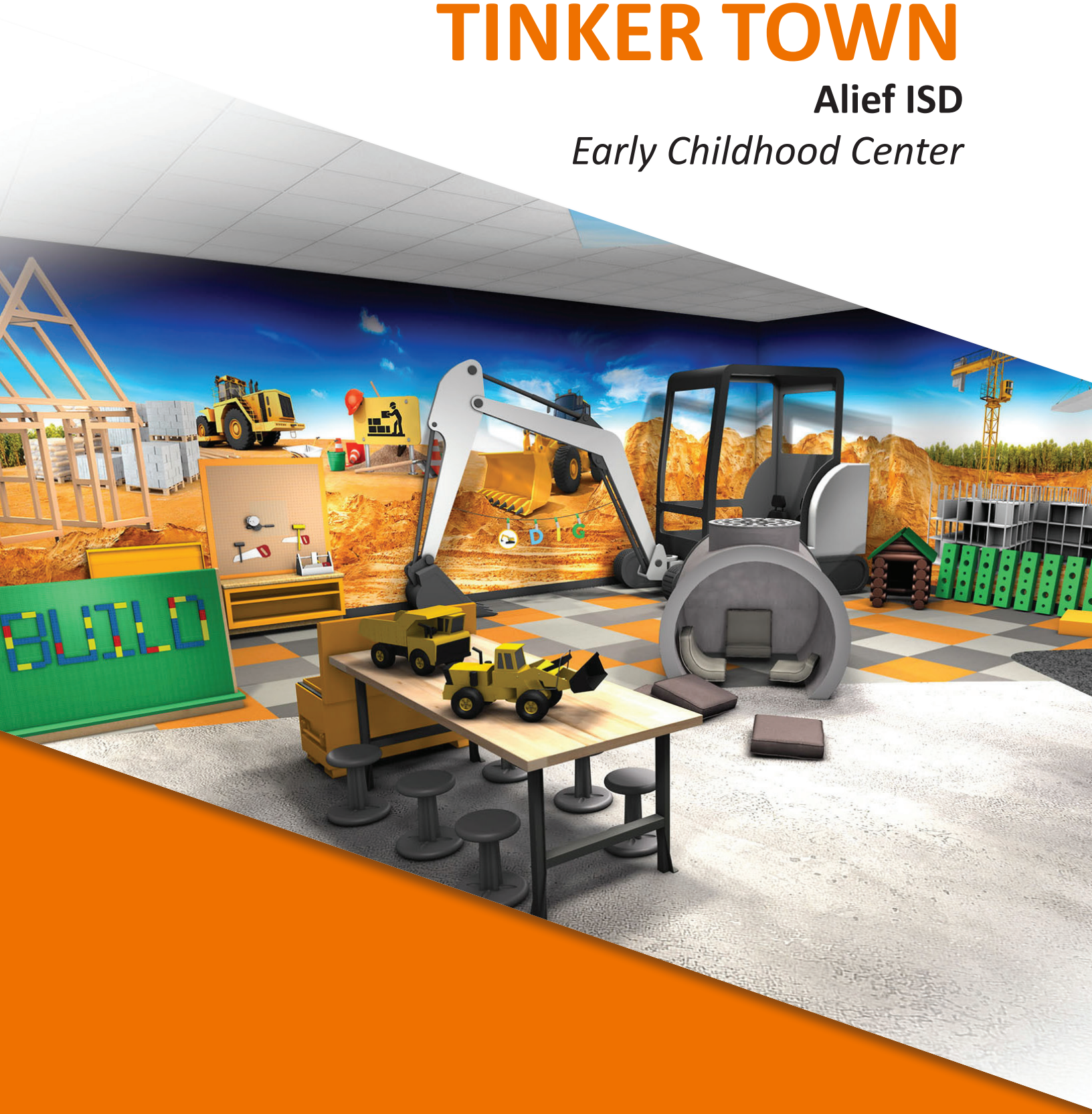
TINKER TOWN

Alief ISD

Early Childhood Center



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EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION CLASSROOMS

Welcome to your new classroom! You may be experiencing many emotions—excitement, uncertainty, even apprehension. This is completely expected. Experiential learning may be new to you as a concept or theory, but rest assured, many of the principles that bind experiential learning have likely been applied by you for years. Experiential learning embodies the active participation, social engagement, and meaningful connections that we know are the pillars of play-based learning. Play is how young children learn!

This guide is intended to support you as you transition to a new classroom environment. You will find helpful background information on the theory, activity ideas organized by skill domains, experiential learning resources, and tools to assist you in reflective teaching practices. Most importantly, have fun with your students in this new learning environment. The classroom space really is a second teacher and the possibilities are endless!

What is Experiential Education?

Experiential education is a theory that acknowledges humans as active participants in the learning process. In the classroom, students are at the center of the learning process, actively engaging and participating in decision-making. Students' interests and needs drive topics of study with small group and individual projects evolving from their curiosities and real-life events. Experiential learning environments, like museums and zoos, naturally provide opportunities for inquiry-based learning that inspire curiosity and passion. These same features and opportunities are available in experiential learning classrooms.

How does experiential education impact your role as a teacher?

Teachers learn about students by actively listening and observing. You listen to conversations, observe students' choices, and communicate with families. Through this listening and observing, you can make assumptions about what students know and provide new materials, activities, and experiences that help expand upon this knowledge. By asking open-ended questions and encouraging students to make observations, students begin to build a schema that continues to grow.

How does experiential education impact the students' role?

Students are at the center of the learning process. Students' interests and needs drive topics of conversation and participation in activities. Students in experiential learning classrooms make choices and decisions throughout the day. They choose whether they play alone or in a group, they choose activity options that sound most appealing, and they choose to engage with interesting materials and equipment.

How Do I Use an Experiential Education Classroom?

A new classroom can be overwhelming, not only for you, but for your students too. Being prepared can help manage those overwhelming feelings and set you up for success in your new environment. Before introducing the classrooms to your students, take a gallery walk in each classroom, taking in the sights and sounds without interruptions. As you are noticing and observing features in the classroom, think about big ideas or themes that might naturally stem from these features. You can list activities or play-based items that might align with these ideas; several activity ideas and accompanying items are provided in the educator guide to help you get started. Introduce the classrooms to the students by taking a community gallery walk. Ask students to describe what they notice, how they feel, and what they would like to know more about.

What Will I Find in Each Experiential Education Classroom?

Each experiential education classroom includes similar best practices and strategies for working with young children, not only in the design but in the supportive activities. The unique themes and content can lead to new ideas and projects stemming from students' interests and questions. Each classroom includes:

- **A General Supply Kit:** A collection of materials that can be used in open-ended ways
- **Magnetic Boards:** Engagement tools for group learning or individual interactions
- **A Classroom Library:** Developmentally appropriate Spanish and English, non-fiction and fiction books, that support the theme
- **Sensory Exploration:** A station or area that encourages inquiry-based investigations
- **An Educator Guide:** A facilitation tool that includes supportive activities and ideas for assessment

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TINKER TOWN

Lincoln Logs Building

TT.01

I.C.7 Child interacts with a variety of playmates.
IX.B.1 Child shows control of tasks that require small-muscle strength and control.
IX.A.2 Child coordinates sequence of movements to perform tasks.

Lincoln Logs naturally encourage students to engage in associative play, problem solve, and consider their own actions. The large-scale Lincoln Logs further encourage skill development as their size necessitates peer interactions. Students can use tabletop Lincoln Logs to make comparisons between structures and draw new conclusions.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

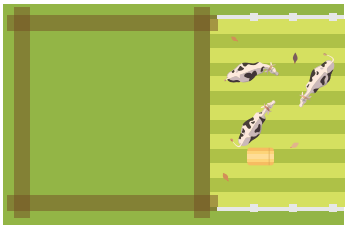
Introduce the tabletop Lincoln Logs and large-scale Lincoln Logs. Students can use the Lincoln Logs mats as a foundation to create structures or explore the pieces freely. As an educator-directed activity, ask students to create a tabletop structure and recreate the same structure using the large-scale Lincoln Logs. In addition, challenge students to build the tallest structure possible. After the structure falls, students can redesign and consider ways to make the structure taller.

