COMMUNITY



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Language and Literacy

Build a Letter: Themed Alphabet

EZ.001.LA.1001-1002

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will identify letters of the alphabet.
Students will distinguish between features of letters.

Each themed classroom includes a magnetic alphabet. A featured activity will be included with each themed magnetic alphabet. Students use small classroom manipulatives to form uppercase and lowercase letters on letter mats with a community/neighborhood theme. Magnetic alphabets are tactile and allow children to learn through hands-on exploration while engaging multiple senses.

WHAT TO DO

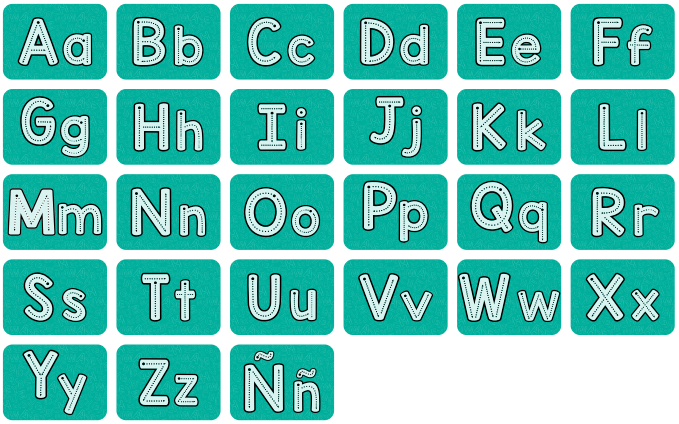
Using the themed magnetic letters as a reference or pre-activity review, encourage students to "trace" letters on letter mats. Students use the manipulatives (math link cubes and color chips) to form uppercase and lowercase letters on the mats.

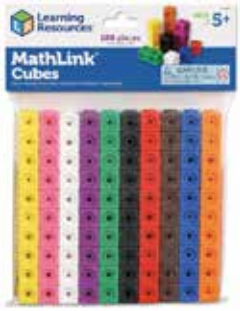
PLAY TIPS

- Ask students to form uppercase and lowercase letters using the manipulatives without tracing. In this instance, the letter mats will serve as a guide.
- Create your own letter cards. Present letters in a variety of fonts to help students begin to recognize letters in the environment. This activity helps to develop environmental print awareness.

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Mathematics

What's Missing?: Number Cards

EZ.001.LA.1003-1004

Activity Type:
Large Group and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will begin to recognize numerals 0-10.
Students will compare quantities of objects by using number recognition and one-to-one correspondence.

Each themed classroom includes themed number cards. A featured activity will be included with each set of themed number cards. Students begin to recognize numerals by participating in number line activities. In *What's Missing?* students will determine the missing numeral in a number line after reviewing the complete number line. Number cards aid in developing subitizing, which is the ability to instantly recognize the number of items at a glance.

WHAT TO DO

1. Align the numbers in order in a number line, then have students (as a group) say the numbers with you, pointing at each number as you go.
2. Align the numbers in order again, this time removing a number. Have students say the numbers with you, prompting students to determine what number is missing. Continue with this activity, removing more numbers as students are able to recognize the missing number(s).

PLAY TIP

Turn the number cards over, face down, and mix them up. Leave one card out of the mix. Have students flip the cards over and align them in numerical order, determining the missing card.

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Mathematics

Making Patterns

EZ.001.LA.1006

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will recognize common 2-D shapes.
Students will sort by features and attributes.
Students will recognize patterns.

Students explore patterns and properties of shapes as they create whole images using pattern blocks and themed pattern block mats. Pattern blocks boost students' ability to think critically, make predictions, and test their predictions.

