
Begin the year with large-group experiences that will establish the group as a learning community and build linguistic resources. During the first two weeks, the teacher and children can produce
a great deal of print for the walls. Enjoy these print materials with children as many times as possible, so that they become familiar resources.

More About Centers

Environment
Centers provide a space where children can explore activities and manipulatives. Through center routines, they learn to work independently and cooperatively, while developing specific skills.

Routine
Teach one center at a time. Model the activity yourself, then invite the children to explore it with your guidance. Allow independent children to visit the center first. Allow others to join as they demonstrate ability to work on their own. Before introducing a new activity, observe the center until you are confident that children are using the area productively.

Sources

All passages adapted from the following material:

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