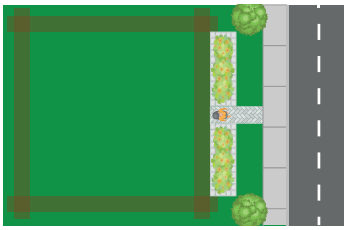
TEACHING STRATEGIES

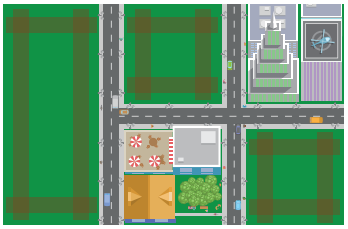
- Make log cabins out of other materials and make comparisons between the building process. Students can use craft tubes or paper towel rolls (cut in half) to build a log cabin. Ask students to glue four craft rolls onto construction paper and add a construction paper roof. How is the paper log cabin building process similar and/or different to building a log cabin out of Lincoln Logs?
- Create a builder's box. Add several types of building materials like Legos, wooden blocks, Lincoln Logs, and Magna Tiles to the box and encourage students to build the same structures. Ask students how the building process is different as they use each type of material.

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TINKER TOWN

Large Foam Block Building
TT.02

I.C.1 Child uses effective verbal and nonverbal communication skills to build relations with teachers/adults.
I.C.7 Child interacts with a variety of playmates.
IX.A.2 Child coordinates sequence of movements to perform tasks.

Large-scale blocks encourage students to work and communicate together to create something new. Students can make objects, structures, settings, and more, adhering to student-created rules. Adults can support open-ended play by asking questions that guide students in new directions.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

1. Sit down with the students and start stacking the blocks. As you are stacking, call out the color and shape of the block. Your modeling encourages students to build on their own. During these interactions, ask questions such as, “Do you think the blocks will stay balanced?” and “How can we make our structure more stable?”
2. Continue supporting students’ block engagement by observing and encouraging. Scaffold ideas by using open-ended questions and making “I wonder” and “I notice” comments to students.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

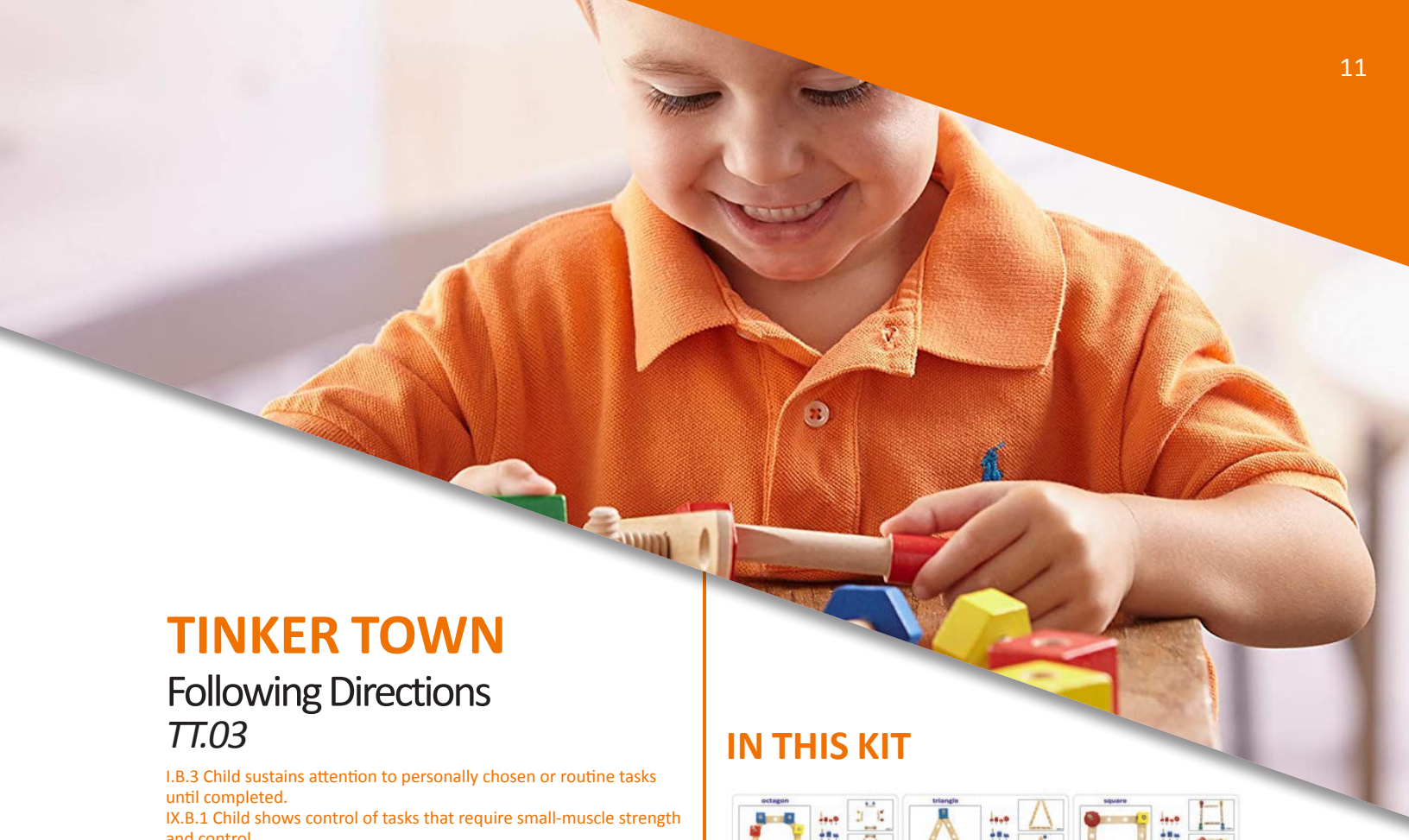
- Be sure to balance student-directed and educator-directed block activities, providing students with ample opportunity to be creative. Laying out block options can give students direction for highlighting their creativity. For example, ask students to create a maze using the blocks, in which they can use cars or balls to follow through the maze.
- Participate in block bowling. Have each participant build their own block tower then use different types of balls (tennis, wiffle, soccer, etc.) to knock down the towers. You can have discussions about force and structure stability.

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TINKER TOWN

Following Directions

TT.03

I.B.3 Child sustains attention to personally chosen or routine tasks until completed.
IX.B.1 Child shows control of tasks that require small-muscle strength and control.
II.A.2 Child shows understanding by following two-step oral directions.

Young children learn language by listening to the world around them. With increased exposure, they begin to comprehend and build understanding. Using concept cards, building materials, and adult guidance, students participate in following direction exercises to make an end product.

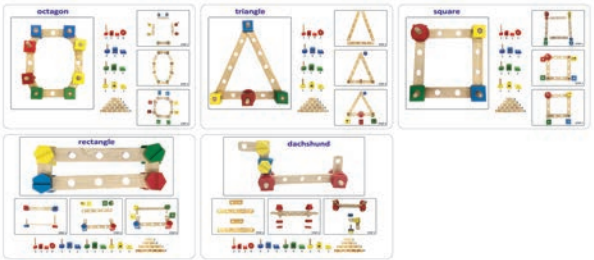
DOING THE ACTIVITY

Introduce the construction building set and concept cards in a free exploration area. Students can use the concept cards to create a pre-determined product or students can build items/structures of their choosing.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Students can practice following directions through other listening exercises. Provide students with a series of directives to create a specific end product using tabletop blocks. For example, ask students to stack two cylinders and a triangle to create a rocket, modeling as you provide the directives.
- Games like Simon Says and Red Light, Green Light help students practice following directions. Even though students are not creating a visible product, they are listening to directions in order to complete a task.

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TINKER TOWN

Tinker Town Alphabet: Alphabet Memory

TT.04

I.C.2 Child assumes various roles and responsibilities as part of a classroom community.
III.C.1 Child names at least 20 letters in the language of instruction.

