

## - Exploration Time -

When your child tells you they played at school, they are talking about Exploration Time, the favourite part of the Kindergarten day for most children. Young children learn a great deal through play. They develop motor control and hand-eye coordination needed for formal school tasks. They learn to plan, make choices, cooperate, solve problems and assume responsibility for their action. They experiment with important concepts and practice needed skills. Play provides many opportunities for language and literacy learning. Play is one of several types of activity through which children learn in Kindergarten.



## ***Play Today***

*You love your children,  
And are concerned that they learn today.  
So am I – that's why I'm providing  
A variety of kinds of play.*

*You're asking me the value  
Of blocks and other such play?  
Your daughter's creating a tower;  
She may be an architect someday.*

*You're asking what is the value  
Of having your child play?  
Your children are solving problems;  
A skill they'll use everyday.*

*You're saying you don't want your son  
To play in dramatic play?  
He's learning to cradle a doll;  
He may be a father someday.*

*You question the interest centres;  
They just look like useless play?  
Your children are making choices.  
They'll be on their own someday.*

*You're worried your children aren't learning,  
And later they'll have to pay?  
They are learning a pattern for learning,  
For they will be learners always!*

## Science Tubs

Children are naturally curious about the world around them. Science tubs encourage children to learn more about the fascinating environment in which they live. Through handling materials such as magnets, rocks and prisms, children learn scientific skills and concepts. Children enhance their observation skills when looking for similarities and differences in rocks and minerals. They explore magnetism to discover which material will be attracted to the magnets and which won't. Prediction, comparison and testing ideas allow children to experience their world first hand.



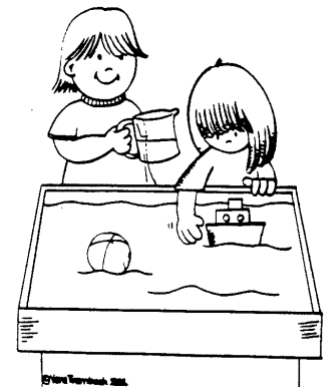
## Art and Crafts

Art and crafts encourage children to represent their ideas and feelings symbolically, through activities such as painting, drawing, collage and modeling. Children experiment with colour, shape and texture while also learning to value their own abilities and those of others. Art is often described as a visual language. Children create art to express meaning and to make sense of their experiences, just as they will learn to use written language. In fact, when children begin to write, they often combine pictures and printing. Children become aware of their 'audience' as they enjoy telling adults their stories of their artistic efforts.



## Book Corner

Literacy is an important focus in Kindergarten. Prerequisites of being able to read are discovering the joy of books, and learning concepts of print (print carries meaning, read left to right and top to bottom). The Book Corner encourages children to enjoy all kinds of books – picture books, information books and poetry books. Children listen to recorded books and share big books together. As they learn that writing is made up of words, they point to words as they retell favourite stories. The most important thing to ensure your child learns to read well is to read to your child every day.



## Sand Box and Water Table

The sand and water tables provide many opportunities for learning scientific and mathematical concepts. Children learn that different materials have different attributes such as weight and shape. They explore measurement and conduct simple experiments to discover which materials will float (corks, ping pong balls) and which will sink (marbles, blocks). Different textures, such as adding water in the sand box, increase conceptual learning. Actions such as pouring, raking and sifting help children develop fine motor skills needed for printing. Children must cooperate in their work and clean up.

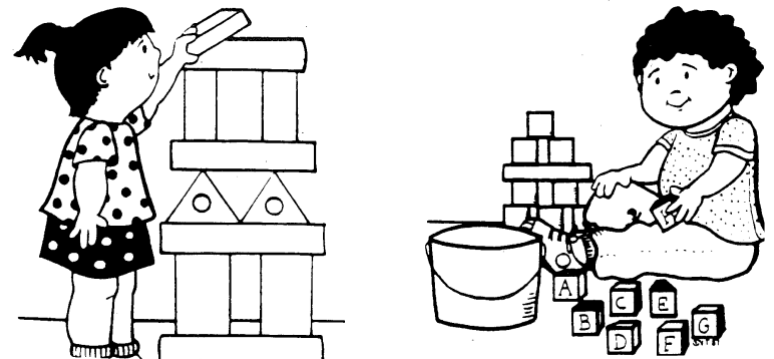
## Math Shelves

Activities on the math shelves are designed to expose children to mathematical concepts while encouraging them to explore and extend these concepts and their skills. Children work with math manipulatives such as unifix cubes, colour cubes, pattern blocks and attribute blocks, as well as 'treasures' such as shells, buttons, and keys. Children classify (sort), seriate (sequence), and explore one-to-one correspondence in free play and in guided activities. Children establish understandings that will enable them to comprehend more abstract concepts in later years.



## Construction

Construction activities with big blocks, Lego and other materials foster a sense of spatial awareness necessary for learning mathematics. Drawing pictures and planning structures (bridges, towers) encourage spatial thinking and develop the physical concepts of balance, symmetry and gravity. When children build, they often revise their plans to achieve a successful balance. Thus, block building is the first venue for editing, an essential component for good writing. Further, children must cooperate and assume responsibility for tidying up.



## Dramatic Play

When children engage in pretend play, they take on familiar (mom, dad, baby) and fascinating (pirate, princess, scientist) roles. The house corner represents many different environments through the year – home, office, store. Each environment is created with simple props and children learn about the roles of the characters that belong in that setting. For example, in the home, children might read grocery flyers and create shopping lists. The puppet theatre provides opportunities to experiment with storytelling and present to an audience. The doll house allows children explore parental roles and care for others.



## Drawing and Writing

At the drawing and writing centre, children explore a variety of writing materials, tools and forms (letters, lists, stories, information writing). Of course, their early writing is comprised mainly of drawing pictures and familiar words (*Mom, Dad, cat, dog*). Children use the words around the room and on labels to copy into their writing. They experiment with familiar letters and sounds. The expectation in Kindergarten is that children will explore the purposes and forms of writing, not that they will achieve conventional writing. However, it is important for their writing be meaningful and for them to enjoy sharing it with appreciative audiences.

