

St. Bernard Kindergarten



St Bernard Kindergarten Curriculum

General Information

St. Bernard Kindergarten is a high-quality education program that allows a child to make the transition from preschool to school. The kindergarten experiences will provide the child with a foundation for future learning. The faculty at St. Bernard's believes that it is essential to build a program which provides the child with a developmentally appropriate curriculum that is rich in the core principles and values of our Catholic heritage.

We recognize that all children develop at different rates, and that children learn by building on prior learning and experience. Our goal is to foster growth in all areas of development. This includes a child's physical well-being and motor development; social, spiritual, and emotional development; language development and cognitive skills (in such areas as mathematics, literacy, science, social studies, and the arts). To accomplish this goal, we strive to implement a curriculum that is challenging, engaging, culturally and linguistically responsive, comprehensive, and likely to promote positive outcomes for all young children.

The domains of a child's development- physical, social, emotional, spiritual, and cognitive- are closely related. Development in one domain influences and is influenced by development in other domains. Because of this interrelation, language skills will affect social relationships, for example. And social interaction will help support language development. For this reason, children benefit from engaging in self-initiated, spontaneous play, as well as teacher planned and structured activities. Therefore, kindergarten children are active learners, drawing on physical and social experiences.

Language Arts

The language arts program includes language development, reading, writing, speaking, and listening activities. We use the Harcourt Reading/Language Arts Program, which guides emergent readers through a systematic process of instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension. These are the building blocks for teaching children to read, as outlined by The National Institute for Literacy (NIFL), an independent federal organization that supports the development of high-quality instructional programs. In addition, the children are also immersed in a rich literary environment, which fosters an appreciation and enjoyment of good literature. Teachers read aloud daily to their students to increase their vocabulary, and their understanding of how we communicate through the written page. Children are encouraged to express themselves in dramatic play, as well as through drawing and writing activities.

Learning to write goes hand in hand with learning to read. As an emergent reader, the child is instructed in recognition of the alphabet letters and taught a corresponding sound for each. The student is then asked to blend these sounds to form words, and asked to decode them when they see them in print. In writing, the converse is true. A student is asked to listen to a word to distinguish its individual sounds, and then asked to print the letters that correspond with the sounds that he hears. The process of sounding out words, writing in a left to right direction, and using simple punctuation is the beginning of the writing process.

Math

The math curriculum in kindergarten encourages exploration, problem solving, as well as the use of logical reasoning. Children are asked to investigate classifications of groups of objects, ways to collect and display data, as well as improving their knowledge of numerical quantities. In addition to using opportunities in our environment to enhance these skills, (for example, the use of the calendar and weather chart), we use the Sadlier Mathematics series. Math activities are reinforced in small group settings. Children are encouraged to explore concepts in learning centers, as well. At these times, children are asked to collaborate with their peers in problem solving strategies. Manipulative materials are used to provide hands-on activities.

Science and Social Studies

Children in kindergarten benefit from an integrated approach to learning. Because of their almost boundless curiosity about the world, it is easy to develop a science and social studies curriculum that is modeled after seasonal themes. We use a periodical magazine published by Scholastic, called "Let's Find Out". It provides us with news items of interest that help us explore many science and social studies topics. In addition, supplemental picture books are a good source for research and discussion.

Art

Art is an integral part of the kindergarten curriculum. In addition to the many opportunities that the children are given to use art as a means of self-expression, our school also participates in the TAG program (Traveling Art Gallery) which gives students the opportunity to appreciate the work of accomplished artists.

Religion

At St. Bernard School, we are proud to profess our Catholic Faith. The moral values of our Christian tradition are permeated in all that we do. Prayer is a part of our daily routine. We read stories from an age appropriate Bible on a daily basis. We use the series from Sadlier, called We Believe. The program was developed by nationally recognized experts in catechesis, curriculum and child development. We celebrate all of the religious holidays, and hope to begin the child in her faith formation. The students will also attend Mass with the school community and prayer services.

Technology

The students spend 40 minutes a week in the computer lab. There they are taught the basic components of the computer, and how to navigate the mouse through learning activities. The software games reinforce skills that they are learning in math and reading. The students also have the opportunity to use the satellite lab and the interactive whiteboard in the classroom.

Physical Education/ Music/ Library/Spanish

These classes are taught by the special area teachers once a week. In music and phys. ed. classes, the development of large motor skills is enhanced through active participation in dancing, skipping, hopping and running activities. At the library, children enjoy hearing a book read to them, as well as a follow-up activity.