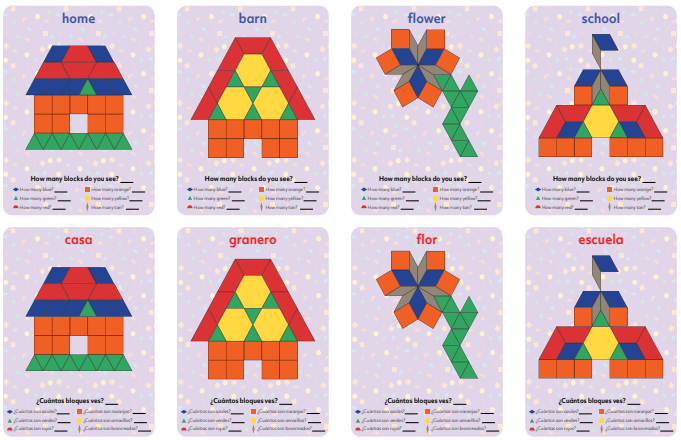
WHAT TO DO

Pattern block mats and pattern blocks work well as a self-directed activity. The intuitive nature requires little direction. Place the mats and pattern blocks out for students to explore freely, encouraging students to match the pattern block shape and color to the correlating space on the whole image.

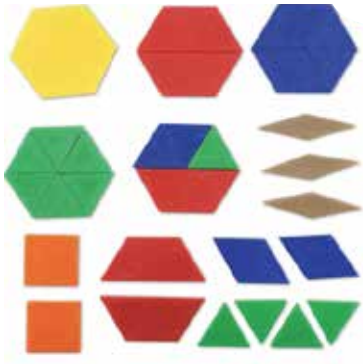
PLAY TIPS

- You can make your own pattern block cards by simply tracing pattern blocks on paper. Create a design using the pattern blocks and place the design on paper. Trace around the outer edge of your design and allow students to fill in the design with pattern blocks.
- Have students take a two-handed scoop of pattern blocks and sort by shape or color. Use graphing paper or a graphing mat to visualize the sorting process.
- Students can use mirrors to create patterns and make observations in the reflections. Ask students to describe what they are seeing as they create patterns in the mirrors.

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Language and Literacy

Pre-Writing Line Tracing

EZ.001.LA.1007

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will build pre-writing skills by tracing curved, notched, and zigzag lines.
Students will recognize directionality in print and writing.

Students work on emergent literacy and transition to letter formations by tracing lines, patterns, and shapes with a theme in a dry erase, reusable format. To connect to fine motor development, students are encouraged to add detail. Themed templates are included for tracing.

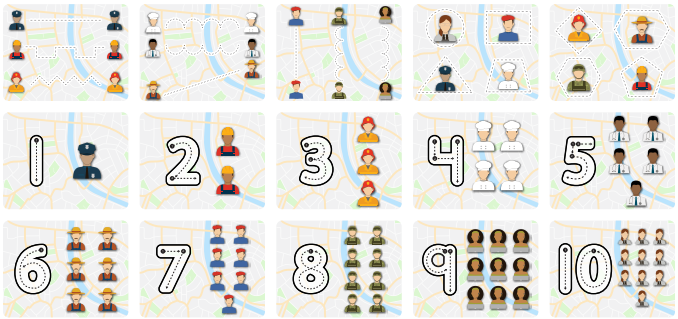
WHAT TO DO

1. Place the dry erase templates in the writing center. Students have the choice to use dry erase markers on the dry erase templates or place paper on the template and trace using a pencil/crayon. Remind students to start from left to right and top to bottom.
2. Encourage students to make their own tracing templates using the dry erase templates as a guide. Students can work on tracing shapes, lines, and numbers by repetitively tracing the same shape, line, or number using a different color crayon each time.

PLAY TIPS

- Include the themed tracing patterns in the writing center to align with other free-choice writing exercises. Using a clipboard will help students control the writing utensil.
- Tape the template vertically, on an easel or teacher board, to encourage the strengthening of fine motor development.

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Language and Literacy

Shaving Cream Words: Word Bank Words

EZ.001.LA.1012

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will identify letters of the alphabet.
Students will recreate letters of the alphabet in unconventional ways.

Each themed classroom includes a word bank. A featured activity will be included with each themed word bank. Students use shaving cream as a medium to practice writing word bank words. Young students gain from having numerous chances throughout the day to enhance their fine motor skills and finger dexterity by using different writing tools and mediums.

