



KINDERGARTEN, 2009 - 2010

Kindergarten is a time to wonder, experiment, discover, discuss, listen, question, observe, and grow. The goal of the program is to provide the five- and six-year old with experience in making choices, solving problems, navigating through 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. Children look at books independently, hear stories read aloud, and discuss characters, plot, and action. Songs, poems, and rhyming games are introduced that expand vocabulary and increase awareness of the sound and rhythm of language. An emphasis is placed 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. Dramatizing our favorite books or poems and sometimes performing for an audience are favorite extensions. 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 journals.

MATHEMATICS: The goal of the kindergarten math program is to allow children the opportunity to explore mathematical concepts, and the to use them to make sense of the world. These concepts are introduced, practiced, and learned through the use of language, communication, social interaction, tools, and manipulative materials. Work is done independently, in cooperative groups, or with a partner, depending on the activity. Children are introduced to these six major content domains: number sense, algebra, measurement, geometry, data analysis, and probability. The morning meeting time is an important part of the daily routine, giving us the opportunity to review the class calendar and daily schedule, explore ways of counting, and learn about place value. This daily routine helps build understanding over time, and grows more challenging based on the needs of the children. 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. The Everyday Math curriculum is used 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. These may include creepy-crawlies,

nocturnal animals, how plants grow, and the night sky. In social studies, investigations involve finding out about who we are, the ways in which we are the same, and the things that make us each unique.

Throughout the year, studies include holidays and celebrations that reflect who we are. Many such activities occur with the rest of the school community in group situations. The people and places in our own community become more familiar as we study our homes and the towns in which we live. In addition, we find out about the kinds of homes in which people live in different parts of the world. The goal is to give our youngest students an introduction to ideas they will study again in subsequent years, and an intrinsic 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 may experiment with textiles, wood, weaving, sewing, clay, papier-mâché, or printmaking. Famous artists are studied as part of our art history component.

STUDIO ART: In kindergarten, art is integrated in the classroom as part of the everyday learning experience. In addition, kindergarteners have art in the art room once per week. This time is about learning what can be done with colored pencil, tempura paint, and crayon. We learn by experimenting and students begin to have a sense of when and why the artist will choose one medium over another. Gaining early exposure to artists from many periods and places will help them have a sense of the diversity of art in the world.

FRENCH: In kindergarten this year we will be touching on many topics using songs, games, movement, coloring, and stories as avenues of exploration. Class will be fun and engaging, fostering enjoyment of the language. Simple French vocabulary will relate to the body, the farm, the house, food, appearances, the alphabet, the weather, colors, and numbers. Class meets two times a week, once for 30 minutes and once for 45 minutes, in the kindergarten room.

MUSIC AND TECHNOLOGY: The music program is an integral part of the TGS curriculum with all students in K-8 having three music classes per week. The primary goals are: developing an appreciation for music; singing on-pitch; reading music and playing an instrument; dancing cooperatively; taking direction and performing on stage. Basic computer skills and an introduction to music technology are also important components of the program. Students work in groups, individually, and with several faculty members throughout the year in different learning situations.

TECHNOLOGY: Kindergarten children are encouraged to use the classroom computer during their free-choice time. They learn to feel comfortable with a mouse and are able to navigate on their own. Learning programs that relate to themes we study are introduced. They 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.

SOCIAL CURRICULUM: The kindergarten class deals holistically with topics of self-esteem, conflict resolution, personal safety, family diversity, emotions, friendships, and decision-making. These topics are integrated into our work together and flow naturally through the day and school year. Community helpers and the roles people can play within a community are studied, 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.

LIBRARY: Kindergarten will meet in the library two periods a week to choose books, and do various activities designed to help the children be comfortable using the library. They will find out learn about parts of a book and the different kinds of literature. They will be introduced to the difference between fiction and nonfiction, be able to recognize the title and author of a book, and practice listening skills. As part of the Red Clover Award program, they will learn to evaluate literary material by text, illustration, and information.

PHYSICAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT: The kindergarten works daily on the development of fundamental movement skills, perceptual motor skills, and basic fitness. Morning meeting often includes stretching, yoga, or a dance. In addition, there is a Physical Skills Development class three times a week: once for just kindergarten, once combined with grades one and two, and one class combined with the preschool. Our activities range from hiking on TGS trails and movement activities in the gym, to organized games, to 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.