

## SAMPLE TEACHER COMMENTS FOR PORTFOLIO REPORTS

### FOR THE ART CENTER:

The Art Center is an exciting place for children to work. It draws them like a magnet. Children come to the center, choose an activity, and work that activity independently. They use the rebus (directions printed in picture form) that accompanies the activity as their guide. This gives them an opportunity to begin work immediately without waiting for directions. It also becomes a reading tool as they must “read” the directions before beginning to work. When children cut with the scissors, they use those small muscles to do what the eyes tell them to do. Lots of practice using fine muscles is needed before children make precise marks on paper. As children learn to use the art media to express themselves, they develop the ability to think creatively and solve problems.

### FOR A PAINTING ACTIVITY:

When children work in the Art Center they are learning more than how to paint. They are learning reading, writing and math. Reading occurs when children see the differences in their strokes and learn to duplicate different strokes or shapes. Recognition of likenesses and differences are basic skills necessary when learning to write and do math. When children use thin and thick brushes or paint thin and thick lines they are learning math. Math skills also evolve when children select and paint on paper of different shapes. When children try to title their painting or put their names on the paper they are practicing writing skills. Skills that are the foundation of writing such as learning about spacing things on paper, working from the top to the bottom, and painting from the left to the right develop when a child is in the Art Center. Creativity blossoms when children are painting. There are many ways to put the paint on the paper and many ways to express ideas and thoughts. Expressing creativity leads to building problem solving skills.

### FOR A PLAYDOUGH ACTIVITY:

Working with playdough offers children opportunities to explore different textures. Children roll, pinch, squeeze, pound, and bend the dough creating different shapes and objects. These activities give them the opportunity to expand their math skills by working with different amounts of playdough, creating shapes, and cutting it into fractions. Through playdough work children develop fine muscles that will help them later with writing skills. Using cookie cutters and rolling pins add another dimension to the Playdough Center. Children have the opportunity to work with a friend and share ideas and tools.

### FOR OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES:

As children play outdoors they are developing control over their bodies and movements. They are learning how their body parts interact and how to make one side do what the other side can do. This coordination of both sides of the body is called integration. Running, jumping, throwing a ball, sliding, riding a tricycle are fun ways children develop coordination of both large and small muscle skills. Outdoor play gives children opportunities to use whole arm movement and leg muscles. These activities are essential to physical development and help in the development of the small muscles needed for precise tasks. Reading, math and writing develop when children have control of their bodies and their muscles. Finally outdoor play, gives children an opportunity to work on social skills in a less restricted environment. In an outdoor setting children learn to share, take turns, express hurt feelings, and work cooperatively with peers.

### FOR THE LIBRARY CENTER:

The Library Center is the heart of the classroom. Here the children have opportunities to write stories, read stories, listen to stories on the tape recorder, and write letters. Children also have the opportunity to share these activities with their friends. Imagine how rewarding it is when one child writes a letter, "mails" it to a friend, and his or her friend reads the letter. Reading, writing, listening, and language development happen in this center. Children learn to enjoy and appreciate good literature as they explore their own creative efforts. Taking care of books becomes a part of a routine as children understand the value of books and develop a love of reading that will last a lifetime.

### FOR THE BLOCK CENTER:

The Block Center is a very versatile learning place. Reading, writing, math, language, and social skills occur through the use of blocks. When children plan and organize their structures they are learning beginning skills necessary for reading and writing. Children develop important thinking skills such as creating balance, order, and symmetry as they work with blocks. Blocks are in direct mathematical proportion so fractions, part/whole relationships, shapes, and counting are a natural part of building. When children work together to create a structure, they are sharing not only the blocks but their ideas and plans for the structure. Planning together gives them a reason to work cooperatively.

### FOR THE WOODWORKING CENTER:

The Woodworking Center is a source of pleasure for young children. As children use adult tools with care and respect, they learn to be responsible and trustworthy. Many math skills are learned in the center such as one to one correspondence, fractions, measuring and counting. Creative thinking and problem solving is developed when children have a short nail and two thick wood pieces to be nailed together. Children build self esteem as they feel competent in their woodworking, and master driving a nail into a block of wood.