WHAT TO DO

Place the word bank words and craft trays filled with a layer of shaving cream in the writing center. Students can practice writing word bank words, their name, and/or the alphabet in the layer of shaving cream. To practice a new word or letter, students simply spread the shaving cream layer again.

PLAY TIPS

- Students can use a spatula to spread the shaving cream into a thin layer or use the opposite end as a writing utensil.
- Provide opportunities for students to draw freely in the shaving cream.

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Social Studies

Map Symbols

EZ.001.LA.1014

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will recognize symbols as representations.
Students will recreate symbols building fine motor skills.

Maps are pictures of places and usually include symbols to show us special places. We use maps to show us where we are and where we need to go. Students have discussions about the meaning of symbols and practice writing map symbols in sand using a legend template.

WHAT TO DO

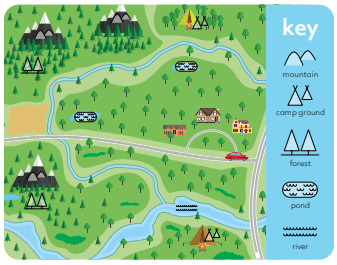
1. Begin by introducing the atlas and comparing it to a globe. This will help students connect their prior knowledge about the world. Ask students the following questions: “What features make up the land?,” “What features make up the ocean?,” and “How do you know what countries are home to people and animals?” Give students plenty of time to explore the atlas on their own and ask questions.
2. Fill the sand trays with colored sand. Demonstrate “drawing” in the sand with your finger. Introduce the legend examples, pointing out the symbols and discussing representation. Students can use the legends to practice “drawing” the symbols in the sand.

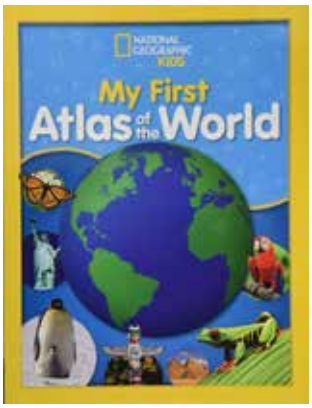
PLAY TIPS

- Encourage students to create their own symbols and share their representations.
- Go on a treasure hunt. Make a map of the classroom, hide an item in the classroom, and indicate the location with an “X” on the map. Students can use the map to find the hidden item.

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Mathmatics

Multicolor Mail

EZ.001.LA.1015

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will sort by characteristics and attributes.
Students will begin to use symbols and letters to communicate.

Students sort mail by color in this self-directed activity. Using color-coded envelopes, letters, and stamps, students sort mail by color and place in the appropriate color sorting bin. Students can use the classroom USPS Postal Box to “mail” letters after sorting. Sorting by color is one of the first steps towards developing foundational math skills. It introduces students to the concept of classification, or sorting objects based on a shared characteristic.

WHAT TO DO

Review all the colors on the envelopes. Students can attach the associated color stamp to the envelope, “write” a letter, and put the letter in the tabletop or classroom mailbox. The designated mail carrier adds the letters to the associated color sorting bin.

PLAY TIPS

- Ask students to sort mail in other ways, such as by recipient or letter length.
- Ask students to “write” letters to each other. Include a list of all students’ names at the writing center and encourage students to write and mail a letter to a friend.

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Social Studies

Urban, Suburban, and Rural

EZ.001.LA.1016

Activity Type:
Large Group and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will identify common features in communities.
Students will demonstrate an understanding of features in urban, suburban, and rural areas.

As an introduction to urban, suburban, and rural communities, students read *The Little House* by Virginia Lee Burton, discussing how the environment around the house changes. Students can sort urban, suburban, and rural photo cards using sorting mats. Sorting activities reinforce vocabulary and provide the opportunity to introduce new words.

WHAT TO DO

1. Read *The Little House* by Virginia Lee Burton, discussing how the environment around the little house changes over time. Ask students the following questions throughout: "What does the little house see?," "What does the little house hear?," and "What kind of things surround the little house?" Picture walk through the community books, making comparisons to *The Little House*.
2. After reviewing the stories, place the suburban, rural, and urban photos and sorting mats in a free-choice center for sorting and further discussion.

