Small Group Structure

Think of each small group as having a beginning, middle and end.

The **beginning** gets the activity started.  Use an opening statement to introduce the activity or materials to the children and to capture their attention.  For example, opening statements could include:

-a description of the materials being used

-a connection of the materials to children's previous play or interests

-a short, simple open-ended story using the materials

-a statement that draws children's attention to a content focus, such as letters or counting.

The **middle** is the active learning. The role of the teacher during active learning is to:

* watch what individual children do with the materials
* move from child to child
* listen to what children say about what they are doing
* use your own set of materials, imitate or copy what you see children doing
* talk with children about what they are doing
* refer children to one another for ideas and assistance
* bring out back up materials as needed
* scaffold children's learning.

The **end** is concluding small group time:

* give children a warning before ending the activity
* encourage children to help you clean up the materials giving concrete suggestions/choices about where to put materials and/or what they can do
* remind children where they can find the materials if they choose to use them again at work time/free choice time
* plan a way for children to transition to the next part of their day.