

Kindergarten Curricula

Young children must be provided a rich and varied environment that allows for social, emotional, physical, and intellectual development. An environment in which children can make choices and decisions, question and take risks, make mistakes and try again, assume responsibility for their own learning, and enjoy their many successes. The kindergarten program helps children view themselves as competent and worthy. Children with high self-esteem are more likely to have confidence, attempt new tasks, take pride in a job well done, and be able to live and work happily and purposefully with others.

The kindergarten curriculum is broad and rich and introduces children to a wide range of concepts and skills while helping them gain insight into the world. It is organized into three major instructional strands. These strands integrate teaching strategies that offer children the opportunity to learn content from other subject areas while developing all the skills necessary to understand the world around them in addition to fostering a zest for learning.

Language Arts/Social Studies Strand

This strand provides learning experiences through four major units:

- **All About Me**
- **Sharing Events in My Life**
- **Children Like Me**
- **Myself in Space**

These units meet the language arts and social studies objectives based on children's natural instincts to communicate with others. The primary learning approach of the strand will be through expressive and receptive language and will include appreciation of literature and poetry, vocabulary development, reading/writing-like activities, letter perception, and an orientation to printed language. These language experiences will be centered on the children and their immediate surroundings and extend to the world-at-large.

A natural development of the language experience process is reading. Our reading program is a developmental approach that focuses upon broadening each child's experimental base. It provides an environment rich in printed materials and whole language experiences emphasizing meaning and fostering each child's desire to become literate.

Kindergarten students demonstrate literacy by:

- **Identifying signs and large print from their immediate environment.**
- **Recognizing letters.**
- **Writing their names and a small repertoire of words using invented or almost accurate spelling.**
- **Understanding reading conventions (book parts, reading left to right and top to bottom on a page).**
- **Becoming familiar with rhymes, fairy tales, and favorite stories.**
- **Developing a sense of printed words, spoken words, and word meanings.**
- **Identifying and understanding rhymes.**
- **Recognizing nonsense words within rhymes.**
- **Repeating initial and final sounds.**
- **Developing phonetic awareness.**
- **Sitting and listening to stories.**
- **Identifying and understanding examples of humor, sadness, and fantasy in stories.**
- **Enjoying language connections such as words, word rhyming, and vocabulary activities.**

Recognizing that a child's development cannot be hastened and that learning styles differ, the teacher will use discretion in providing a variety of concrete experiences. Emphasis will be placed on activities related to playing, observing, listening, speaking, thinking creatively, illustrating, writing, and reading.

Mathematics/Science Strand

This strand provides learning experiences through five major units:

- **Sorting and Classifying**
- **Spatial Relationships and Patterns**
- **Number Concepts**
- **Comparing**
- **Exploration and Problem Solving**

These units meet mathematics and science objectives by building on children's natural curiosity about numbers and the world around them. Science concepts are integrated with the study of mathematics as children learn to observe, differentiate among, and describe objects and organisms in the classroom and outdoors. The primary learning approach will be the use of manipulatives to encourage development of mathematics concepts, scientific inquiry, and problem solving. Children learn concepts while participating in hands-on activities and at the same time begin to develop important thinking and process skills.

The scope and sequence of the strand allows for the teacher's flexibility, creativity, and innovation with the assurance that all required objectives and unit goals will be met. A teacher may use discretion when implementing these stated objectives, according to the developmental level of the students.

Art/Music/Movement and Health Strand

It is the intent of this strand to offer major units planned for meeting the significant developmental needs of this age group by providing creative activities in art, music, physical education/movement, and healthy living. These shall reflect an understanding and appreciation of the nature of the kindergarten child who is continuing to form a positive self-image. The primary learning approach of the strand will be through aesthetic experiences including singing, listening, movement and rhythm, and improvisation. These activities will enhance motor ability, perceptual ability, socialization, listening, and speaking. Attainment of these skills can help a child function independently and can contribute to his/her self-assurance. Physical activity stimulates all vital body processes and promotes better eating and sleeping habits.

The learning experiences accommodate various learning modalities such as visual, auditory, and tactile/kinesthetic. They provide opportunities for children to develop concepts, communicate orally, interact with others, solve problems, think critically, inquire, observe, explore, discover, and create. The integrated kindergarten program utilizes a variety of instructional approaches including individual, small group, whole group, role-enactment activities, and activity centers.

The instructional strands support and enhance the child's development through:

- **A concrete, hands-on manipulative approach which includes observing, comparing, imitating, investigating, and questioning.**
- **Meaningful play experiences through which children:**
 - a. **Make sense of their world.**
 - b. **Understand concepts and satisfy innate curiosity.**
 - c. **Take their first steps in the mental operation of symbolic thought.**
- **Exploration through the senses to help children further understand the world.**

- Opportunities to use language to communicate through listening, speaking, and writing.
- Activities promoting eye-hand coordination, large and small muscle strength and control, balance, coordination, health, growth, body image, and good posture.
- Activities which foster understanding, cooperation, and socially responsible attitudes.

The integrated units allow for creativity and diversification with the assurance that objects and goals will be met when the children are involved in meaningful learning experiences.