

PLAY-BASED LEARNING AT FUN, 2, 3 PRESCHOOL

Fun, 2, 3 Preschool practices a Play-based approach. We strongly believe that this sets all children up for the best skills for life-long, 21st century learning. Some of you may be familiar with what this means and others may have questions. I encourage you to search "benefits/research on play based learning" or something similar to find a plentitude of information on the subject. We, as professionals, know that both free play and guided play provide opportunities in all learning domains (social/emotional, cognitive, literacy/language, creative and physical). Here I have included a little about how we incorporate play (both free play and guided play), what structure is included in our days, as well as a few handouts explaining what play based is and the benefits.

Some parents may hear "child led" or "play based" and think that we let the children do whatever they want all day long, without providing learning opportunities or structure. The balance is what we strive for. Here are some ways structure is provided in a play-based program:

- Following a daily schedule, with wiggle room if an ongoing project should not be interrupted, or a child is in the middle of important learning.
- By following our general rules: don't hurt others or yourself, and don't destroy property or the work of others.
- By learning to play board games that have simple rules and outdoor games that follow a structure (such as Red light/green light, Duck, duck goose, etc.)
- Our lunch routine requires eating in order (main dish first), taking care of trash and spills, and packing up own lunch (with help if needed) before going to play.
- We encourage all children to help during our community clean-up times.

"Play-based learning, specifically guided play, maintains the joy of free play while allowing children to connect authentically with content. When children co-construct their learning with their teachers and peers, they apply it to their own lives making meaningful, personal discoveries as the progress towards learning goals. Children naturally learn through play by engaging in and making sense of their world. Guided play is self-chosen, enjoyable, and process-oriented. These opportunities are experiences that are child-directed and teacher-facilitated in which teachers take an active role as intentional planners, observers, and guides."

At Fun, 2, 3 we have a basic curriculum structure, but are always observing children's interests, curiosities, and learning opportunities. We look for ways to facilitate, or guide children towards deeper learning. We also look for ways to interact with our community surroundings (apples growing at neighbor farm, road or tree work being done by school, Friday morning musicians at the park). This is called "place-based learning".

I encourage you to research more, keep your eyes and ears open for ways to support your child in learning and to communicate with us about any ways we can help facilitate learning about your child's interests and needs.