

Thematic Learning Centers

Workshop #1-Designing Culturally-Relevant Dramatic Play Centers that Promote Language Development

- Explore how culturally-relevant dramatic play centers allow young children to draw from their experiences to enhance their play and language skills.
- Apply strategies for planning language-rich, culturally-relevant dramatic play centers.
- Plan and design dramatic play centers that reflect children's communities, cultures, and familial experiences outside of school.

Workshop #2- Setting-up Engaging Learning Centers for Dual Language Learners

- Develop an understanding of how guided play during learning centers is a vehicle for developing cognitive, academic, social and linguistic skills in young children.
- Explore how learning centers are spaces where dual language learners scaffold each other's language and learning as they work in pairs or small groups.
- Discuss how to organize a developmentally appropriate early childhood environment into defined areas of the classroom that have a play-based learning purpose.
- Analyze their current classroom set-up to design the following learning centers: math, science, literacy, construction, writing, library, dramatic play, and art, to address academic content for young children while stimulating their learning.

Workshop #3- Creating Challenging Learning Center Activities: Make-and-Take*

- Design and create developmentally appropriate activities for children that address content areas and to be placed at their learning centers.
- Utilize curriculum and standards (e.g., PK guidelines or TEKS) to create their learning center activities.

*This workshop requires that participants or school administrator(s) provide materials to make their games and activities (ex: construction paper, buttons, pipe-cleaners, paper plates, etc). A list of materials will be provided upon request.

Workshop #4- Developing a Model EC Classroom*

- Analyze existing classroom setting to determine strengths and accessibility for children's learning.
- Organize a developmentally appropriate early childhood environment into defined areas of the classroom that have a play-based learning focus.
- Examine the significance of a planned environment for children's learning and development.

*Participants will physically arrange a DAP classroom environment.