

Center Time and How Beneficial it is for Your Child

Center Time (*also known as choice centers or play centers*) are an important time in your preschooler's daily routine. Tiger Tots ensures that all classes receive 60 minutes of consecutive, uninterrupted center time **each day**. We would not devote almost half the preschool day to play if we did not believe in its importance!

During centers they are able to learn social-emotional skills, explore different interest areas, and grow their self-confidence while developing a love of learning. Along with this, they are also able to observe the world around them and partake in new experiences. Each center opportunity allows children to develop and practice oral language skills, fine and large motor growth, and their problem-solving abilities. Below is a breakdown of the centers your child will experience this year and why they are essential for their learning.

Center	About this Center	How You Can Promote This Center
Blocks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Blocks are designed in proportional units• Children's building skills develop in distinct stages• Children create designs and build what they see around them (roads, houses, buildings)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Talk with children about different shapes and how many blocks are needed• Help children find and return blocks to designated places• Suggest props a child might like to use

<p>Dramatic Play</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pretend play helps children make sense of their experiences • Children take on roles and pretend about a situation, use props, and play with other children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pretend with children by taking on a role • Help children find and return the props they need • Suggest ideas to extend make-believe play
<p>Toys and Games</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These materials teach math, support eye-hand coordination, and promote small-muscle skills • Some are self-correcting, and some are open-ended 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play games with children • Help a child who is having trouble completing a task (putting a puzzle together) • Comment on the pattern a child makes
<p>Art</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children need opportunities to explore and experiment with various art materials • Art is a way for children to express their ideas and feelings • Adults should not impose their own ideas about art on children • Children's artistic skills develop in predictable stages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage children to experiment with paint, markers, clay, dough, and collage materials • Help with a special activity (making play dough) • Help children write their names on their artwork • Write the captions and stories that children dictate about their artwork

Books	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children develop valuable literacy skills that a love for books • It is a quiet place to get away and enjoy books • To a child, the most important letters are those in his or her name 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read and enjoy looking at books with children • Encourage children's writing and take dictation • Tell stories and listen while children retell stories
Discovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is an area where children can explore materials firsthand • Adults can encourage and share a sense of wonder with children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be curious about children's discoveries • Help children take apart an old, small appliance (clock, tape recorder)
Sand/Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These materials usually calm children • Children build understandings about scientific and mathematical concepts as they play with sand and water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show children how to keep the sand and water in tables/tubs • Offer props and talk about what children are discovering • Help with a special activity (blowing bubbles, testing what floats or sinks)

Taken and adapted from *The Creative Curriculum*