

KINDERGARTEN

The underlying philosophy of the St. James kindergarten program is a developmental one. It is based on the belief that all people, upon birth, have a series of milestones to master as they develop and each child reaches these milestones at his/her own pace. As trained observer, it is the kindergarten teacher's responsibility to determine the emotional, cognitive, social, and physical levels of development of each child in the kindergarten program. They then strive to provide an environment rich in hands-on activities that will foster the optimum growth of each child.

INTRODUCTION

The kindergarten program offered at St. James serves as the first step in the formal educational process. The kindergarten experience sets the stage for the children's positive image of school. The skills your child learns at this level will prepare him/her for the reading, writing and mathematics curriculum offered in first grade.

At this point in a child's life, there is a transition from the security of home to the challenges of learning and functioning independently. In kindergarten, parents and St. James faculty will develop strong family ties, good home-school communication skills and positive role modeling so that the children in our care will feel loved and accepted. This early childhood preparation will result in a child who is ready to move into the wider world with a sense of anticipation and confidence.

KINDERGARTEN OVERVIEW

The St. James kindergarten program consists of two full-day classrooms. All children who are registered for kindergarten are screened by a certified examiner to determine their readiness for the program. Testing material from the Brigance Screening Process and Gesell Readiness Test are used to determine a child's developmental age. Final decision for acceptance will be made at the recommendation of the examiner and the kindergarten teachers, with final approval by the principal. The examiner may also consult with the child's preschool teacher to assist in making an informed decision.

KINDERGARTEN AREAS OF STUDY

RELIGION Religion is a vital part of the St. James kindergarten program. Our program enables the child to become aware of his or her uniqueness as a child of God and of God as our loving Father. It is our belief that your child is the Jesus of his/her generation. Children continue to develop spirituality through the cooperative work of their parents and teachers. Throughout the year, various opportunities for parent enrichment evenings are held for the parents of all school-aged children to fine tune parenting skills and prepare parents for the challenges of raising growing children.

MATHEMATICS Mathematics readiness is acquired through informal group activities, games and discovery through manipulative materials. Concepts taught include counting, recognition and understanding the value of numerals 1-20, learning about comparisons, calendar, time measurement, sets, one-to-one correspondence, equivalence, geometric shapes, money, graphing, patterning, area, and preparation for simple addition and subtraction. Weekly math activities are provided during center time that allow for group or individual work on number concepts.

READING READINESS Readiness for reading requires a prolonged and gradual period of training and development. Success in reading depends on the child's mental, physical, social and emotional maturity. Letter/sound association, auditory and visual discrimination, and fine motor skills are developed in order to nurture growth for eventual formal reading instruction. Among the many skills taught are: alphabet recognition, rhyming and hearing initial and final sounds, following directions, developing vocabulary, drawing conclusions, recalling story details in sequence, and creative thinking. A

combination of the whole language and phonics approaches forms the foundation of the language arts program in kindergarten. They are also introduced to the letter sounds through the Alpha Letter People.

EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM This program is in place for children who may require additional assistance in developing reading readiness skills or fine motor skills. The test of Phonemic Awareness (TOPA) is administered to all incoming kindergartners. Participation in this program is based upon an individual assessment of each student.

LEARNING CENTERS Learning centers form the core of our day in Kindergarten. The children visit centers daily. Through the course of a five-day week they participate in several different center activities. Among the centers available are: math, construction, clay, listening, writing, painting and language arts.

FINE MOTOR DEVELOPMENT The children are encouraged to practice fine motor skills through: drawing, painting, cutting, pasting, constructing, modeling and sewing. The children also attend a weekly art class. Frequently, parents are also given suggestions for materials to help them work at home with their child on fine motor skills.

SOCIAL STUDIES Children are encouraged to adjust and modify their behavior within a group by practicing good social skills. They are assisted in learning how to take

turns and share. Social Studies concepts include learning about children of other countries and their customs, conservation of valuable resources, patriotism and history.

SCIENCE The science program increases the children's awareness of and the ability to observe the environment and world around them.

MUSIC Children experience music through singing, listening to recordings, creative rhythms, body movement and dramatization. In addition to class activities, the children attend weekly music class.

HEALTH AND SAFETY Children begin learning about body structure and function, personal cleanliness, dental health and nutrition. Basic principles of safety in the classroom, on the street, on the playground and "stranger-danger" are also stressed. Physical exercise is part of the curriculum and healthy snacks are encouraged.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE In Kindergarten children enjoy a brief, age-appropriate weekly Spanish lesson.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION Children attend a weekly class where physical activities are geared for the overall gross motor development of the child.

COMPUTERS AND LIBRARY Each week the children receive a lesson with the computer teacher or the librarian.

