



The Kindergarten Chronicles

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Welcome Back Kindergarten Teachers!

Welcome to a brand new school year with its many celebrations and challenges! During this month, you and your students will celebrate many firsts: the first day of kindergarten, the first true friendship, the first struggle, and the first academic achievement. Our students come to us in this first month of school with a varying range of abilities. Some have had pre-school experiences ranging from private programs to daycare settings to in-home programs. Some have been instructed by parents and caregivers. Some have not had the benefit of such experiences at all. As a result, we have students who struggle with holding a pencil to students who are already reading. By now, you may be wondering how to meet the needs of each of your students without going absolutely crazy. This is the first challenge.

One way to reach each of your students at his or her individual level is through work stations, or centers. We can all remember the centers we loved as kindergarten students. At these centers, we learned to

cooperate, share, and communicate with one another. These same centers provide students with choices that engage them in a variety of literacy-based activities.

The first week of school, I introduce the concept of work stations. Coincidentally, "work stations" is a term coined by Debbie Diller in her book, *Literacy Work Stations: Making Centers Work*. I explain to my students that these are special stations where they do "important school work". The work stations are simple at first to allow students to become familiar with the procedures and tasks at each station. Each task is explicitly modeled before it is placed in a station. I begin with five stations and each student is assigned one station each day. During this time, students stay at their stations. The tasks at each station have a graduated level of difficulty to keep all students actively engaged. Refer to the back of this newsletter for a description of some of the tasks at my early work stations.

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Literacy Centers Class for K-1 Teachers

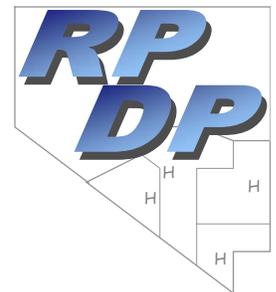
Would you like to learn more about literacy work stations? If so, RPDP has a one-credit graduate-level course titled, *Literacy Centers for K-1 Teachers*. The next class will be held in November. We will meet Saturday, November 5th and Saturday, November 19th from 8:00 AM to 4:30

PM at Givens ES. The cost of the class is \$45.00. Participants receive Debbie Diller's book, *Literacy Work Stations: Making Centers Work* and Linda Holliman's book, *The Complete Guide to Classroom Centers*. The class is interactive with many hands-on opportunities. Register on Pathlore.

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Bill Hanlon, Director

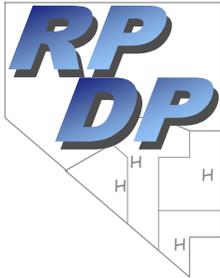
Food for Thought

The puzzle station is an effective way to help students learn early center routines and procedures. Consider using puzzles ranging from simple shape puzzles to more challenging puzzles containing 24 pieces.

"Being a kindergarten teacher in September is like putting together a jigsaw puzzle while riding a rollercoaster!"

~ Anonymous

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The "Three Bears Rule" of Choosing a Task at a Work Station:

The activity or task should not be too hard for the student, nor too easy. The activity or task should be **JUST RIGHT!**

Try brainstorming outrageous activities like flying an airplane (too hard) to crawling (too easy) to running (just right) for students to understand the "Three Bears Rule" in a more concrete way.

Primary Word Knowledge Benchmark Class

If you missed the Primary Word Knowledge Benchmark Class, it will be offered again on Monday, October 10th from 4:15 PM — 7:15 PM at Givens ES. Register on Pathlore.

Early Work Stations

Library Station:

- Choose a book and tell a story using the pictures.
- Find a word you can read and write it on a sticky note to take home.
- Read a book to a work station friend.

In addition to picture books, the library station has books ranging in DRA levels one through six.

Writing Station:

- Trace your name and draw a picture of yourself.
- Write your name using a capital and lower case letters and draw a picture.
- Write a story about your picture and share it with a work station friend.

Keeping a supply of various colors and

sizes of paper keeps this center interesting for students.

Housekeeping Station:

- Use the grocery store ads/ coupons to cut and glue three things you need to make your grocery list.
- Draw three items on your grocery list.
- Label the items you put on your grocery list.

Saving the grocery ads you receive weekly in the mail are ideal for these tasks.

Big Book Station:

- Choose a big book we have read and "read" the pictures with a friend.
- Turn to any page in a big book and find the word "the" (our first

sight word). Tally the number of times you found the word "the" on a sticky note.

- Use a pointer and read your favorite big book.

Class made big books are a favorite for students at this station.

These are just a few ideas to get you started. Each year, I am amazed at what my students are able to accomplish in just a few short weeks.

As I look around my classroom, I see students who are engaged and excited about tasks that challenge and enrich their minds at all levels. What more can a kindergarten teacher want!

