

Chance School Program Guide

Introduction

The Chance School Program Guide is a description of developmental milestones and developmentally appropriate experiences that are the framework of the Chance School program/curriculum for preschool age children and elementary age children – ages 2 through 5th grade. At Chance School, we believe that the goals of education are broad. We want to help children become literate, self-disciplined and socially responsible individuals who are resilient and healthy in body, mind and spirit; therefore, teaching to the whole child – cognitively, socially, emotionally, morally and physically - is our goal. As our Vision, Mission, Philosophy, and Best Practice Goals illustrate, we put the “whole child” focus into practice on a daily basis by creating classroom experiences that reflect these beliefs.

What you will find in this Program Guide

Developmental Milestones

We believe, like David Elkind and other renowned experts, that teachers must first be child development specialists. It is the teacher’s primary responsibility to know the stages of child development as stated by Erik Erikson, Jean Piaget, Lawrence Kohlberg, Arnold Gesell, Mildred Parten and others, and to use their knowledge of stages in helping children grow and develop. The milestones in this guide are somewhat abbreviated; they serve as a guide and offer criteria for planning and assessment purposes while working with various age groups. A program that is built around appropriate developmental milestones is a responsive, success-driven educational learning environment.

Developmentally Appropriate Experiences

For each level of learning, we have listed sample experiences that are used to promote and support the emergence of skills, processes and behaviors that promote “thinking” learners, while working toward their full potential. The experiences are grounded in what we know about the developmental stage and chronological age of a child and the natural interests of children. The lists of experiences at each level may include experiences from previous experiences. Each experience list reflects some new and revisited experiences presented at various age levels; we encourage the notion of revisiting previous experiences through a spiral approach to learning. Experiences are open-ended and offered in a variety of ways that allow for each to be presented again and again through different content areas, different centers, expanded materials, and in small/large groups, as well as individually. The variations allow for further learning opportunities, more in-depth investigations, new discoveries and heightened engagement. It is the teacher’s awareness of the needs of children’s creativity and skills, which entwine experiences with content.



A word of importance: Knowing that all areas of a child’s development – cognitively, socially, emotionally, morally and physically - are naturally integrated and interrelated in the classroom setting, for planning and assessment purposes (in this guide) we have chosen to separate the different areas of development to ensure a more deliberate focus on each component of the “whole child”. Knowing that our elementary program structure is a multi-age configuration of K/1, Primary 2/3 and Intermediate 4/5, with two certified teachers in each classroom, we have chosen to focus on specific age groups in this guide to ensure clarity regarding growth and development of individual learners through the continuum of learning.

Teacher’s Role: While the focus of a developmental program is the “whole child”, the classroom teacher as an observer, a role model, a guide and as a facilitator plays an important role in establishing productive learning. It is the teacher’s role and responsibility to establish a community of learners by creating a non-threatening learning environment, developing a respectful ownership of one’s learning space and materials, practicing appropriate methodology that includes assessment (formal and informal), and by creating a partnership between home and school.

Conclusion

It is the vision, mission and philosophy of Chance School to develop “thinking” learners through a “whole child” focus. We believe that the road to thoughtful learning is a scaffolding process built through supportive and involved adults (both teachers and parents), who look for meaning in a child’s actions and responses to his/her environment and to cultivate experiences that encourages each to work toward his/her full potential.

Hardworking, dedicated and knowledgeable educators have been involved in the effort of the Chance School Program Guide. It is their collective wisdom and foresight in this guide that allows all faculty, staff and administrators at Chance School, to educate and support children as learners. We believe that with a nurturing voice, ongoing encouragement and a deliberate focus on the growth and development of the “whole child” that one is able to unlock the secrets of a child’s potential.

The Faculty, Staff and Administration of Chance School

Created February 1990

Revised 1999, 2005, 2012

Administration

Gail Lotze – Head of School

Sue Musson – Program Coordinator (Preschool and Elementary)

Kim Tabler – Extended Program Coordinator (Chums, Enrichment, Summer Camp)

