

CHUM Preschool - 4 Year Old Curriculum

Our preschool curriculum provides a comprehensive framework for guiding 4-year-old preschoolers through a balanced year of learning and growth. The focus is on developing early literacy, math readiness, social-emotional skills, creativity, and problem-solving through playful, hands-on experiences. Instruction is rooted in literature, meaningful discussions, and engaging activities across all learning centers. Children will build a foundation for kindergarten success by exploring letters, sounds, numbers, patterns, and vocabulary, while also strengthening fine and gross motor skills. Consistent parent communication and regular observation of developmental milestones ensure that families remain partners in the learning process, helping each child grow with confidence, curiosity, and joy.

Language Arts

Letters & Letter Sounds

Children build phonemic awareness and alphabet knowledge through daily practice. Activities encourage letter recognition, sound identification, and early writing skills.

- Letter of the week (upper & lowercase recognition, beginning sound practice)
- Heggerty phonemic awareness: letters, sounds, blending sounds, rhyming, songs, chants, and sorting games
- Search and find activities - ("Find something that starts with M!")

Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Program

The Heggerty program is a daily, systematic approach to building strong phonological and phonemic awareness skills. Each short, teacher-led lesson helps children listen closely to sounds in language, strengthening the foundation for reading and writing. Skills are introduced through fun oral and movement-based activities that require no paper or pencils, making them highly engaging for preschoolers.

- Rhyming recognition and production
- Identifying beginning sounds in words
- Blending and segmenting simple words orally
- Isolating initial, medial, and final sounds
- Adding or substituting sounds to make new words
- Identifying words that rhyme
- Building auditory memory and active listening skills
- Daily routines lasting 10–12 minutes for consistency

Writing

Writing skills develop through playful exploration and meaningful practice. Children draw, scribble, and begin forming letters, learning that their writing carries meaning. Through daily activities and name practice, they build confidence, fine-motor strength, and an excitement for expressing ideas with print.

- Tracing name (full first and last name), and moving to writing on own
- Beginning name writing (uppercase for first letter, lowercase for the rest)
- Tracing lines, letters, and pictures
- Learning proper pencil grip

Sight Words

Sight words are taught gradually to promote early reading fluency. Exposure through repetition, games, and songs helps children recognize high-frequency words with confidence.

- Introduce one new sight word each week
- Examples: I, a, the, we, see, go, to, like, my, me, can, it, is, on, etc.
- Repetition through songs, chants, pocket charts, and games

Related Literature & Daily Stories

Children are introduced to books that connect with themes, spark imagination, and develop a love for reading. Literature provides the foundation for language, vocabulary, and comprehension while reinforcing seasonal and thematic units. Every day includes a story related to the topics being learned in class. Some of the types of books used include:

- Seasonal picture books (fall leaves, snow, spring, summer fun)
- Classic preschool stories (*The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, Chicka Chicka Boom Boom*)
- Theme-based literature tied to units (community helpers, transportation, animals, friendship, kindness)
- Rhyming and repetitive books to build phonological awareness
- Nursery rhymes revamped into our own to create positivity
- Fictional stories related to the topic being taught that day
- Nonfiction stories when learning about real-life topics (such as the butterfly/frog life cycles)

Vocabulary

Vocabulary development is central to communication and comprehension. Words are introduced through stories, hands-on activities, and daily conversations, giving children meaningful language they can use in context.

- Thematic word lists (farm animals, shapes, weather, family, community, transportation, body parts, emotions)
- Positional words (over, under, above, below, in front, behind, etc.)
- Descriptive words (big, little, smooth, rough, etc.)
- Expressive words (emotions, actions, etc.)
- Rich language introduced during read-alouds and discussions

Rhyming

Rhyming develops phonological awareness, a key predictor of reading success. Daily rhymes, songs, and activities strengthen listening and word recognition skills. It is introduced through songs, playful repetition, and our Heggerty program.

- Daily rhyming chants, songs, and finger plays
- Simple rhyming games
- “Odd one out” rhyming games
- Nursery rhymes and rhyming books

Discussion Topics & Conversations

Structured discussions foster critical thinking, listening skills, and self-expression. These topics allow children to explore ideas, share experiences, and practice social interactions.

