

Block Building Basics I: Creating the Block Area

You have the blocks, and a space for building...now what? Are you making the most of this critical area in your classroom? In this workshop, participants will discuss how to organize the block area, shelve and arrange blocks to maximize their mathematical properties, select appropriate accessories, and set up simple guidelines from Day 1 that ensure a positive, creative experience for all children. We'll troubleshoot challenging block problems such as too little space, too few blocks, and effective cleanup routines.

Key Concepts:

Children need to have enough space to move between shelves and other buildings. We can create building spaces that are protected and spacious.

How much building space have you allotted for block play within your classroom?

Shelves can be organized to promote a visual reminder of the mathematical properties of blocks (half units next to units, units next to double units, etc.)

How have you organized your blocks on your shelves?

Accessories need to be chosen for flexibility of the child's creative purpose, not to promote a particular play experience (colored cubes vs. cars or cows)

List three accessories you would like to try within your block area.

Block area guidelines need to be explicitly taught from Day 1 in simple, clear language ("Build as high as your head." "Decorate, don't dump." "Use the blocks you take." "Only touch your own work." etc....)

What are your top three block area rules?

Trouble Shooting Problems That Arise in the Block Area

The Block Area is a place, like a garden, that needs tending. For it to thrive, daily tending is needed. What are common problems that frustrate you, and keep your Block Area from being all that it might be for your students? Most problems within the Block Area relate to space, materials or the organization of the space and the materials. All these problems are solvable!

List your top three Block Area problems here:



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