The Beginning Reading Center is a hands-on approach to developing beginning reading skills, such as letter-sound relationships, vocabulary, comprehension, spelling, and sentence formation. Young learners practice these important early skills using a combination of fun manipulative materials—large, chunky tiles, a “work” tray, and colorful, self-checking activity cards.

Tiles
The Beginning Reading Center contains 100 plastic tiles—26 lowercase letter tiles, 38 picture tiles, and 36 word tiles. Tile borders are color-coded to go with the activity cards, enabling students to easily determine the tiles necessary for the task. For example, all letter tiles and the cards with which they are used have blue borders.
**Activity Cards**

Fifty self-checking activity cards provide lots of opportunities for active, independent learning and reinforcement of teacher-directed lessons. The front of each card has a skill-building task and, in most cases, an example, enabling students to work independently. The back of each card shows the solution to the task. The cards have borders that are color-coded to go with the tiles, allowing you (or your students) to quickly identify cards for center or lesson preparation. See the back cover of this guide for a complete listing of skills to help you plan your lessons.

**Listen and Find**

Lay an assortment of picture tiles on a table. Say a clue about a picture, and have the students find the corresponding tile. Here are some ideas to help you get started: “Find a picture that begins with b.” “Find a picture that has a short a in its name.” “Find a picture that rhymes with pen.”

**See and Spell**

Place the picture tiles in a paper bag. Call on a student to reach into the bag and take out a tile. Have the student say the name of the picture and spell its name out loud. Continue the activity until the whole class has had an opportunity to “see and spell.”

**Short Vowel Scavenger Hunt**

Spread out all the picture tiles face up on a table or on the floor. Then name a vowel, and have each student find a picture that has that short vowel sound in its name. Continue the activity with other vowels.

**Variation:** Play this game with five students at a time. Lay out the picture tiles. Assign each student a vowel. At your signal, have each student search for pictures that contain his or her designated short vowel sound. The first student to find six pictures wins the game.

**Word-Building Challenge**

Use the letter tiles to reinforce phonics and spelling skills. Work with a small group of students at a time, and have the students take turns forming words with the tiles. Give criteria such as the following: “Make a word that rhymes with hen.” “Make a word that ends in t.” “Make a word that has four letters.”

**Rebus Sentences**

Let students combine the picture tiles and word tiles to create simple rebus sentences. Then have each student read his or her sentences to a partner.

**Sentence Booklets**

Have students use three or more word tiles at a time to create sentences. Instruct the students to copy their sentences onto sheets of paper and illustrate them. Later, staple each child’s pages together to make individual sentence booklets.