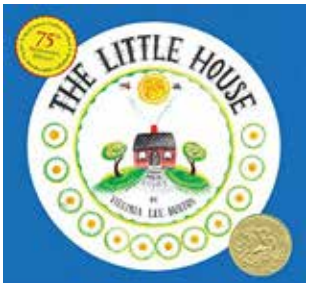
PLAY TIPS

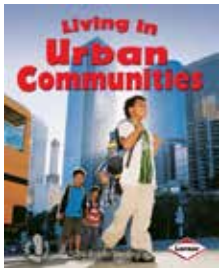
- *The Little House* feels lonely and neglected over time because she wasn't taken care of. Discuss taking care of material things. Ask questions like, "How should we treat the things that belong to us?" and "What happens when we don't take care of our things?" Relate the discussion to respecting materials in the classroom.
- Using pictures from the story, ask students to sequence the progression of events from beginning to end.

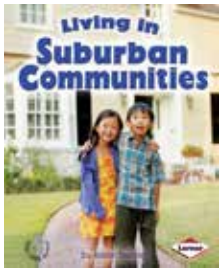
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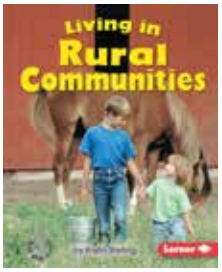










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Fine Arts

Jobs Around Town: Dramatic Play

EZ.001.LA.1017

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will engage in associative and cooperative play for creative expression.
Students will create and recreate stories.

Students discover that a community can include many different groups of people such as a school community, a neighborhood community, and even your family! Students can create communities in the classroom by assuming new and different roles using dress-up materials, props, and other dramatic play items.

WHAT TO DO

Set the scene for a community exploration center by introducing the costumes and service vehicle magnets and talking about the ways people help us (keep us healthy, keep us safe, maintain the city, help us commute, grow food, etc.). Ask students how they can be helpful at home and at school. Students can explore members of the community by role playing, using their imagination and creativity. Provide situations and prompts that help students get into character.

PLAY TIPS

- Invite family and community members into the classroom to talk about their careers, encouraging further interest and curiosity in students. If possible, visit a local library, museum, fire station, or other community location to help students feel the experience.
- Encourage students to make supportive materials like menus, mail, and medical records to enhance their role playing.

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Social and Emotional

Building Our Community

EZ.001.LA.1019

Activity Type:
Large Group and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will interact with peers in play-based ways.
Students will create stories and scenarios using dramatic materials.

Play is such an important part of children's learning and development. Children play and interact with their peers by exploring simple building materials and using the experiential learning classroom (murals and flooring) to recreate the city they live in. Students can build a fire department, a police station, homes, add people, and more on the community floor map.

WHAT TO DO

1. Help students celebrate the work people do in our communities by sharing books and stories from the classroom library. Be sure to reiterate that communities can be big or small and people in communities help each other by offering goods and services.
2. Introduce the build-a-community materials (wooden buildings, vehicles, community members, and blocks). Review the community helpers who live and work right alongside us in our communities. Students can use the build-a-community materials to create a community on the town flooring. Encourage students to create scenarios or provide play scenarios such as a family taking an afternoon trip to the zoo or a fire truck putting out a small fire.

PLAY TIP

While walking in the school neighborhood, stop and observe community helpers. A neighborhood walk could include observing a local construction site, garbage and recycling trucks, or a delivery service. Have discussions about the services the community helpers provide.

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Social Studies

Saving, Spending, Earning, and Giving

EZ.001.LA.1021

Activity Type:
Large Group and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will begin to understand that items cost money and bills/coins have different value.
Students will act out consumer related scenarios with their peers.

Young children are just beginning to understand that we need money to buy things, we earn money by working, and there is a difference between items that we want and items that we need. By exploring money in a play-based way, students start recognizing and attaching value to coins (more vs. less). Students can create a community market in the classroom, buying and selling neighborhood market items using play money.

