

CURRICULUM

We believe that early learning is relationship-based. Carefully constructed early education experiences promote exploration, critical thinking, cooperative play and the development of mutual respect. Our approach to curriculum development is based on a dynamic and always growing understanding of child development and learning, based in research, experience, and ongoing reflection. We have a deep respect for young children as competent, resilient, intelligent, and creative human beings. All of the experiences we provide children offer them the opportunity to develop critical thinking and collaboration with peers and teachers. This development will serve them well not only in kindergarten, but for the rest of their lives. It is our belief that each year of a child's life should be appreciated, respected, and not rushed.

Social and Emotional - Children learn so many different amazing things during the preschool years, including recognizing and labeling their own emotions as well as their peers'. We encourage self-regulation, taking turns, and acts of kindness. Our goal is to provide the children a warm and nurturing environment where they will feel safe interacting with us and each other. We also model respect using words such as "please", "thank you", and "excuse me".

Language and Literacy - We will encourage the use of language through songs, story time, and circle time. We will encourage emergent literacy through projects, songs, and books. Early language skills are very individualized and we realize that different children learn in different ways and at different paces. We mold our language and literacy experiences around the skills and interests of the child.

Religion - We will implement prayers at circle time and before snack. We will teach simple Christian values and lessons that are easy for young children to grasp. We will read a daily Bible story so our children learn that God loves them.

Music - We will integrate music into our daily activities, using finger plays, songs, and marching bands as an interactive teaching technique. All children love music. We will also be introducing them to rhythms and beats. (Recent studies show that this helps math skills later.) Singing, instruments, games, and exercises are all a part of our music program.

Art - The process of creating art is more important than the product. Art is a great way for a child to express themselves while exploring their own creativity through their senses. It helps to build self esteem, dexterity, and to familiarize them with many colors and shapes. We will give the children ample opportunities to explore art, using glue, markers, clay, paints, crayons, paper, child scissors, glitter, and many other things. The messier the project, the more the children seem to enjoy it. We will be having tons of fun!

Physical Activities - Developing large and small muscles is accomplished with indoor and outdoor play. We will use balls, playground equipment, and games to help the child develop these muscles. All hopping, jumping, running, and activities will be developmentally appropriate for each child.

Math and Science- We will explore spatial relations such as far and near, big and small. We will familiarize children with numbers through intentional experiences and by every day counting in songs and play. Through the use of toys and projects, we will familiarize children with a variety of shapes. We will explore the world around us and follow the children's interests. The most fundamental part of science is the desire for discovery, which all young children have.

Daily Skills - Learning simple daily skills boosts children's self-esteem and dexterity. We will teach skills such as hand washing, pouring, and caring for materials. Trying and mastering these skills give young children a sense of independence and determination.

Sensory Play - Experiences with sensory materials provide children with the opportunity to create and experiment with a variety of materials. This supports scientific learning, imagination, and creativity.

Nature Experiences - Exposure to and experience with nature provides children the opportunity to build respect for God's creation as well as learn more about the world around them. We offer children "jobs" such as caring for flowers or documenting the changes in caterpillars.

Assessment - Progress is assessed throughout the year using a variety of formal (VPK) and informal methods. We reserve the right to use the *Ages and Stages Questionnaire* to assess your child's development. If, at any time, there are concerns about your child's progress, we will bring those concerns to your attention. While we are happy to discuss your child's progress at any time, special attention is made to his/her progress during the spring (VPK) parent/teacher conference.

Teachers utilize the Handwriting Without Tears Curriculum starting in the three-year-old classrooms to develop the writing skills necessary for success in kindergarten.