Each themed classroom includes a magnetic alphabet. A featured activity will be included with each themed magnetic alphabet. **Alphabet Memory:** Students reinforce alphabet recognition, letter sounds, and the visual difference between uppercase and lowercase letters by participating in alphabet memory.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

1. Review the letters of the alphabet using the themed magnetic letters. As you are reviewing, be sure to point out both the capital and lowercase letters.
2. The first time you introduce the memory game, model appropriate play with the students. Place the cards face down and spread them out (you may want to start with fewer matches and increase the number of matches as students become more comfortable with the game). Take turns trying to find a match by turning up two cards. If the cards match, keep the match and take another turn. If the cards do not match, return the cards to the same location, face down. Continue the game until all of the matches have been found.

TEACHING STRATEGY

Playing memory games can help preschool students improve brain functions such as attention, concentration, and focus. Play Memory Tray to encourage critical thinking. Place several items on a tray for students to see (start with a small number), then remove from students' vision. Return the tray, without the items, and ask students to recall items that were on the tray. Continue to add more items to the tray as memory capabilities increase.

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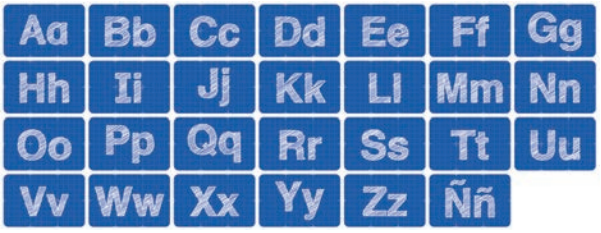




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TINKER TOWN

The Three Little Pigs Comprehension

TT.05

III.D.1 Child retells or re-enacts a story after it is read aloud.
III.D.2 Child uses information from books by comparing.

Comparing versions of stories leads to a stronger ability to comprehend and analyze texts. Using the books, *The Three Little Rigs* by David Gordon and *The Three Little Pigs* by Mara Alperin, students make comparisons between characters, setting, and plot (what happens) using story props.

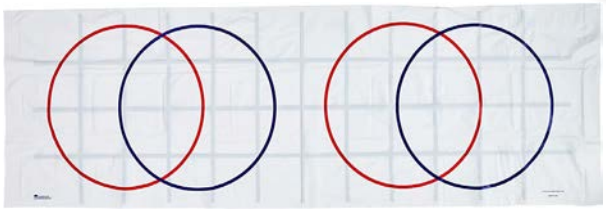
DOING THE ACTIVITY

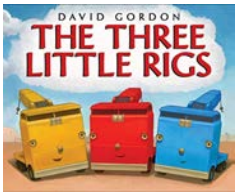
1. Read both, *The Three Little Rigs* by David Gordon and *The Three Little Pigs* by Mara Alperin, reviewing the characters, setting, and plot in each story. Ask the following questions: "Did you notice anything that was the same in both books?" and "Did you notice anything different?"
2. Introduce the floor Venn diagram. Tell students that a Venn diagram is a tool that helps us compare two things. All of the similarities between two things are placed in the middle. All of the differences between two things are placed in the outer circles. Compare the two stories using the storytelling props. Ask students to place the props in the respective areas of the Venn diagram as you make comparisons.
3. Read the books again, asking students to read along using the hand puppets. Encourage students to retell the books in their own words, using the hand puppets and construction props.

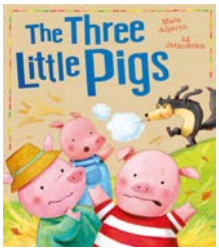
TEACHING STRATEGY

Make additional storytelling props using construction paper or other art materials. You can use these additional storytelling props in your comparisons of the stories.

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TINKER TOWN

Tinker Town Word Bank: Cotton Swab Painting

TT.06

III.C.1 Child names at least 20 letters in the language of instruction.
IX.B.1 Child shows control of tasks that require small muscle strength and control.

Each themed classroom includes a word bank. A featured activity will be included with each themed word bank. **Cotton Swab Painting:** Students work on developing prewriting skills by exploring a variety of writing materials. Using paper, paint, and cotton swabs, students can practice writing word bank words, their name, letter sequencing, and other drawing activities of their choosing.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

Place the word bank words, printing paper, cotton swabs, and small bowls of paint in the writing center. Students can practice writing word bank words, their name, and/or the alphabet with the unconventional writing materials. Students can also use the materials to draw or paint in open-ended ways.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Write out letters or word bank words on paper or sentence strips (tracing) for students who need additional support.
- Provide opportunities for students to paint freely with the cotton swabs.

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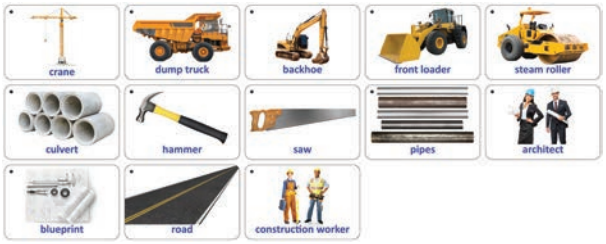
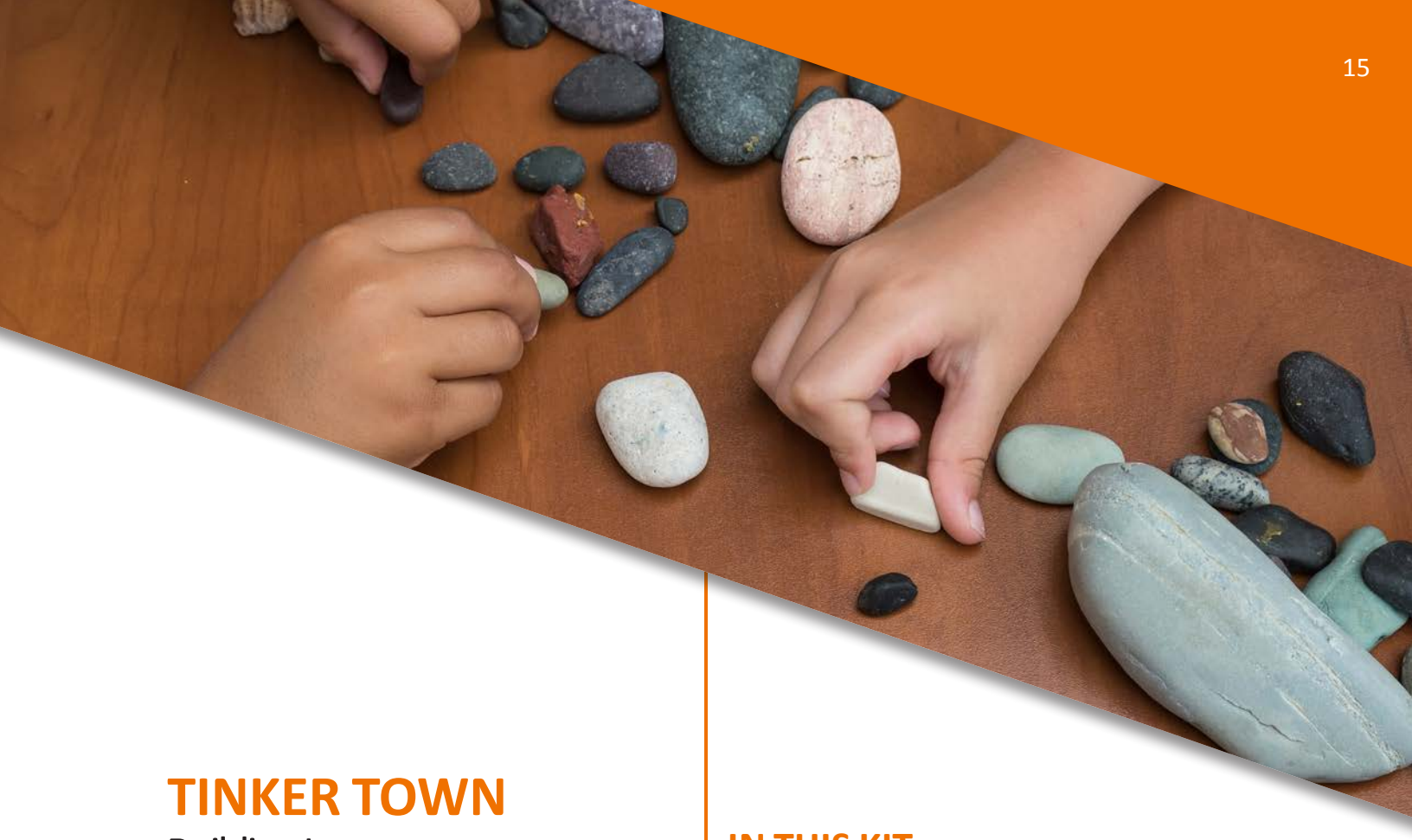






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TINKER TOWN

Building Letters

TT.07

III.C.1 Child names at least 20 letters in the language of instruction.
IX.B.1 Child shows control of tasks that require small muscle strength and control.

