



Blake Lindner Thompson Early Childhood Learning Center Early Learning Program



“We are grateful for a place we trust, that will build Christ-centered values into our children – and importantly, will help them discover who they were created to be.”
– Parent of a CHCA Early Learning Student

Cincinnati Hills Christian Academy

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Cincinnati Hills Christian Academy Early Learning Program Statement

Vision

Cincinnati Hills Christian Academy will unleash each student's God-given gifts through Christ-centered academic excellence. We are devoted to developing the whole person, and instilling a lifelong passion for learning, leading and serving.

Mission

Cincinnati Hills Christian Academy is a Christ-centered, Non-denominational, College Preparatory Academy that exists to:

Prepare students intellectually and spiritually for success in higher education and to impact and influence the world according to their unique gifts and talents. This will be accomplished by:

1. Creating an environment that encourages students, faculty, staff, and families to develop and live out their relationship with Jesus Christ.
2. Developing a passion for lifelong learning that leads to thoughtful, effective service through excellent, intentional curriculum and extra-curricular offerings.
3. Empowering outstanding Christian faculty and staff to fully use their passions and expertise to create engaged critical thinkers.
4. Fostering an exceptional environment that develops students' gifts and talents in the arts, athletics, leadership, and additional extra-curricular opportunities for God's purposes.
5. Building an engaged school community – encompassing faculty, staff, students, families, alumni, and donors – that reinforces the school's vision, mission, and core values.

“I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you.”
Psalm 32:8

“He said to them, ‘Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.’”
Mark 10:14

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Core Values

1. **Christ-Centeredness:** We believe in following how Christ Himself led, served, taught, loved, and lived; we strive to base all we do on His word.
2. **Academic Excellence:** We believe in reflecting we are an academy of learning. It is our primary, but not exclusive, goal to prepare our students academically for college and beyond.
3. **Whole Person:** We believe in recognizing all are gifted by God in unique ways. We believe in developing all forms of spiritual, intellectual, artistic, athletic gifts in each student to their fullest potential.
4. **Servant Leadership:** We believe in the power of servanthood. Servant leadership will be taught, modeled, and encouraged to all students, staff, and parents so that all are equipped for the situations in life when God calls them to lead.
5. **Outreach/Service:** We believe in modeling Christ in all we do. We will provide opportunities daily and through special events for students, staff, and parents to share Christ's love through service and witness to others.
6. **Stewardship:** We believe in acknowledging we are blessed in many ways. We as a school will model strong fiscal stewardship and will encourage, train, and expect students, staff, and parents to be wise and generous stewards over their time, talents, and money.
7. **The Value of Each Person:** We believe in demonstrating biblical equality, embracing each individual as a unique creation of God, ensuring we operate in an emotionally, socially, and physically safe and nurturing environment, and intentionally enrolling a student body, faculty and staff who reflect the socioeconomic and racial make-up of the community in which we live.
8. **Vibrant Sense of Community:** We believe in acting intentionally. We will foster a vibrant, connected culture of empathy, fellowship, and respect among students, staff, and parents.
9. **Accountability:** We believe in holding ourselves and each other to the highest standards of integrity, excellence, and constant measurable improvement.
10. **A Joyful Spirit:** We believe in having an attitude of gratitude for God's blessings that are lived out in every day smiles, laughter, and by celebrating demonstrated character and unique achievements. This results in a contagious joy that connects at the heart-level.

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Purpose of the Early Learning Program

CHCA's Blake Lindner Thompson Early Childhood Learning Center offers high quality Toddler and Preschool Programs to our school community for children ages 2-5. The purpose is to provide CHCA's youngest students with a safe, nurturing, and stimulating introduction to school life. The programs are designed to instill a love of learning in each child by meeting each student's cognitive, social, emotional, physical, creative, and spiritual needs, providing an excellent foundation for the formal learning experiences that lie ahead.

CHCA respects parents as the primary and most important providers of care, nurturing, and education for their children. *"Raise up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it."* Proverbs 22:6. The programs provide opportunities for parents and teachers to develop strong partnerships that will positively impact each child's care and education.

The programs are predicated on the belief that when children are engaged cognitively, relationally, and spiritually, learning is maximized. CHCA creates learning experiences that invite students to construct knowledge and make meaning of their world. Students construct their knowledge through movement, exploration, use of a variety of materials, collaboration with others, and opportunities to make connections to something they already know. CHCA's vibrant and engaging environment acknowledges that foundational to learning, are the experiences and knowledge that children bring to school in combination with their natural senses of curiosity and wonder, and joyful exuberance.

