



KINDERGARTEN
2007-2008

Kindergarten is a time to experiment, discover, discuss, listen, question, observe, and grow, laying an important foundation for the school years ahead. The goal of the program is to provide the five and six year old with experience in making choices, solving problems, initiating social activities, collaborating with others, exploring artistic creativity, and developing literacy skills. Independence is encouraged and there is a strong emphasis on harmony and respect within the group.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT: With an emphasis on the four language arts strands (literacy, letter/sound relationships, communication, and writing) the Kindergarten day is rich with words spoken, heard, seen, and written. Fiction and non-fiction books are used, as are audio books. Children look at books, listen to stories read aloud, and discuss characters, plot and action. Songs, poems, and rhyming games are introduced to expand vocabulary and increase awareness of the sound and rhythm of language. Our literacy goals also place an emphasis on strengthening understanding of letters and their sounds. In addition, the children tell stories for dictation and write group accounts of activities and adventures. In doing so, the children see written language used and sense its importance. Beginning attempts in writing are encouraged and supported, and children are introduced to correct letter formation. Children make their own books, compose stories and poems, and keep a journal. In addition, we dramatize our favorite books or poems and often perform for an audience.

MATHEMATICS: The goal of the kindergarten math program is to allow children the opportunity to explore their interests while at the same time preparing them for future mathematics experiences. Concepts are introduced, practiced, and learned through the use of language, communication, social interaction, tools, and manipulatives, as we work independently, in cooperative groups, or with a partner. We introduce the children to these six major content domains: number sense, algebra, measurement, geometry, data analysis, and probability. Our morning meeting calendar time is an important part of our daily routine, giving us the opportunity to explore ways of counting, the class calendar and daily schedule, and place value. This daily routine helps build understanding over time. The children also have opportunities to create and replicate patterns, work with coins, learn simple graphing and estimating skills, play games to reinforce concepts learned, and apply math to their everyday activities. These daily routines, hands on experiences, and games are vital in building conceptual understanding that is linked to authentic and interesting contexts. We use the Everyday Math curriculum as a base for our work in mathematics.

SCIENCE AND SOCIAL STUDIES: The Kindergarten class explores different themes that stem from teacher and/or student ideas and questions. With an emphasis on hands-on materials, each theme is integrated into our day through literature, music, art, or math when appropriate. Units of study in science often involve the natural world around us, allowing us to investigate our beautiful surroundings and collect natural objects right outside our door. Units of study include creepy-crawlies, nocturnal animals, how plants grow, and the night sky. Additionally, we use the classroom as a laboratory to explore the effects of gravity in conjunction with the experience of skiing and sledding during the winter months. In social studies, we begin with investigating who we are and talk about ways we are the same and things that make us each unique. Throughout the year, we also learn about the holidays and celebrations that reflect who we are. Many such activities occur with the rest of the school community in group situations. In addition, we take a look at homes and find out about the kinds of homes people live in around the world. The goal is to give our youngest students an introduction to ideas they will study again in subsequent years, and a holistic way of supporting children as they explore who they are and find their places in the world.

ART: Art is another means of expression for children, one as important as language and physical skills. The goal of the art program in Kindergarten is to create a climate where children can explore different materials in many ways, with a sense of enjoyment in the process. Art materials are available on a daily basis. Throughout the year, projects revolve around units of study and we experiment with textiles, wood, weaving, sewing, clay, paper mache, or printmaking. We also study various famous artists as part of our art history component.

SOCIAL CURRICULUM: The Kindergarten class deals daily with topics of self-esteem, conflict resolution, personal safety, family diversity, emotions, friendships, and decisionmaking. These topics are integrated into our work together and flow naturally through the year. We also focus on community helpers and learn the roles people can play within a community, whether it is within our school or a town. We, too, become community helpers as we contribute to our school in a positive way or participate in community service.

PHYSICAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT: The Kindergarten works daily on the development of fundamental movement skills, perceptual motor skills, and basic fitness. We have a Kindergarten PSD class once a week, and a combined class with grades 1 and 2 and one class with Pre-school. Our activities range from hiking on TGS trails, movement activities in the gym, organized games, and specific activities to build skills in running, jumping, throwing, catching, and strength. In the winter, we cross-country ski with the rest of the school community.

TECHNOLOGY: Kindergarten children are encouraged to use the classroom computer during their free choice time. They learn to feel comfortable with the technology and are able to work on their own. We introduce learning programs that relate to themes we study as well as provide experiences with problem solving, learning to read, and math. At times throughout the year the Kindergartners work with older students to retrieve information relating to one of our themes or to create age-appropriate projects. In addition, teachers may use the Internet with the whole group to explore web pages and other relevant sites that augment a unit of study.