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Pre-Kindergarten Program

Overview

The Pre-Kindergarten Program is a classroom-based program designed for children around the age of three-and-a-half through five years old.

Our goal is to provide thoughtful, engaging and fun learning experiences for each child in order to create a strong foundation for success in kindergarten and future classrooms.

Discovery Early Learning Center focuses on the Reggio Emilia philosophy, an approach which is centered on observing what children know, are curious about, and what challenges them. Our teachers develop and implement lessons and activities based on these observations that reinforce knowledge and skills essential to the children's development.

The concepts and skills we focus on, as well as supporting activities and projects are based on the Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines set out by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and are aligned with the Kindergarten Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).

Classrooms

The program is divided into two groups by age and considers each child's individual development:

Pre-K 1: ~3.5 years through 4 years old

Children in pre-K 1 are typically developmentally past the preschool age but are more than one year away from expecting to attend a kindergarten program.

Pre-K 2: 4 years through 5 years old

Children in pre-K 2 are typically those in their final school year of pre-kindergarten and expect to attend a kindergarten program the following year.

The physical, social, emotional, language and cognitive development of each child are considered during placement in a specific pre-k classroom.

Domains and Skills

The pre-k program encourages development in the following essential skill domains of early childhood education:

- Social and Emotional Development
- Language and Communication
- Reading
- Writing
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies
- Fine Arts
- Physical Development

Each of the nine domains are associated with skills that children learn throughout the program. Most of these skills will have typical outcomes at:

- Around four years old (Pre-K 1)
- End of pre-kindergarten year (Pre-K 2)

Our teachers design and implement daily lessons and activities that encourage, support and reinforce development in the above domains.

How We Implement

The development of these knowledge and skills are implemented throughout the children's day, including circle time, small group lessons, outdoor time, centers, projects and art time.

- Circle time allows for the whole class to come together to discuss rules, routines, and the plan for the day. It also allows for group discussion and an introduction to weekly language and math lessons.
- Small group time allows for individualized lessons focusing on specific skills.
- Our outdoor area is an extension of the classroom and allows for exploration in the areas of science, art and physical development.
- Centers allow for self-directed activities and provide opportunities to reinforce all skill domains.
- Projects are pre-planned activities, guided by the children's interests and curiosities, and provoke thoughtful conversations and collaboration between teachers and students.
- The children also have dedicated daily art studio time to invoke creativity through a variety of art mediums.

Concepts, Outcomes and Reinforcement

The table below shows examples of the progression of development throughout the pre-kindergarten program and engaging hands-on activities and projects that reinforce these skills:

Domain	Skill	Concept	Around four years old	End of Pre-Kindergarten Year	Example Project or Activity
Social and Emotional Development	Relationships with Others	Initiating social interactions	Interested in peer play, but may show lack of skill or confidence in joining a group	Shows confidence in initiating social interactions	Centers: Pretend play store/restaurant
Social and Emotional Development	Self-Concept Skills	Personal characteristics	Identifies own personal characteristics (hair, eye color)	Can express pride in age appropriate abilities and skills	Project: Heredity Exploration
Language and Communication	Speech Production Skills	Similar sounding words	May confuse words that sound familiar	Perceives differences between similar sounding words	Small Group Activity: Beginning sounds board game
Language and Communication	Conversation Skills	Conversational rules	Sometimes uses acceptable communication with familiar adults and children	Takes turns without interrupting and uses appropriate tone of voice	Circle Time: Show and Tell
Mathematics	Counting	Reciting number words	Recites number words in order from 1 to 20 or higher	Uses rote counting in order from 1 to 30 or higher	Individual Activity: 100s chart
Mathematics	Geometry and Spatial Sense	Recognizing and creating shapes	Recognizes common shapes and manipulates shapes using fine/gross motor skills	Names and creates common shapes	Small Group Activity: Creating geometric shapes with snack foods
Reading	Alphabet Knowledge	Letter sounds	Identifies letter sounds in first few letters of first name	Recognizes 20 distinct letter sounds	Circle Time: Phonics chants
Writing	Conventions in Writing	Recording own name	Records own name in whatever manner he/she is able	Writes own first name using legible letters in proper sequence	Art: Writing names using variety of mediums (i.e. playdough, shaving cream)

Additional Notes

- The outcomes above are guidelines that we work towards with all children within the program. However, we understand that each child progresses at their own rate within each domain.
- Children enrolling in the pre-k program will need to be fully potty-trained and have basic knowledge of self-care skills (ability to put on own shoes and jacket, washes own hands, etc.).
- We do not perform formal assessments but instead use informal methods to ensure children are continuously progressing throughout the program.