



Visual Support Guide: Learning Centers

What?

The learning centers visual support shows pictures of centers or play areas that are common early childhood environments. The visuals can help children understand which centers are available during choice or free play time. This can encourage them to engage more independently during these routines. You can use the visuals on a play schedule to help children move between centers or areas during choice time. The pictures provide labels for learning centers to help children understand where to move to next when following a schedule. You can also use the visuals to help a child who has a language delay or is a dual language learner request a learning center.

Why?

- Posting visuals on learning centers creates well-organized physical environments that support children's self-confidence and sense of control. They help children know where to go and what to do more independently.
- Using visual supports to help a child build and follow a schedule during choice time can support a child who has difficulty organizing themselves and staying engaged during unstructured times such as free play.
- You can use the learning center visuals in different ways.
 - Help a child who needs extra support to make choices about where to play during choice time.
 - Help a child who needs extra help to stay engaged throughout the free play routine.

How?

- Make learning center visuals.
 - Select and print the pictures of learning or activity centers in your learning environment.
 - Enlarge the pictures to make them more visible.
 - Translate the names of the learning centers into the languages spoken by the children in your learning environment.
 - To use the visuals as labels, cut them out and post them at a child's eye level on a shelf or wall in the center.
 - To use the visuals to support choice making, put the pictures on a single sheet of laminated paper to create a choice board.
 - Use the visuals as an activity schedule. Laminate each picture and place Velcro on the back. Print a visual schedule grid and Velcro the pictures to it when creating a schedule with a child.
- Use the learning center visuals.
 - When using the visuals as labels, teach the child what each visual means.
 - Show each picture, clearly label the center, and describe the activity a child can do at the center.
 - You can say, "This is the home center. In the home center, we can

pretend to do things at home, like cooking dinner” or “This is the art area. You can use paint to make a picture.”

- When using the visuals to help a child make a choice, ask the child to point to the picture of a center or provide a choice between two centers.
 - You can say, “Would like to play in the block area or at the writing center?”
 - Point to each picture as you say the word to help the child understand.
- When using the visuals as a visual schedule.
 - Before choice time begins, help the child create a schedule of centers.
 - Show them the pictures and ask where they would like to play first. Put that picture on the schedule, then support the child to make more choices and put the pictures on the visual schedule.
 - Show the child the visual schedule and explain each activity on the schedule, using language they can understand.
 - You can say, “First you’ll go to the art area. Next, you’ll play in the house center. Then you’ll go to the block area. Last, you’ll go to the book center.”
 - To help increase their understanding, point to each picture as you say each word.
 - Encourage the child to begin playing in the first center.
 - As the child moves through the schedule, be sure to refer to the visual schedule. You can say, “Next is house center!”
 - Use a timer or alarm to signal how long each activity lasts and when it ends.

Learning Centers

Home Center



Water Table



Art Area



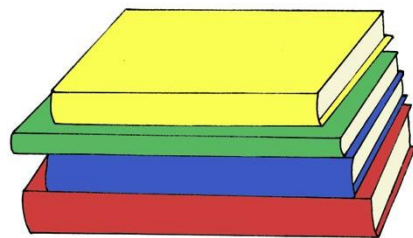
Library



Blocks



Books



Learning Centers

Dress Up



Computer



Sand and Water Table