Students use rocks to line tracings of uppercase and lowercase letter cards. Letter cards include a picture that matches the beginning sound to help students make meaningful associations between letters and sounds.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

Provide students with the letter-tracing cards and a handful of rocks. Include the themed magnetic letters from activity TT.04 as a visual alphabet reference. Demonstrate aligning the rocks along the letter cards to form letters. Ask students to use the rocks to outline the letter cards.

TEACHING STRATEGY

Students can also use a dry erase marker to trace the letters.

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TINKER TOWN

Driving Nails

TT.08

III.C.1 Child names at least 20 letters in the language of instruction.
IX.B.1 Child shows control of tasks that require small muscle strength and control.

Students continue exploring letter recognition and emergent writing in unconventional ways by using faux nails and letter/number patterns. Students “trace” outlines of letters and numbers while developing fine motor skills as they hammer faux nails into prints.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

Provide students with the pound-a-pattern set, and number and alphabet templates. Students can use the hammer and nails to follow the patterns on the template or create their own pattern using blank paper.

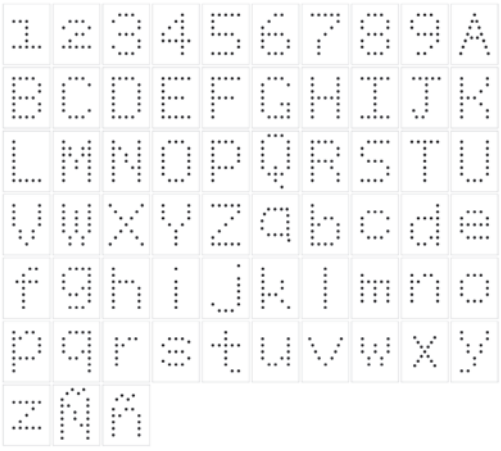
TEACHING STRATEGY

You can draw (or students can draw) additional patterns to use with the pound-a-pattern set. Students can even trace their favorite picture or image from another book to use with the set.

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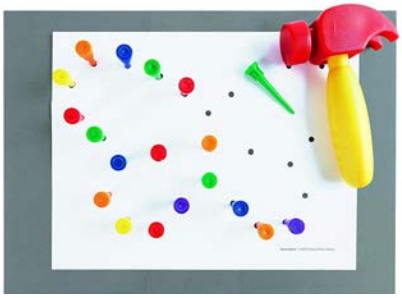


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TINKER TOWN

Building Shapes

TT.09

V.A.3 Child counts 1-10 items, with one count per item.
V.C.2 Child creates shapes.
IX.B.1 Child shows control of tasks that require small muscle strength and control.

Understanding shapes is at the foundation of building and constructing. Students practice creating shapes using craft sticks and identification cards. Educator can help students identify the shapes and facilitate conversations about characteristics of each shape such as how many sides and corners (vertices) each shape has.

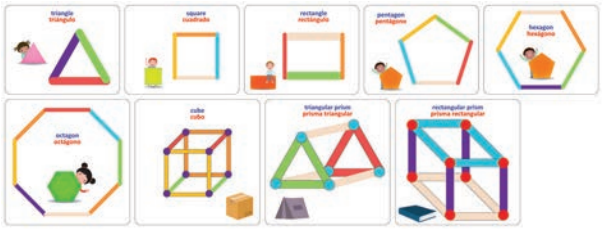
DOING THE ACTIVITY

Spread out the shape mats in a free-choice center or as part of a small group experience. Place the craft sticks on the table. Ask students to recreate the shapes using the craft sticks. Students can lay the craft sticks directly on the mat (match) or recreate by sight. As students are recreating, ask questions such as, “How many craft sticks will you need to recreate this shape?” and “Can you think of additional shapes to make (outside of the shape mats)?”

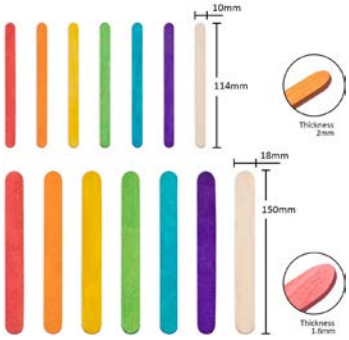
TEACHING STRATEGIES

- After students have created shapes using the craft sticks, they can glue them together as shape references for future activities.
- Add Velcro to each end of the craft sticks (identical surface of Velcro on each side) and encourage students to build shapes. Velcro enables the craft sticks to be used multiple times (reusable activity).
- Create 3D shapes using Play-Doh as an adhesive. Using the 3D shape mats, encourage students build 3D shapes with educator support. Include a variety of materials to build 3D shapes such as craft sticks, toothpicks, and straws.

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TINKER TOWN

Cube Counting

TT.10

V.A.3 Child counts 1-10 items, with one count per item.
V.B.2 Child uses concrete models for subtracting 0-5 objects from a set.
IX.B.1 Child shows control of tasks that require small muscle strength and control.

Students practice one-to-one correspondence as they build and deconstruct Unifix Cubes towers. Students roll dice to add to and take away Unifix Cubes pieces in this exercise.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

1. Students practice adding to and taking away up to six, building with Unifix Cubes and die. In a small group, have each student start with one cube, take turns rolling the die, and add to or take away the rolled number, building a tower. Educator can state if the students should add to or take away and pre-determine number of turns each student will take.
2. During other iterations of the activity, have students determine if they will add to or take away Unifix Cubes during their turn, stating which action they will take.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Have students compare their tower size throughout and after the activity. Ask questions such as, “Which tower has more (the most) Unifix Cubes?,” “Which tower has less (the least) Unifix Cubes?,” and “Which tower(s) have the same amount of Unifix Cubes?”
- Have students build individual towers using a number line. Write the numbers 1-10 on a sentence strip and have students build towers that correlate in size to the associated numbers (for example, number 1 on the number line would correlate to a tower size of 1 Unifix tall).

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TINKER TOWN

I Can Be an Architect

TT.11

III.D.3 Child uses information learned from books.
V.C.1 Child names common shapes.
IX.B.1 Child shows control of tasks that require small muscle strength and control.

After reading *Young Frank, Architect* by Frank Viva, students learn that an architect designs objects and often gives advice during the build process. Students can practice assuming the role of an architect by interacting with "blueprint" cards and creating buildings and structures using tangrams.

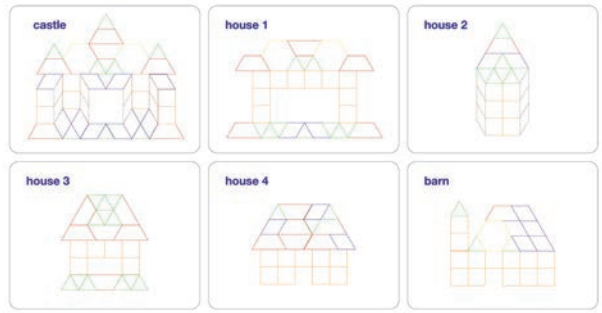
DOING THE ACTIVITY

1. Read *Young Frank, Architect* by Frank Viva, reiterating the word architect throughout and explaining that an architect is someone who designs the construction of a building. Ask students to share what they know about architects and people who construct buildings. Show students pictures of a variety of buildings and ask them to share different types of buildings found in their community.
2. Show students the architecture block boards and ask how they look similar or dissimilar to pictures of buildings (an outline, similar shape, etc.). In small groups or in a free-choice center, encourage students to use tangrams or pattern blocks to fill in the architecture block boards.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Take students on a walk outside to identify different types of geometric shapes found in neighborhood buildings.
- Have students search through magazines, catalogs, and books for photos of buildings and talk about the shapes they see.