The curriculum provides age-appropriate, high quality academics based on standards derived from current research on brain-based learning and the State of Ohio Early Learning Content Standards in all content areas. And all content areas are integrated with a Christian worldview.

Early Learning Program Philosophy

The philosophy of the Early Learning Program is grounded in the belief that *"Children are a gift from the Lord; they are a real blessing."* Psalm 127:3. As a school community, we join you as parents in embracing your child as His gift with joy and thanks. And we partner together, guiding and nurturing your child to flourish, and realize his or her God-given potential.

CHCA's Early Learning Program values the whole child and acknowledges each child as having unique experiences, interests, and cultural values that must be recognized and respected. We believe all children have an innate curiosity and interest in engaging in social interactions, establishing relationships, constructing meaning, and negotiating their environment.

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“The principal goal of education in the schools should be creating men and women who are capable of doing new things, not simply repeating what other generations have done.”

– Jean Piaget

Inspired by the Reggio-Emilia philosophy, CHCA’s inquiry-based early learning curriculum provides meaningful, engaged, effective learning. It is well planned and organized with instructional strategies to support, challenge, make connections to experiences and previous learning, and extend each child’s abilities and skills. The curriculum is rich with opportunities to solve problems, develop literacy, use critical thinking, collaborate, and engage in intellectual activities. Teachers guide the children to construct knowledge through a hands-on, discovery learning process that emerges from the interests of the students, tailoring the provocations and investigations to ensure learning benchmarks are met.

Students of CHCA’s Early Learning Program will choose from a wide range of opportunities and experiences including:

- Interactions with other children and with loving, Christ-centered teachers
- Explorations with manipulatives and problems to solve
- Creative dramatics, music, and art in the Atelier
- Large and fine motor development
- Natural experiences in the Nature Learning Lab

The program provides a thoughtful balance of child-led and teacher-framed activities and experiences to help students develop a positive self-image and offers opportunities for individual and group work and play. CHCA’s objective is to help children realize their potential while meeting their developmental needs.

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Early Learning Program Description

The Two, Three and Four-Year-Old programming offers a wonderful beginning and foundation to a child's education. Children are provided developmentally tailored opportunities to expand their learning and develop the underlying skills to prepare for a smooth transition on to the next academic year. Children must be two, three, or four years old by September 30 in order to be considered for placement into each program.

The classrooms contain a rich variety of materials and resources for students to experience:

- Finest children's literature
- Creative, natural, and manipulative materials
- Language through day to day conversations, books, poetry, creative dramatics and writing
- Variety of music and art activities
- Quiet and active playtime
- Engagement Centers
- Large group, small group, and individual instruction
- The Atelier, a studio for creativity and innovation
- Nature Learning Lab
- Indoor recreational space and outdoor natural playscape

Early Learning Program Curriculum

The curriculum presents a continuum of learning and development in the following domains:

Christian Studies: We are made in God's image and children are valued as children of God, receiving instruction in the Bible at age appropriate levels through stories and activities. God is the creator of the world we live in, and wonder and appreciation for His creation are responses to the world around us. Our relationships with others follow biblical principles of the Golden Rule and of community. Bible stories provide examples of biblical heroes, and students learn the importance of developing godly character. Students practice prayer as a simple conversation with God.

Language and Literacy: Teachers model and invite students into the love of language and its many expressions: oral, written, dramatic, and musical play. During the toddler years children acquire concepts such as conventions of print, develop phonological awareness by hearing stories, rhymes, playing games and in interaction with adults who model and value language and value children. Children learn to listen to and talk about books that are read to them, construct understanding about books, develop concepts of print and the idea of story. Vocabularies grow and children acquire new words through literature, hands on, sensorial experiences, explorations, and investigations. The environment is literacy rich.

Mathematics: Young children's knowledge of mathematics is constructed over time where mathematics experiences are woven throughout the curriculum, follow logical sequences, allow for depth and focus and

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connect to the child's development of knowledge and skills. Carefully planned experiences focus attention on particular mathematical concepts. Instruction includes: number sense and counting, ideas of groupings and comparisons, patterning and ordering, sequences, measurement, and geometry and spatial relationships. Instruction is grounded in manipulatives, provocations and loose parts, problem solving, collaborative work, and ties to language.