Preschool

Lyndsey Popham – 2's Teacher

Kristi Welsh – 2's Assistant

Susan Clines – 2's Teacher

Jamie Nichter – 2's Assistant

Maureen Harden – 3's Teacher

Rose Anne Phillips – 3's Assistant

Nan Malthouse – 3's Teacher

Ann DiGiuro – 3's Assistant

Amanda Bass – 4's Teacher

Leslie Christian – 4's Teacher

Kathy Attaway – 4's Teacher

Katie Stivers – 4's Teacher

Elementary

Bobbi Harper – K/1 Multi-age Teacher

Heather Isham – K/1 Multi-age Teacher

Eric Stevens – K/1 Multi-age Teacher

LeeAnn Usher – K/1 Multi-age Teacher

Kathy Kopp – Primary 2/3 Multi-age Teacher

Jennifer Hampton – Primary 2/3 Multi-age Teacher

Janet Farmer – Primary 2/3 Multi-age Teacher

Leslie Linde – Primary 2/3 Multi-age Teacher

Molly McCormack – Intermediate 4/5 Multi-age Teacher

Jennifer Cross – Intermediate 4/5 Multi-age Teacher

Jennifer Starr – Intermediate 4/5 Multi-age Teacher

Tiffany Condit – Intermediate 4/5 Multi-age Teacher

Specialists

Janie Langan – Art Teacher, K-5

Donna Hampton – Music Teacher, K-5

Jenny Brown – P.E. Teacher, Preschool - 5

Mary Ellen Gaines – Library/Media Teacher, Preschool -5

Sandy Stallard – Technology/Media Teacher, K-5

Claudia Alfaro – Los Monitos – Spanish, K-5

Sarah Cummins – Outdoor Classroom, Preschool 3's – 5th

Our Vision

To ignite and instill confidence and skills to excel in a global and changing environment

Mission Statement

Chance School is an independent school that serves children ages 2 through 5th grade. As a diverse community of learners, we commit to excellence and respect through a joyful, challenging and progressive program. With an intentional whole-child approach to education, each individual reaches his/her cognitive, social, emotional, moral and physical potential. Chance students graduate as confident, inquisitive learners prepared to engage productively with their world.

Philosophy Statement

Childhood is a continuous and unfolding process. All children advance through stages of development cognitively, socially, emotionally, morally and physically, and benefit from developing positive attitudes about learning and living in a democratic society. Therefore, at Chance School:

We believe in creating a learning environment that is welcoming and provides a culture of mutual respect. Our environment instills a joy of learning by encouraging and supporting curiosity, discovery, creativity and an open exchange of ideas through collaboration and cooperation.

We believe learning and experience are inseparable. Day by day we empower children to construct knowledge through active engagement, hands-on learning and social interaction. Learning opportunities are relevant because children benefit from making connections to the real world.

We believe in guiding children with dignity and respect. By using positive discipline and respectful language, Chance students are empowered to solve problems and to become responsible citizens.

We believe children benefit from having a voice. Choices and decision-making blended with routines and expectations create a culture for optimal learning and develop the foundation of habits, skills and attitudes.

We believe in nurturing self-reliance and self-confidence daily. A strong sense of self is vital to being an engaged learner and healthy participant in one's learning journey.

We believe that teachers, as facilitators, guide, support and challenge learners to work toward reaching their full potential in all areas of development.

We believe in honoring the uniqueness of each individual. By acknowledging and celebrating diversity, we encourage the acceptance of ourselves and others while enriching the learning environment.

We believe in establishing a sense of community by having a partnership between home and school. Together educators, administrators and parents contribute to the life of the school in ways that benefit young children.

I hear, and I forget.
I see, and I remember.
I do, and I understand.

Chinese Proverb

Chance School Best Practice Goals

Establishing a Community of Learners

- Individual/small/large group learning opportunities
- Collaboration and cooperation
- Expressive/receptive language opportunities
- Classroom jobs and responsibilities
- Classroom meetings
- Respectful and responsible attitude and rapport
- Resourceful and resilient

Providing a Safe and Healthy Learning Environment

- Deliberate classroom layout/design/structure
- “Chancese” language and mode of positive/respectful discipline and rapport
- Accessible/appropriate materials
- Respectful of one’s own learning space/materials and that of others
- Routines and consistency
- Expectations and accountability

Incorporating Excellent “best practice” Methodology

- Current educational research/trends
- Professional development
- Whole-child and milestone focus
- Appropriate resources/materials
- Support and extension opportunities
- Variety of experiences and materials
- Qualified faculty and staff
- Accreditation and licensing
- Program guide; philosophy and mission driven