- Daily “circle time” talks (weather, calendar, class news)
- Feelings and social-emotional learning (“how are you?” check-ins)
- “What if?” and problem-solving questions
- Seasonal and holiday traditions
- Question of the day
- Show and Tell – opportunities to practice speaking in front of peers, building confidence, vocabulary, and listening skills

Songs

Songs are used daily to support language, memory, rhythm, and fluency. Music engages children in joyful learning, while also helping them remember concepts and vocabulary tied to themes and routines. Singing also fosters community and self-expression.

- Themed songs related to different topics (fall leaves, community helpers, animals, friendship)

- Seasonal songs (holiday, winter, spring, summer)
 - Transition songs for routines (clean-up, lining up, greeting/goodbye)
 - Finger plays with motions (*Itsy Bitsy Spider*, *Wheels on the Bus*)
 - Repetitive chants for phonemic awareness and rhyming
 - Songs with movement for gross motor practice (action songs, finger plays, freeze dance)
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Math

Mathematical Concepts

Math instruction weaves together numbers, patterns, measurement, and problem-solving in playful ways. Children build logical thinking skills by sorting, classifying, comparing, and exploring real-world math experiences. Number concepts are explored through concrete, hands-on experiences. Children learn to count, recognize, and write numbers while developing an understanding of quantity and operations.

- Shapes (circle, square, triangle, rectangle, oval, diamond, star, heart)
- Comparing sizes (big/small, tall/short, long/short, heavier/lighter)
- Measuring with non-standard units (blocks, hands, footsteps)
- Graphing simple preferences (favorite color, pet, fruit)
- Sorting by color, size, and shape
- Building simple problem-solving skills through manipulatives
- Counting to 20 (and beyond with exposure)
- Number recognition 1–10 (extend to 20 as ready)
- 1:1 correspondence (pointing while counting)
- Number writing practice
- Begin the concept of addition and subtraction

Calendar Time

Calendar routines help children understand time, sequence, and special events. They provide consistency while reinforcing number order, days of the week, and months of the year.

- Months of the year, days of week, daily weather
- Teach sequencing and passage of time (weekends vs school days)
- Counting
- Patterns

Patterns

Patterns help children build early math reasoning and recognition skills. They are introduced in visual, auditory, and kinesthetic ways so children can see, hear, and feel sequences.

- AB, ABB, AAB, ABC patterns with colors and shapes
 - Extend and create patterns with beads, cubes, and buttons
 - Using movement for patterns (clap, stomp, clap)
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Gross Motor Skill Development

Gross motor activities build strength, coordination, and confidence. Children practice large body movements daily through indoor and outdoor play, music, and games.

- Running, skipping, hopping, jumping, marching, galloping
 - Obstacle courses (crawling, climbing, balancing)
 - Throwing, catching, and kicking balls
 - Dancing, movement games, and action songs
 - Balance beam walking
 - Parachute play and jumprope
 - Exercise through many outlets (outdoor play, movement songs, etc.)
 - Playground exploration and free play
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Fine Motor Skill Development

Fine motor skills prepare children for writing, self-care, and other precise tasks. Daily activities strengthen finger muscles, hand-eye coordination, and dexterity.

- Playdough rolling, pinching, cutting
 - Bead stringing and lacing cards
 - Scissor practice (straight and curved lines)
 - Using tweezers, clothespins, and tongs
 - Building with small blocks and connectors
 - Puzzles with increasing complexity
 - Drawing, tracing, coloring, and name-writing practice
 - Tearing paper and other materials
 - Assembling objects
 - Painting with brushes, sponges, and fingers
 - Gluing and pasting
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Social Sciences

Social sciences introduce children to community, culture, and relationships. They learn about themselves, others, and the larger world through storytelling, role-play, and real-life examples.

- Learning address and phone number
 - Recognizing family members and roles
 - Community helpers and their roles (firefighter, nurse, police officer)
 - Customs of other countries
 - Holidays and cultural celebrations around the world
 - Classroom citizenship: rules, routines, and kindness
 - Geography basics (maps, land/water, where we live)
 - Learning about emotions, friendship, and empathy
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Science

Hands-on science builds curiosity and problem-solving. Activities are designed to let children observe, question, and experiment with the world around them.