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TINKER TOWN

Exploring Blocks of Different Shapes and Sizes

TT.12

III.A.1 Child engages in pre-reading and reading-related activities
V.C.1 Child names common shapes.
IX.B.1 Child shows control of tasks that require small muscle strength and control.

Blocks naturally provide children with opportunities to predict, experiment, and discover architectural principles. By exploring blocks of different shapes and sizes, students problem solve and create solutions, often in small social groups.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

1. Read *Shapes, Shapes, Shapes* by Tana Hoban, encouraging students to look closely as you read the book to find shapes in everyday items. Talk with students about the different shapes they are familiar with such as square, rectangle, triangle, circle, and star. Discuss the features of each shape.
2. Introduce the blocks and ask students to identify items from the book that share the same shape. Allow students to use their imagination to create blocks structures and simple shapes, reinforcing the shapes highlighted throughout the book.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Ask students to build structures/shapes using materials other than blocks, such as straws, toothpicks, pipe cleaners, and craft sticks. Have students compare/contrast their observations about the structures/shapes.
- Go on a shape hunt outdoors. Ask the students to take a notebook and pencil to record the shapes they see in nature. For example, a rock may by shaped like a triangle and a flower may be shaped like an oval. Allow students to share their findings with each other.

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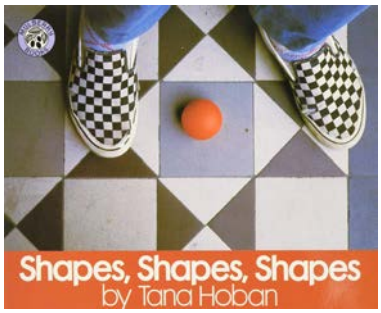






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TINKER TOWN

Nonstandard Measurement

TT.13

V.D.1 Child recognizes heights or lengths or people or objects.

Young children apply early concepts of measurement in many of their everyday activities. They compare size, height, and length of toys, food, and even each other! Students further explore the concept of measurement by building with Play-Doh and measuring their creations with nonstandard forms of measurement.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

1. Ask students to make sculptures or artifacts out of the Play-Doh. You can model sculptures or show images/photos as inspiration first, if needed.
2. Encourage students to measure their Play-Doh creations using various tools: math links, snap cubes, and clothespins. They can record their measurements, writing the number of items that are required to measure the length of their Play-Doh creation.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Nonstandard measurement can be incorporated into everyday activities. Children may use additional nonstandard measurement tools such as hands and fingers to estimate length, blocks or squares for area, and sand and water for capacity to reinforce comparing.
- Have students work together with a partner to measure different body parts. They can take turns measuring how many snap cubes long their arms, legs, and hands are and repeat the activity using a different form of measurement.

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TINKER TOWN

Geoboards

TT.14

V.C.1 Child names common shapes.
IX.B.1 Child shows control of tasks that require small muscle strength and control.

Young children use geoboards to make shapes, measure an area, explore perimeter, and practice symmetry. Using geoboards in a play-based way helps students develop important pre-reading and pre-writing skills too. As they name shapes and letters, they are making identifications that eventually lead to writing exercises.

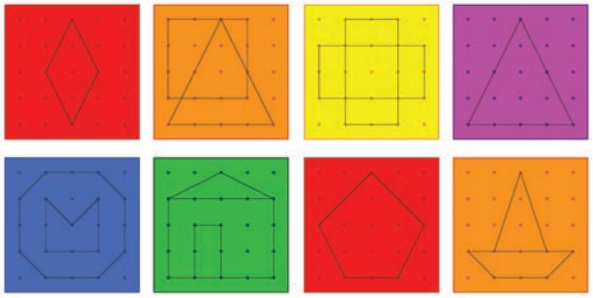
DOING THE ACTIVITY

Introduce the geoboards as a tool to make shapes using rubber bands or fabric loops. Model the appropriate use. Introduce the shape cards and ask students to create the shapes by mirroring the diagram on the shape cards. Reinforce features of each shape as students are creating and recreating, such as number of sides and curved/straight lines.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Make additional identification cards (numbers, lines, etc.) by drawing images on graphing paper. Students can use the identification cards to create images on the geoboards using rubber bands or fabric loops.
- Challenge your students to create pictures and images of their own on the geoboards. Have students look closely at their images, asking the following questions: “What shapes can you find in the design?” and “Can you tell me how many triangles (squares, rectangles, etc.) you can see?”
- Make your own geoboards using cork board and push pins or repurposed Styrofoam and golf tees.

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TINKER TOWN

Making Observations and Predictions

TT.15

III.A.1 Child engages in pre-reading and reading-related activities.
VI.A.2 Child observes, investigates, and describes the position and motion of objects.
IX.B.1 Child shows control of tasks that require small muscle strength and control.

After reading *What Can a Crane Pick Up?* by Rebecca Kai Dotlich, students make observations and predictions, and conduct investigations using classroom materials and a crane. Educator and students determine items to investigate, formulate a hypothesis (which items do you think the crane will pick up?), and test their hypothesis.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

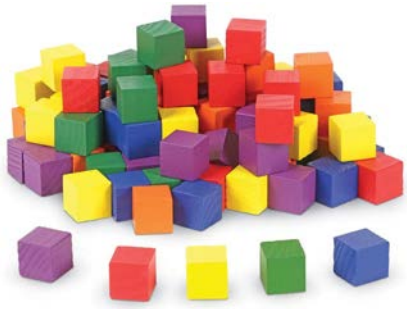
1. While you read *What Can a Crane Pick Up?* by Rebecca Kai Dotlich, ask students to make predictions about the crane's ability to pick things up. After reading the book, facilitate a discussion about cranes, sharing that full-sized cranes make big jobs (lifting and moving jobs) easier.
2. Students can see a crane in action by experimenting with a tabletop crane and wooden blocks. Ask students to make predictions about the number of wooden blocks the tabletop crane can hold and then encourage students to test those predictions. Ask students to find other items around the classroom and then make and test predictions about the crane's ability to pick the items up.

TEACHING STRATEGY

Repeat the activity using the large-scale manual crane in the classroom.

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TINKER TOWN

Gravity

TT.16

I.C.7. Child interacts with a variety of playmates.
VI.A.2 Child observes, investigates, and describes the position and motion of objects.
IX.B.1 Child shows control of tasks that require small muscle strength and control.

Gravity is a concept young children regularly see occurring in their play. They build towers and knock them down and drop toys, watching as they fall to the ground. Students reinforce their understanding of gravity concepts by exploring magnetic pipes on the peg board. Students can create ramps and experiment with manipulatives as they connect one piece to another.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

1. Invite a small group of students to the magnetic wall to look at the materials (ramps, rings, and balls), and talk about their observations and ideas. Ask the following questions: "What are some things you notice?," "What are some ways you might play here?," and "What if it doesn't work?" Provide several I wonder statements like, "I wonder how I can get this ball to move quickly down the ramp?" and "I wonder how I can slow the ball down?"
2. Encourage students to free play in this area while you make observations and ask guiding questions. Use terminology like plan, build, test, and retest throughout.

TEACHING STRATEGY

Explore how different materials roll down the ramps. Test the materials one-by-one and ask questions like, "What material seems to be the slowest?," "What material seems to be the fastest?," and "Why do you think that is?"

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TINKER TOWN

Build a City Magnetic Wall

TT.17

VII.B.3 Child discusses the roles and responsibilities of community helpers.
VII.C.1 Child identifies and creates common features in the natural environment.
IX.B.1 Child shows control of tasks that require small muscle strength and control.