Science: Science instruction is founded upon the design of its Creator and students are introduced to God's creation at the earliest level. Students are natural scientists: curious, observing, and questioning. The science curriculum provides a balance among science inquiry, earth and space science, physical science, and life science where students explore ideas, manipulate materials, and engage in conversations to construct understanding. Students share with others their experiences and expand their understanding of the natural world through observing, exploring, drawing, and construction. Exploration of science-related topics is enhanced by lessons from the Science Innovation Lab brought to the classroom and visits to the Nature Learning Lab.

Social Studies: Students begin to acquire an awareness and understanding of the world, starting with God who created them. Children explore how people live, work, get along with others, solve problems, and shape their surroundings. For young children, the family, school, neighborhood, and community are ways to experience social studies in action. Everyday experiences in the learning community support development of self and competence along with building relationships, healthy peer interactions, and empathy.

Approaches to Learning: In addition to core curricular content, the program intentionally creates the learning environment and experiences necessary to build skills in productive behaviors, dispositions, and attitudes which have been shown to enhance learning, specifically: initiative, engagement, persistence, and creativity.

Physical Well Being and Motor Development: Healthy skills and behaviors help set children on a path to more effective learning and living a healthy lifestyle. In both individual and cooperative learning environments throughout the school day, students will have opportunities to develop both fine and large motor skills. In addition, healthy habits and practices are emphasized so that they become part of the children's daily routine.

Social and Emotional Development: Positive social and emotional development provides an essential foundation for cognitive and academic competence not only in preschool but in later years as well. Each aspect of the day will allow for the development of the skills, attitudes, and values necessary for students to successfully navigate their world through interactions with adults and peers.

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“...play is the principal business of childhood.”
– Jerome S. Bruner

Classroom Practices

Our classroom practices are designed to create an engaging, safe, stimulating, and challenging environment in which each child is encouraged to grow and learn.



Morning Meetings: We gather as a whole class to share news, pray and give prayer requests, and introduce content, skills, and expectations for the morning’s activities.

Interactive Modeling: We teach children to notice and internalize expected behaviors through modeling.

Logical Consequences: We respond to behavior that allows children to fix and learn from mistakes while preserving their dignity.

Academic Choice: We increase student motivation and engagement by differentiating instruction and allowing students choices in their work.

Working with Families: We build a community of support and enrichment through family engagement and partnership with teachers.

Rule Creation: We help students create and understand classroom rules that allow all class members to meet their learning needs.

Positive Teacher Language: We use words and tone to promote children’s active learning and self-discipline.

Guided Discovery: We introduce materials in a way that encourages creativity, persistence, investigation, inquiry, and engagement.

Classroom Organization: We set up the learning environment in ways that encourage independence, cooperation, productivity and engagement.

Collaborative Problem Solving: We use conferencing, role playing, and other strategies to resolve any student conflicts within the classroom.

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Sample Daily Schedule

The following represents a sample sequence of daily instructional activities. Times are approximate and the order of activities may vary as yearly schedules are created. Each activity is welcoming and affirming to each child and is intended to engage the student's interest on cognitive, emotional, social, spiritual, and physical levels.

8:20-8:30 a.m. – Arrival: Children arrive to the classroom and sign in (folder work).

8:40-9:00 a.m. – Group Meetings: Introduction to isolated skills and concepts, shared story, calendar item and morning message. (Individual Classrooms)

9:00 -11:00 a.m. – Engagement Centers, Project Work and Enrichment Classes*: Children will participate in and put into practice the skills and academic concepts introduced formally by the teacher during group meeting. The various engagement centers offer students many opportunities which relate to the current topic in the project-based learning approach, as well as fine arts (music, visual arts, theater/drama), writing /literacy, sensory, nature and science, math, tinkering, snack, Christian studies, construction and creative time in The Atelier. (Classrooms, The Atelier, Outdoor Learning Lab, Atrium)

11:00-11:30 a.m. – Outdoor Learning Lab or Indoor Recreational Activity (Outdoor Learning Lab or Atrium).