WHAT TO DO

Introduce the cash register and grocery store items (fruits, vegetables, canned goods, boxed goods, and payment forms) in a free-choice center. Students can add price labels to grocery items and/or trade items with one another, determining their own value system. Be sure to reinforce terms such as earn, spend, save, and borrow as students interact with the materials.

PLAY TIPS

- Sort real coins in the classroom. Set out a sorting tray and some coins and encourage students to sort by color and size.
- Introduce an estimation jar in the classroom. Fill the jar with easily recognizable items like pom poms or bouncy balls and ask students to guess how many objects are in the jar. After students have made a guess, count the items as a class. As students become more comfortable with estimating, add smaller items like erasers or beans.

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Fine Arts

Community Shops – Bakery and Flower Shop

EZ.001.LA.1022

Activity Type:
Free Choice and Small Group

Objectives:
Students will engage in dramatic expression by taking on different community roles and practicing real-life social and commerce interactions through rotating play themes.

Using the pushcart, students rotate between a flower shop and bakery, exploring different jobs, tools, and responsibilities. Children role-play as florists, bakers, designers, cashiers, and customers—applying communication, collaboration, early math, and literacy skills as they work together to run their shop. The thematic variation keeps curiosity high and expands vocabulary as students encounter new props and play scenarios.

WHAT TO DO

1. Set up the pushcart as either the flower shop or bakery. Students can role-play the cashier-customer relationship, create unique displays such as floral arrangements or baked goods, and better understand responsibilities in service roles.
2. Add writing materials like paper, labels, pencils, crayons, and markers to inspire students to design signs and labels. Independent pre-writing helps students build confidence and vocabulary.

PLAY TIPS

- Add real flowers and encourage students to observe and draw them. As flowers dry, students can sort petals, stems, leaves, and buds while discussing the parts of a flower.
- Invite students to “plant” flower using Play-Doh or clay as a base.
- Decorate play pastries with beads, felt shapes, and pom-poms to support fine motor development.
- Sort baked goods and flowers by shape, size, and price to introduce the basic consumer – service interactions.

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Science

Recycling Center

EZ.001.LA.1023

Activity Type:
Large Group, Small Group, and Routines

Objectives:
Students will begin to understand the importance of caring for our planet.
Students will learn to identify recyclable materials and correctly sort them.
Students will demonstrate an awareness of how individual actions can positively impact the environment.

Recycling and sustainability are important concepts to introduce to young children as they learn to care for their environment, classroom, and home. By setting up a classroom recycling center, students can engage in hands-on learning about how recycling helps reduce waste and protect the planet. Using labeled recycling bins and picture sorting cards, students will practice identifying different types of materials, such as paper, plastic, glass, and metal, and placing them in the correct bin. This activity encourages responsible habits and helps students understand their role in keeping the Earth clean.

WHAT TO DO

1. Begin by asking students to name one thing they throw away in the trash. Then ask, "Where does our trash go once we throw it away?" Facilitate a brief discussion about landfills, explaining that they can only hold a limited amount of trash. Once they're full, we must find new places for our trash. Explain that one way to reduce the amount of trash we produce is to recycle.
2. Ask students what it means to recycle (e.g., turning items into something new and useful). Review items that can be recycled, such as paper, plastic, glass, and metal.
3. Introduce the product sorting cards and invite students to "recycle" them by placing each card in the appropriate labeled bin.

PLAY TIPS

- Incorporate real recyclable items from the classroom whenever possible. You're likely use the paper recycling bin the most often. Encourage students to place paper scraps in the correctly labeled bin after projects or writing activities.
- Create an anchor chart with your students that highlights other ways to care for our planet. Start with a picture of Earth in the center and branch out with ideas such as: turning off lights when not in use, riding a bike instead of driving, conserving water, and reusing containers. Continue to add new ideas during future classroom discussions.
- Rotate the classroom "Recycling Helper" role each week so every student gets a chance to take responsibility for the recycling center.

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