Offering Curriculum Reflecting Current Research and Practice

- Whole-child and milestone focus
- Flexible; allows for “teachable moments”
- Real-life extensions
- Theme related; integrated; open-ended –allows for individual extensions/expression
- Appropriate and relevant materials
- Progressive and innovative
- National standards: current common core standards
- Professional development
- Program guide; philosophy and mission driven

Administering Ongoing Assessment of Growth and Development

- Planning decisions
- Monitoring and tracking ongoing individual growth and development
- Whole-child and milestone focus
- Continuum
- Measurable outcomes
- “Next-step” goal-setting

Building a Partnership between Home and School

- Classroom involvement: field trips/hobbies/traditions/lunch/read-aloud/etc.
- Volunteer opportunities
- Newsletter communication
- Classroom presentations
- Parent education
- Conferences and progress reports
- E-news/web/facebook

Commitments

COGNITIVE/INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT:

*We provide hands-on success oriented learning centers and experiences with appropriate materials, which enable the child to become a self-motivated learner.

*We utilize a flexible, written "curriculum" outline for all levels, in all developmental areas, based on developmentally appropriate practices, research, national guidelines and standards with a strong commitment and awareness of student need, student interest, and understanding of our ever-changing world.

*We provide a variety of open-ended learning materials and open-ended opportunities that are developmentally appropriate, encouraging a progression of learning and growth.

*We support our program each day, by providing opportunities for art, music, physical education, library and technology.

Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking:

*We encourage literacy development on a daily basis. Reading, writing, listening and speaking are interrelated and naturally support one another. Direct instruction, opportunities for practice, and appropriate materials are provided to support growth in these areas as well as to encourage and celebrate each child's potential and experience.

Mathematics:

*We provide math experiences that encourage exploration, investigation, and problem solving. Through the use of a spiral curriculum program, and the use of manipulatives, the student moves from concrete to abstract levels of learning. Math has its own set of rules, symbols and procedures; therefore, process and meaning are emphasized in our daily approach.

Theme Study (Science, Social Studies):

*We encourage the use of our senses, what we already know (prior knowledge), and what we want to know (questioning), to increase our awareness and understanding of our environment, families, communities and our ever-changing world. We provide the necessary tools, resources and technology to support this learning journey. Theme Study culminates with open-ended opportunities for students to show what they have learned. Field trips and speakers are provided to encourage real—life connections.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT:

*We encourage the respect of others' rights and opinions in all learning experiences and by working in small and large groups, we encourage interaction and the exchange of ideas.

*We foster creativity by encouraging creative thinking and interaction with others in the child's approach to his/her environment.

*We participate in field trips, which stimulate awareness of the community and have holiday celebrations, which foster appreciation of cultural similarities and differences.

*We plan daily activities to include and encourage interaction.

EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

*We offer a low student/teacher ratio, which enables teachers and staff to work individually with each child in order to effectively support learning and growth.

*We develop leadership through daily classroom responsibilities, by providing children the opportunity to be classroom helpers, and by setting up classroom rules and consequences and thus providing an atmosphere for self-discipline and problem solving as children advance through the program.

*We, as teachers, demonstrate and model appropriate behavior and use positive reinforcement to help children develop self—discipline.

*We utilize professional resources when special support of children is indicated.

*We provide experiences that promote feelings of self worth by using developmentally appropriate experiential learning centers through which children can be successful.

MORAL DEVELOPMENT:

*We give guidance and nurture an awareness of moral development, which is inseparable from and woven into all learning.

*We provide a caring and supportive environment, which help children to become responsible for their behavior and to value others.

*We support children in making choices, learning to distinguish between right and wrong.

*We nurture and encourage children on a daily basis, as they develop kindness, respect, honesty, self-discipline, courage, and forgiveness and compassion.

*We enlist the children's input in solving problems and formulating solutions that are meaningful to them.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT:

- *We provide indoor and outdoor, man-made and natural, physical activity areas with developmentally appropriate equipment.
- *We provide physical activity experiences during the regular and after school programs.
- *We provide a designed program for gross motor development as well as the understanding of game play and sportsmanship, supervised by a physical education specialist.
- *We provide a nutritional snack with the participation of our parents.
- *We plan units of study that support and increase our awareness of nutrition, health, safety, and the appropriate care of our bodies.
- *We provide a variety of classroom experiences that support the development of fine motor control.
- *We provide opportunities for the development of self-help skills on a daily basis through classroom routines, materials located at a child's level and classroom responsibilities.