11:30 a.m. -12:30 p.m. – Lunch and Nap transition: Children may pack or purchase a lunch. Following lunch (12:00 p.m.), students enrolled in the half day program are dismissed. (Atrium and Classroom)

12:30-1:30 p.m. – Naptime: Children rest or sleep on cots during this time. (Classroom)

1:30-1:45 p.m. – Transition from nap (toileting, nap items put away etc...) to preparing for enrichment classes.

1:45-2:45 p.m. – Enrichment Classes and Free Exploration of Engagement Centers. (Atrium, The Atelier, and Library).

2:45-3:00 p.m. – Snack, Story, Prayer and Good-bye

3:00-6:00 p.m. – Extended Day program begins, including enrichment classes and free exploration of Engagement Centers.

*Chapel occurs weekly (day, time TBD)



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Enrichment Classes (Offered weekly; days and times vary by class)

Music: Children explore sound through singing, moving, listening, and playing rhythm instruments.

Spanish: Once per week, students will begin to learn and appreciate the Spanish Language and Hispanic culture, using everyday naming vocabulary, games, greetings and songs. Children use play to explore the joy of seeing God's world through another language and culture.

Art: Each morning, students will enjoy creative time in The Atelier. Art and various mediums are provided for students to express their understandings, to grow in fine motor skills, extend the learning in the classrooms, innovate, and to develop an awareness of the world around them. Students learn the use of and care of materials and tools and practice in various media, techniques and processes related to the visual arts.

Library: Students enjoy literacy rich opportunities during story time, once each week in the library. Students will hear and participate in stories and research related to current project work.

Science Explorers: *"Ever since the creation of the world His invisible nature, namely, His eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made."* Romans 1:19-20. Students have opportunities in The Atelier and outdoor learning lab to explore, experiment, hypothesize, question and develop science concepts with our Science Enrichment Teacher.

Adventures in Movement: By tapping into a child's natural curiosity and encouraging them to explore movement through guided play and discovery, we develop fundamental movement skills.

Engagement Centers

Engagement centers allow the students to work independently in designated areas and offer students access to natural materials in a hands-on and manipulative environment. Materials in each center support an extension of formally introduced skills and concepts during the morning meeting. Materials in each center change regularly to support concept, knowledge building, and engagement. The engagement center learning and development illuminates the breadth of learning and development from age 2 to 5 that strengthens the child's school readiness for entry into kindergarten.

Construction Center: Children design and create structures as they experiment with size, shape and weight. The children are encouraged to use the materials in the block and construction area in unconventional ways using a variety of offered materials.

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Fine Arts (Music, Visual Arts and Dramatic Play) Center: Children are introduced to a variety of instruments to discover how they make sounds and are exposed to various music genres in music appreciation. Children will be able to express creativity, observe cause and effect with a variety of mediums, increase small motor development, learn colors, shapes and textures, and develop aesthetic appreciation and independent work skills. Children will also develop creative expression, imagination, social interaction skills and work through problems by reenacting real life experiences.

Writing and Literacy: Early literacy skills include developing concepts of print, comprehension of age-appropriate text, phonological awareness, and letter recognition. Children will develop reading and writing readiness skills as they practice letter formation and recognition, storytelling, growing their vocabulary, and expressing themselves through language and messaging.

Sensory Center: Children develop sensory awareness with materials such as sand, water, rice etc... They compare characteristics by sifting, pouring, comparing, and experimenting with materials.

Nature and Science Center: Focuses on children's curiosity to explore and learn about their environment. It includes behaviors of exploration and discovery and the conceptual development of problem solving and cause and effect. Children can explore, experiment, observe, hypothesize, question and develop concepts using real objects.

Math Center: Children develop an understanding of number quantity, number relationships, basic algebraic concepts, measurement and data and geometry through hands on games, activities and materials. The math center also addresses children's developing knowledge of key attributes of objects, including size and shape, and the way objects fit, are positioned, and move in space.

Tinkering Center: Initiative, creativity, curiosity, and their motivation to participate in new and varied innovative experiences and challenges occur in this inventing center. Children's creative, innovative thinking allows them to think about or use materials in unconventional ways, and to express thoughts and ideas with a variety of recycled and repurposed materials. Engagement, persistence and initiative are fostered in this center.

Christian Studies Center: Emphasizes Christ's love for each child/person. Christ-like character traits are nurtured and developed through songs and literature. Bible concepts, principles and stories are integrated with hands on materials, activities and literature.

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