Students have discussions about construction, building types, transportation, and people in their community by manipulating magnetic pieces (vehicles, structures, construction equipment, and signs). Students can create their own city or work with a group of peers to create a shared community.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

1. Place the construction/city-themed magnets on the magnetic wall for free exploration. Encourage students to build a city scene using the pieces and discussing the purpose and specific features of their city.
2. Use the magnets to tell oral stories. Model oral storytelling, stopping at various points to invite the students to physically engage in the story's actions. Encourage students to contribute their ideas to the story and create stories of their own.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Add the magnets to the writing center to entice tracing. Students can trace the vehicle, structure, and construction equipment, adding details as they choose.
- Create a classroom community art mural using the magnets. Students can sort the magnets by type, creating a city scene, and contribute to the collective design.

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TINKER TOWN

Signs All Around Us

TT.18

VII.B.3 Child discusses the roles and responsibilities of community helpers.
VII.C.2 Child explores geography tools and resources.
IX.A.2 Child Coordinates sequence of movements to perform tasks.

Students begin to understand that signs and environmental print in the community have meaning and keep us safe. Students can interact with environmental signs in the classroom in play-based ways to increase this understanding.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

1. Introduce the road signs and review the meaning behind each. If applicable, have students perform the action as part of the review.
2. Block off an area of the classroom that will serve as the designated "ride-on" area to avoid collision with others (use painter's tape or string to create boundaries). Encourage students to build a riding course within the designated area, placing the signs along the course. Encourage students to perform the action on the sign as they are riding through the course.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Take this activity outside to incorporate more space.
- Make a classroom book by simply binding pictures of different outdoor signs taken with a digital camera (or Polaroid). Students can read the book in the classroom and make connections to the classroom signs.
- Environmental print is everywhere — on road signs, magazines, menus, food containers, and buildings. Ask students and families to bring in empty food containers and magazines from home to help students make connections between environmental print.

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TINKER TOWN

Road Exploration

TT.19

VII.C.2 Child explores geography tools and resources.
VIII.A.1 Child uses a variety of art materials.
IX.B.1 Child shows control of tasks that require small muscle strength and control.

Students create their own roads for play using art materials that mimic different road textures. Students can have discussions about textures, road surfaces, and tires.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

1. As a free-choice activity, pour a variety of paint colors into the paint trays and allow students to explore the rollers. Encourage students to make straight, wavy, vertical, and horizontal lines using the rollers and make comparisons between the lines.
2. As an educator-directed activity, pour black paint into a paint tray and ask students to make a road with a foam roller of their choosing. Students can add details to their road, such as medians, curbs, and road signs, and practice driving wooden vehicles on their road after it dries. Ask students to think about a real vehicle and how the road surface they made might (or might not) support real tires.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Students can add texture to their road surface by including sand, salt, or glue in the paint.
- Try texture painting with other common household items such as sponges, cookie cutters, and Styrofoam.

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TINKER TOWN

Construction Dramatic Play

TT.20

I.C.7 Child interacts with a variety of playmates.
VII.B.3 Child discusses the roles and responsibilities of community helpers.
VIII.C.1 Child creates experiences through dramatic representation.

Preparing to build takes a lot of planning! You can sketch out your design, test your design, revise your design, and rebuild. Students can try out the design process in the dramatic play area using a variety of play-based construction themed materials.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

Introduce the dramatic play materials and encourage students to design, build, and redesign. Ask students to draw out their plans, first using paper and pencil, and then mirroring those designs using the Big Briks. Students can use the other construction dramatic play items to create a full construction scene and imagine themselves in construction-oriented roles.

TEACHING STRATEGY

Continue adding new materials to the construction dramatic play center to entice creative and new thinking. Students can create construction signs using paper and coloring materials or use the construction signs from activity TT.18.

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TINKER TOWN

Sandpaper Rubbings

TT.21

VIII.A.1 Child uses a variety of art materials.
IX.B.1 Child shows control of tasks that require small muscle strength and control.

Students explore textures by creating art using a variety of materials on fine, medium, and coarse sandpaper and discussing the differences between textures. As an extension, students explore wood as an art surface and make comparisons.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

1. Pass around the assortment of sandpaper pieces and ask students to feel the texture. Ask students the following questions: “What does it feel like as you rub your hand over the sandpaper?” and “How do the pieces of sandpaper feel different?”
2. Place the sandpaper, crayons, and paper in the writing center or free-choice center. Students can either use the crayons to draw directly on the sandpaper or place the paper over the sandpaper and draw on the paper. Ask students to describe what it feels like as they draw (feels bumpy) and look closely at their drawings and share any details.

TEACHING STRATEGY

Give students the opportunity to explore interactions between sandpaper and wood. Ask students to draw on the wood and then observe what happens as they use sandpaper to gently rub over their drawing. What do they notice as they use different pieces of sandpaper? What happens if they use a different writing utensil (making comparisons between crayon, marker, and pencil)?

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TINKER TOWN

Lego Wall

TT.22

V.B.2 Child uses concrete models to subtract 0-5 objects from a set.
V.E.1 Child sorts objects that are the same and different into groups.
IX.B.1 Child shows control of tasks that require small muscle strength and control.

Learning through Legos individually and in a small group can benefit children in many ways. Students build small-muscle strength, increase confidence, interact with peers, and create and problem solve. Students can use the Lego wall to create letters, practice letter-sound correspondence, and build replica structures.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

1. Introduce the Legos, baseplates, and Lego Building Instruction Guide as a free-choice or educator-directed activity. As a free-choice activity, students can use the baseplates or Lego building wall to create structures and murals. The Lego Building Instruction Guide can help guide students in creating Lego scenes and murals with adult support or peer collaboration.
2. Challenge your students to build classification, sorting, spatial sense, and addition and subtraction skills using Legos in educator-directed ways. Ask students to find the Legos that match, either by color, shape, or size, or combination of sorting categories. Ask students to make a tower, starting with the largest bricks on the bottom and graduating up to the smallest. Ask students to recreate something that you build, either after you have designed the structure or through a step-by-step process.

TEACHING STRATEGY

Use Legos as counting manipulatives in addition and subtraction activities. Number cards can help students make the one-to-one correlation.

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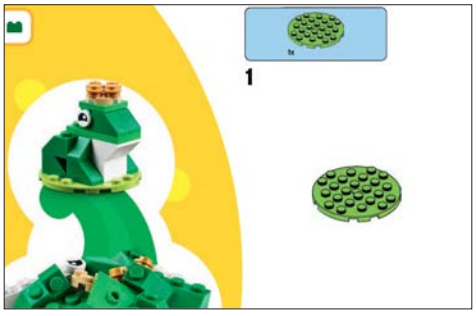


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TINKER TOWN

Construction Sensory Bin

TT.23

VIII.A.1 Child uses a variety of art materials.
IX.B.1 Child shows control of tasks that require small muscle strength and control.

Open-ended sensory exploration encourages creativity, self-expression, imagination, and provides opportunities for children to be successful, regardless of their language or cognitive abilities. Materials that align with the classroom Job Box sensory area will be provided such as kinesthetic play dirt, diecast construction toys, construction signs, and large river rocks.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

Empty the faux dirt into the portable container sensory bin. Add the construction vehicles and additional items (construction signs and rocks). Provide several play-based scenarios, such as: roll the vehicles through the dirt and rock, fill the dump trucks, load the trucks with rocks, and create a job site.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Make your own taste-safe dirt by combining cocoa powder, water, and flour. Mix 2 tbsp. of cocoa powder and 1 c. of flour in a container. Slowly add one cup of water and mix.
- Add several PVC pipes or cut-out cardboard pieces to allow students to freely explore and investigate the movement of objects (vehicles, dirt, and rocks) on ramps.

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TINKER TOWN

Simon Says

TT.24

II.A.1 Child shows understanding by responding appropriately.
IX.A.2 Child coordinates sequence of movements to perform tasks.
V.C3 Child demonstrates use of location words.

Simon Says encourages children to listen to instructions, make interpretations, and follow through with decisions. This gross motor game is also an early introduction into leadership roles. Using photo identification cards as support, one child assumes the role of "leader" and encourages their peers to follow body movements.

