

## Pre-Kindergarten

Pre-Kindergarten is a two-year program that emphasizes learning through play, based on active discovery, exploration and hands-on experiences. Each class is staffed by a lead teacher and a full-time assistant who oversee programs that balance teacher-directed and child-initiated activities. The environment is language-rich and the classrooms are multi-themed. An array of manipulatives inspires children to be creative, to develop hand-eye coordination, fine and gross motor skills and to learn by doing. These learning tools are conduits for creativity, enabling each child to interpret and personalize information and solve problems in his or her individual way.

Three-year-olds and 4-year-olds are grouped together, with the second year children mentoring the first year children, and the younger ones staying with the same teacher the following year. The first year of the Pre-Kindergarten Program concentrates on developing independence, social and emotional growth. The children need to be able to navigate through every-day experiences individually and in groups. Once they have mastered these skills, they can embark on their academic journey and better participate in the activities they are being exposed to in our program.

During the second year the children return to school with confidence. They are eager to model good choices and expand upon the skills and knowledge that they have secured in the first year of our program. The children are taught through themes that integrate pre-reading, writing, math, science, social studies creative arts and physical activities. The teachers work with the children to build the connection between language and symbols, enabling them to become increasingly adept at letter-sound relationships and phonetic spelling. Various manipulatives and teaching tools are used to start shaping the child's ability to understand mathematical concepts, as well as to aid in the strengthening of fine motor skills.

The children learn about the world around them by exploring and observing their environment. Experiments in and out of the classroom, including cooking and water play, provide active opportunities for learning about basic science theories. The children also become involved in their communities in and out of school. They begin to understand relationships, civic responsibility and caring for themselves and others. Through art projects, music and dramatic play the Prekindergarten program fosters the children's creative thinking and self expression. Outdoor playtime provides the children with opportunities to develop gross motor skills, and to work together in groups and on teams.

In addition to the range of activities children experience with their classroom teacher, they leave their classroom daily and work with specially-trained teachers to enjoy one or more of the following 'Specials' classes: Movement, Creative Art, Music, Library, and Spanish.