- Sink/float experiments with everyday objects
- Exploring magnets, light, and shadows
- Weather charts
- Animals in Winter – hibernation, migration, and adaptation activities (bear caves, bird and butterfly migration, squirrel food storage)
- Temperature – exploring hot vs cold, ice melting, thermometers, dressing for the weather
- Growing plants from seeds and observing changes
- Exploring life cycles of butterflies, frogs, and plants
- Using senses to explore textures, sounds, smells, tastes, and looks
- Caring for the environment (clean-up, recycling basics, keeping homes/school clean, planting)
- Life cycles (butterflies, chickens, frogs)
- Simple recipes
- Hands-on exploration and curiosity

Health and Safety

Health and safety are taught daily through routines and intentional lessons. Children learn how to care for their bodies, stay safe in their environment, and build lifelong healthy habits.

- Classroom and playground safety rules
 - Handwashing and hygiene routines
 - Heart health and eating nutritious foods
 - Importance of sleep and exercise
 - Covering coughs and sneezes
 - Teeth health
 - Fire drills and emergency preparedness
 - Stranger safety and personal boundaries
 - Mr. Yuk – teaching children to recognize poison symbols and stay away from harmful substances
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Nutrition

Nutrition education introduces children to healthy eating habits and food choices. Lessons are interactive and often tied to snacks, celebrations, or seasonal themes.

- Learning about food groups (fruits, vegetables, grains, proteins, dairy)
 - How to eat healthy and exercise to maintain a healthy heart
 - Discussions about healthy vs “sometimes” foods
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Problem-Solving & Critical Thinking

Concepts

Preschoolers learn foundational concepts that prepare them for higher-level thinking and problem-solving. These ideas are introduced through stories, manipulatives, and everyday experiences.

- Same/different
- Sorting and classifying
- Opposites
- Sequencing 2-3 steps (first, next, last)
- Spot the difference
- Exploring cause and effect through play (blocks falling, pouring water)
- Time concepts (yesterday, today, tomorrow)



Expressive Arts

Expressive arts encourage creativity, imagination, and self-expression across music, movement, and visual art. Children explore many forms of artistic expression.

- Music: singing, rhythm sticks, scarves, bells
- Drama: role-playing, puppets, storytelling, acting out stories
- Visual Arts: coloring, painting, drawing, sculpting with clay/playdough
- Dance/Movement: freeze dance, yoga, marching songs, yoga
- Finger plays – classic rhymes with hand motions to build memory, rhythm, and coordination
- Painting – using brushes, sponges, fingers, and other tools to explore color and texture with tempura paint and water colors
- Opportunities for class performances (Thanksgiving show and end-of-year graduation show)



Free Play

Free play allows children to explore interests, build friendships, and develop independence. This unstructured time encourages imagination, cooperation, and problem-solving while supporting social-emotional growth.

- Indoor play with blocks, puppets, dolls, cars, blocks, and puzzles
- Small group games chosen by children
- Outdoor free play with balls, bikes, chalk, and playground equipment
- Opportunities for building, pretending, and experimenting
- Teachers observe play to guide social interactions and extend learning naturally



Small Group Learning

Small group learning provides targeted instruction and individualized support. Working in groups of 3–5 children allows teachers to differentiate instruction, observe skills more closely, and encourage peer collaboration.

- Literacy: guided reading with picture books, letter/sound matching, phonemic awareness games
- Math: hands-on counting, number recognition, sorting/classifying, simple addition/subtraction with manipulatives, math games
- Science & Social Studies: small experiments, exploring objects with magnifiers, role-play activities

- Social Skills: turn-taking games, problem-solving role play, cooperative building challenges
 - Teacher Observations: assessing fine motor, listening, and comprehension in a focused setting
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Lesson Plans and Daily Schedule

Lesson plans provide a structured daily rhythm while allowing flexibility for children's interests and needs. Plans include literacy, math, science, art, and movement woven into playful experiences.

- **Morning Meeting** – greeting, calendar, weather song
 - **Circle Time** – songs, short story, theme discussion, finger plays
 - **Heggerty** - letters, sounds, blending, phonemic awareness
 - **Gross Motor** - music & movement through fun exercises and movements
 - **Small/Whole Group** – fine motor, early math, craft, or literacy games
 - **Free Play** – art, dramatic play, blocks, sensory, literacy, playground
 - **Closing Time** – goodbye song
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Parent Communication

Ongoing communication with parents creates a strong home-school connection. Families are kept informed and provided with tools to support learning at home.

- Monthly newsletters with reminders and upcoming events
 - Daily notes or updates on Remind app
 - Photos and informal updates when possible on Remind app
 - Mid-year and end of year progress report
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