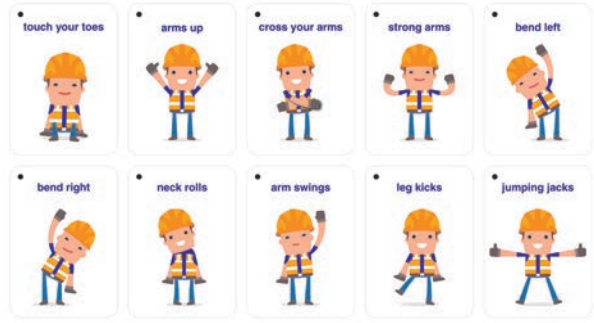
DOING THE ACTIVITY

1. Read *Pigs Aplenty, Pigs Galore!* by David McPhail, asking students to think about the pigs' actions as they are listening to the story. After reading the story, have the students pretend they are the "pigs aplenty" and participate in the following actions: "Lift up your arms," "Touch your waist," Put your hands on your knees," and "Touch your toes."
2. Tell students they will be playing a game called Simon Says. Similar to the pigs aplenty, Simon Says is a game in which you will follow actions. If the leader says "Simon says" first, that is an action the rest of the students must follow. If the leader does not say "Simon says" first, the rest of the students do not follow the action.
3. Begin the game with simple actions, such as "Simon says put your hand on your head." As students become comfortable with simple one-step actions, add two-step and three-step actions, such as "Simon says stand on one foot and jump up and down."

TEACHING STRATEGIES

- Play Simon Says with an emphasis on positional words. Have students use a block to show understanding of positions. For example, "Simon says put your block in front of your toes" and "Simon says pick up your block with your right hand."
- Simon Says is a game that often excludes players once they perform an action without "Simon says" stated first. Young children should continue to remain in the game to focus on listening skills rather than the competitive nature.

IN THIS KIT



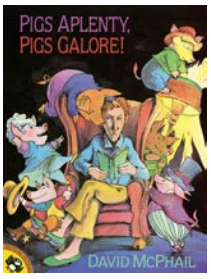


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TINKER TOWN

Application Explorations

TT.25

I.B.1.b Child takes care of and manages classroom materials.
X.A.1 Child opens and navigates through digital learning applications and programs.

With the support of adults, young children can use technology applications actively to improve language skills and prepare for school readiness. Two applications to explore in **Tinker Town** include: Grandpa's Workshop and Labo Brick Train.

DOING THE ACTIVITY

Introduce the applications Grandpa's Workshop and Labo Brick Train, modeling the appropriate use. Provide time for students to explore the applications, asking probing questions to help students think critically about the content they are interacting with. Starter questions like, "What do you think if ..." and "Can you compare this with ..." provide students with opportunities to dig deeper.

TEACHING STRATEGY

Technology and media can support early learning and relationship building if used intentionally. Educators learn about the challenges and opportunities with integration of technology to best support their students. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Is the media age appropriate, individually appropriate, and culturally and linguistically appropriate?
- Is the media active, hands-on, and empowering?
- Is assistive technology available to children with special needs?

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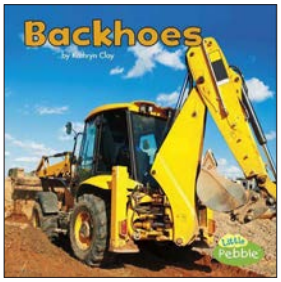
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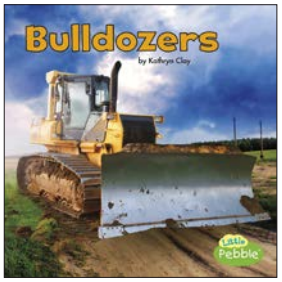
NON-FICTION



A Trabajar Duro!



Backhoes



Bulldozers



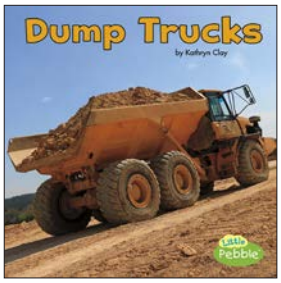
Camiones



Community Helpers at a Construction Site



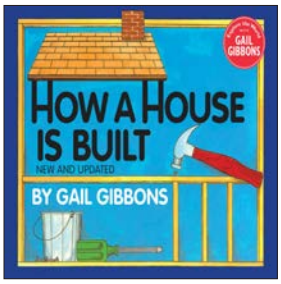
Cranes



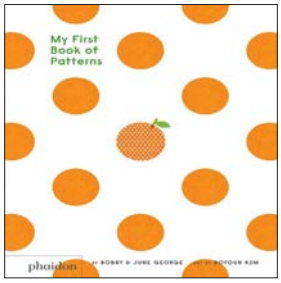
Dump Trucks



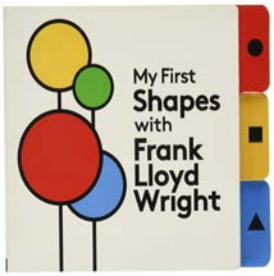
Excavators



How a House is Built



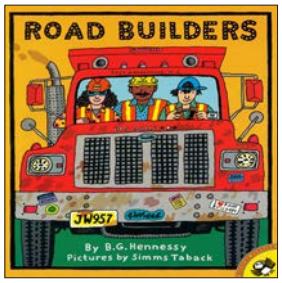
My First Book of Patterns



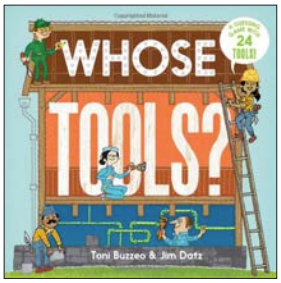
My First Shapes with Frank Lloyd Wright



My First Spanish Tools in the Shed



Road Builders



Whose Tools?

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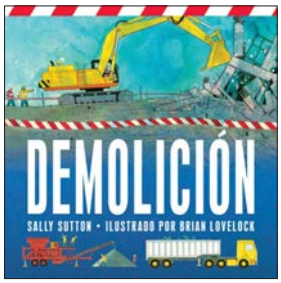
FICTION



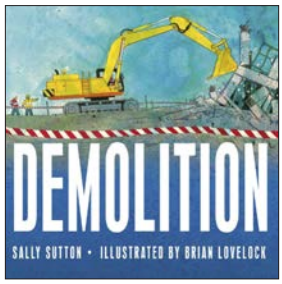
Buenas Noches, Construcción



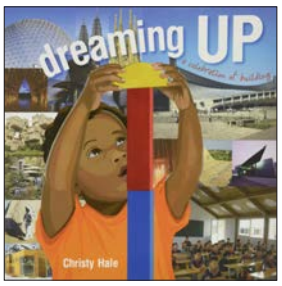
Construir Una Carretera



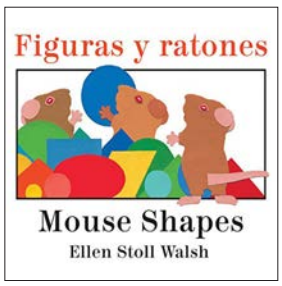
Demolición



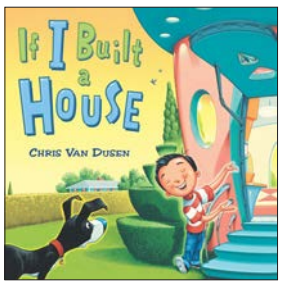
Demolition



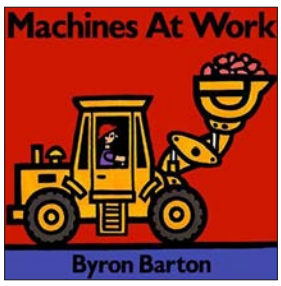
Dreaming up: A Celebration of Building



Figuras y Ratones



If I Built a House



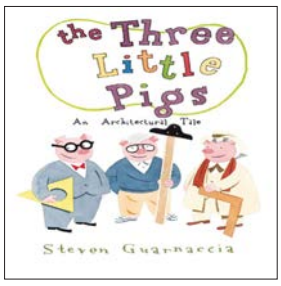
Machines At Work



Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel



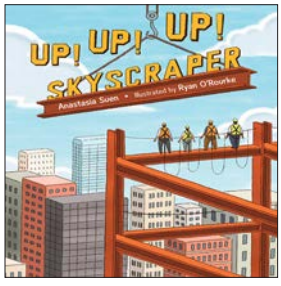
Ready, Set, Build!