## FOR THE POURING CENTER:

The Pouring Center is a place to learn many different concepts and skills. Children learn math by measuring volume, weight, balance and distance. In addition, they learn the concepts of more and less, empty and full, and solid and liquid. They develop fine motor skills when they scoop, pour, drip, dump and mix. Children develop scientific principles when they explore different textures and experiment with the properties of many kinds of materials. Vocabulary is increased as children work with and talk about the funnels, water wheels, basters, and pipettes. As they move wet sand they “excavate” and when they make a channel for the water to move through they construct a “canal” and sometimes they make a “dam” to stop the water from moving.

## FOR THE CONSTRUCTION CENTER:

The Construction Center is a favorite place because all the activities are open-ended since the toys have no stopping point. By having open-ended materials, children can develop the ability of take different approaches to solve problems they encounter while building. There are no “wrong” or “right” answers at this center. The children play with small connecting blocks, toys with various shapes, logs for cabin building and similar toys. When the children are creating a pattern, putting pieces together to form a whole, or measuring their construction they are using math skills. The purpose of the Construction Center is not to have a “finished product” but to give children the opportunity to experiment, initiate, create, and solve problems.

## FOR THE MANIPULATIVES CENTER:

The Manipulatives Center has many different areas such as a flannelboard, a magnet board, a puzzle shelf, and games. There are many choices so that children have many opportunities to select an activity of interest to them. At this center your child works a puzzle with a friend or learns to share cooperatively by playing a game. Finding the different pieces of a puzzle helps your child learn about similarities and differences or figure ground perception (distinguishing shapes from their background). Puzzle work also helps develop the understanding of the part/whole relationship, a valuable math and reading skill. By working with a friend there are lots of opportunities to negotiate and problem solve which leads to the development of effective communication skills.

## FOR THE SCIENCE CENTER:

The Science Center provides children with opportunities to explore their environment as they learn and explore cause and effect, cycles in nature, comparisons, chemical and physical changes and the properties of matter. Through simple activities children build a foundation for future scientific learning. As curiosity builds, children learn to be patient with projects that take time and how to make decisions based on data they gather. A basic skill for “scientific research” is the ability to see how things are the same and how they are different. Developing the ability to understand likenesses and differences builds a science base as well as a skill basic to reading and math.

**FOR THE DRAMATIC PLAY CENTER:**

As children play in the Dramatic Play Center, they learn to take turns, share, and select their friends based on common interests. They take on family and community roles that help them understand what other people do and how they act. In essence children have an opportunity to try on a role to see if it fits their personality style. The Dramatic Play Center helps them learn to make choices and decisions as they discover ways people help each other. Both math and reading skills are practiced as the children use a variety of objects like the phone book, recipe book, coupons, and a guide to television programming. Children learn to problem solve, work out difficult situations, develop vocabulary and practice social interaction in the Dramatic Play Center.

**FOR THE MUSIC CENTER:**

Children are naturally drawn to the Music Center. As children sing songs or move to the beat of the music, they explore and practice important developmental skills. Singing helps children develop new vocabulary words, practice words they already know, create and imitate sounds, recognize and repeat patterns, and compare sounds to each other. Science skills also develop as children strike a triangle and discover cause and effect. They learn about pitch, volume, and sound waves. Large muscles are developed as children express the mood of what they hear with their body movements. Movement, music and children go hand-in-hand.

**FOR COMPUTER ACTIVITIES:**

As children use the computer they begin to feel comfortable with technology and to understand its capabilities. They are developing a critical foundation to build on and add to all through school. Computer use is an everyday choice for the children as it becomes another “play” activity. Software is the key to using the computer as an effective learning tool. Through appropriate software children can solve meaningful, real-life problems, express themselves in writing and drawing, experience math problems, and discover solutions.