

KINDERGARTEN STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

Most of what I really need to know about how to live and what to do, and how to be, I learned in kindergarten.
Robert Fulghah

The kindergarten program provides a rich, active environment where young children begin to develop responsibility and respect for themselves and others.

At this age children will be growing rapidly and becoming independent about eating and dressing. They'll want to relate experiences and retell stories as they try out new vocabulary. They'll be extremely active and naturally curious.

As they develop, they need to feel secure and loved. They'll naturally search for group approval, but they also need a few special friends. They'll want plenty of exercise, and they'll need plenty of rest. For them, school will often be an adventure, something they look forward to with great anticipation. The curriculum is designed to take advantage of that enthusiasm to develop a foundation for learning.

Curriculum

The curriculum of the kindergarten provides developmentally appropriate and challenging activities in all areas. Grounded in a solid basic-skills curriculum, the traditional classroom experiences in language arts, math, science, social studies, art, music, and movement are reinforced by special experiences in learning the basics of computers, and in doing community projects.

Teachers use numerous strategies to help students develop early literacy skills such as phonemic awareness, print concept, alphabet recognition, and consonant as well as short vowel sounds. Phonemic awareness, letter recognition, phonetic spelling and concepts of print are at the heart of the language arts curriculum along with appropriate and engaging literacy works. Titles include: *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*, *Goodnight Moon*, and *Brown Bear, Brown Bear*.

The kindergartners dictate words, phrases, sentences, and eventually stories. They practice speaking skills like telling stories and summarizing information. They eventually begin to read their own names and labels for common objects.

They begin their studies of math concepts (patterns, relations between numbers, problem-solving) through a variety of hands-on activities and games. At the same time they also develop an understanding of democratic and civil values in social studies. From understanding the need for rules and authority to learning the Pledge of Allegiance, they begin to assume individual responsibilities at home and at school and learn how to work and play safely with others.

Kindergartners have many rich experiences in art and creative expression. They will sing a wide variety of songs, try their hands at a variety of art media, and even participate as actors in puppet shows and plays.

Kindergarten children spend the year developing locomotor skills like hopping, jumping, and galloping. This is achieved through the "SPARKS" education program. While doing these various skills, the children learn teamwork and cooperative learning skills.

Throughout the year appropriate safety procedures are taught on the playground and in the classroom, as well as appropriate safety skills at home. The importance of good nutrition and hygiene is emphasized. The physical education and health program encourages children to develop skills and an attitude that promotes lifetime fitness.

Perspective

When they leave kindergarten, students will be able to make decisions, move independently and purposefully in the classroom, have a skills level appropriate for them, and demonstrate growth in social and emotional development. Above all we want them to have positive feelings about themselves and about school. The learning environment in kindergarten capitalizes on the 5-6 year old's joy for life and enthusiasm for learning.