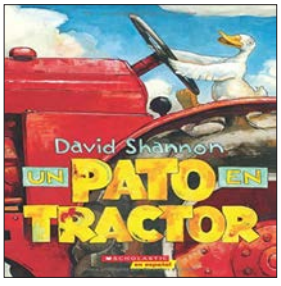
The Three Little Pigs: An Architectural Tale



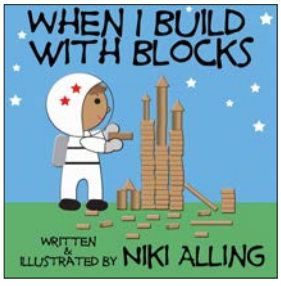
The Three Little Pigs Los Tres Cerditos



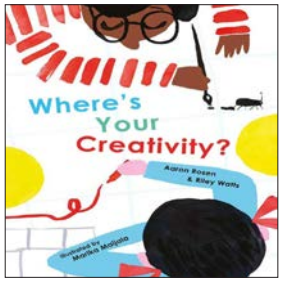
Up! Up! Up! Skyscraper



Un Pato en Tractor



When I Build with Blocks



Where's Your Creativity?

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GENERAL SUPPLY KIT



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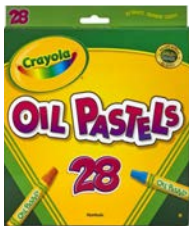












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ASSESSMENT TOOLS



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TINKER TOWN

Activity Rubric Scale

Student:_____ Class:_____

Date:_____

Activity or Skill:_____

_____

4 **Achieved-** The student frequently demonstrates the ability to apply the knowledge or perform the skill accurately in several environments without support.

3 **Progressing-** The student demonstrates understanding or use of the knowledge or skill in one or more environments with some support.

2 **Emerging-** The student is beginning to show understanding or use of the knowledge or skill in one environment with extensive support. The student is unable to demonstrate the skill without assistance.

1 **Introduced-** The student has been exposed to the knowledge or skill as part of the educational curriculum but demonstrates no measurable understanding of the knowledge or skill at this time.

Notes:_____

_____

_____

_____

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Anecdotal Note Observation Form

Student:_____ Date:_____ Time:_____

Objective for this observation:

List of others in the context:

Context:

Notes:

Preliminary thoughts regarding observation:

Educator's Signature:_____

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TINKER TOWN

General Observations

DATE	TIME	SKILL	OBSERVATIONS

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Picture Portfolio

Student:_____

Date:_____

Learning Center:_____

(Include photo or sample of student's work)

Notes:_____

_____

_____

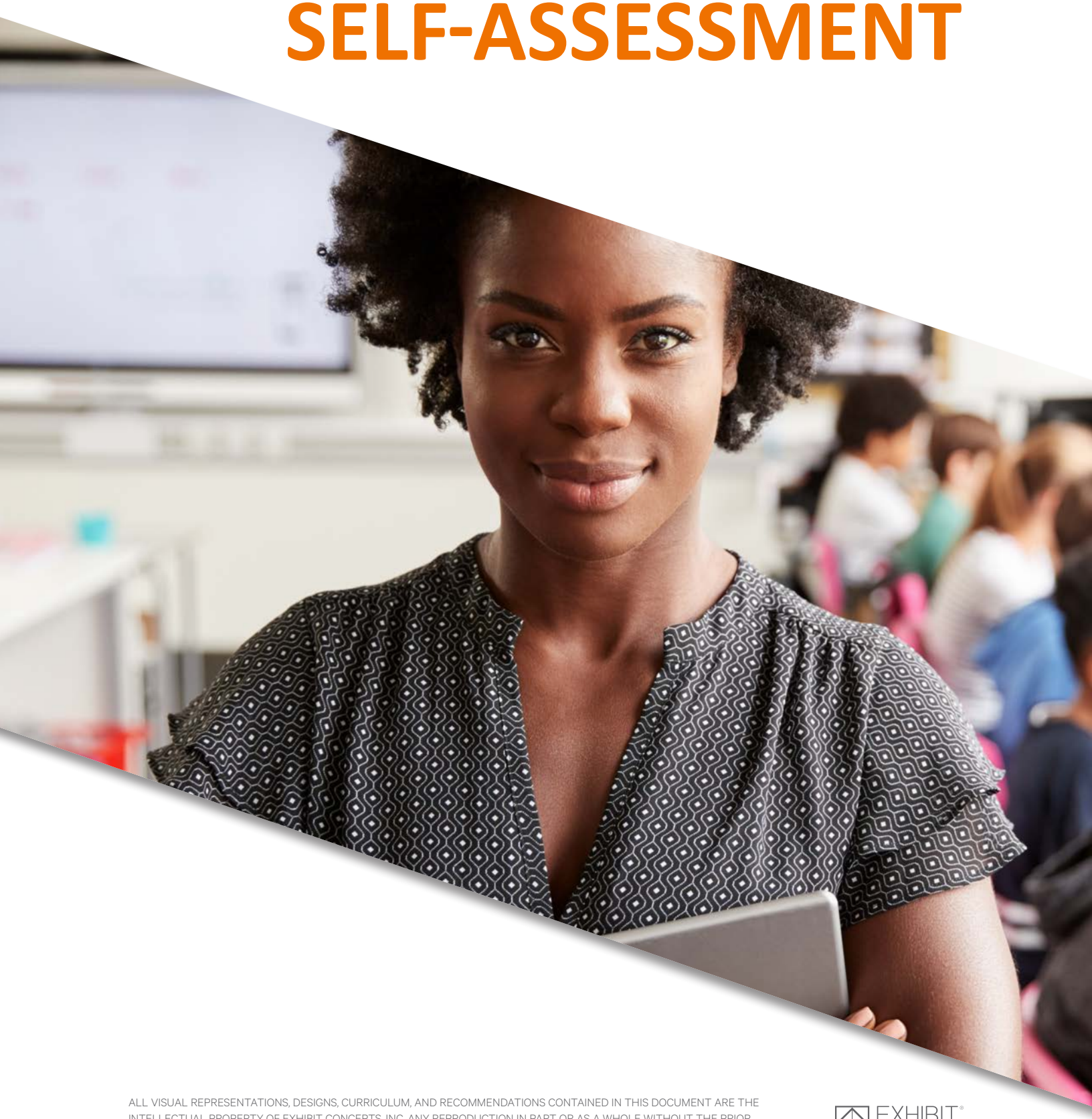
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TEACHER SELF-ASSESSMENT



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TINKER TOWN

Self-Assessment of Benchmarks of Experiential Education Implementation

Name:_____ School:_____ Date:_____

WHEN I PLAN...	LACKING	EMERGING	PRACTICING
I plan activities and experiences that follow the interests of my students.	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐
I consider multiple learning modalities.	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐
I consider new and novel items to engage students.	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐
WHEN I TEACH...	**LACKING**	**EMERGING**	**PRACTICING**
I give students choices.	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐
I ask open-ended questions that help students think creatively and critically.	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐
I observe my students.	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐
I identify and respond to the existing knowledge and skills each student brings to an activity or experience.	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐
I help students make connections between existing and new knowledge.	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐
I use developmentally appropriate concepts and vocabulary to introduce new content.	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐
I individually reflect on how to continuously improve my instruction.	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐
IN MY CLASSROOM...	**LACKING**	**EMERGING**	**PRACTICING**
My students are active in the learning process by:			
• choosing items to engage with and participating in activities that interest them.	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐
• working through problems and activities in real-life situations.	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐
• collaborating with peers, as developmentally appropriate.	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐
• initiating their own investigations.	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐
• asking questions.	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐
• making observations.	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐
My students recognize and use developmentally appropriate vocabulary and concepts.	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐
My students are intrinsically motivated.	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐	☐☐☐☐

My definition of experiential education is:

I'd like to know more about the following in regard to experiential education:

My strengths:

Areas I'd like to improve upon:

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