

Little But Mighty

Cannon's Early Childhood Program celebrates our youngest students.

It is a crisp October morning, and Kindergarten Teacher Mrs. Emily Davis is drowning in apples. They are scattered all over her classroom—green ones, yellow ones, some shiny, others bruised. Today is “Apple Day” in Kindergarten, and students have spent hours investigating the fabulous fruit. They have compared and contrasted colors, shapes, and sizes. They have estimated weights and placed each fruit on a scale to discover the accuracy of their guesses. And of course, no Apple Day would be complete without a taste test. Children happily munch and announce their preferences to anyone within earshot.

This morning may be special, but it is also typical here in Cannon's early childhood classrooms. Each day finds Junior Kindergarten and Kindergarten students celebrating learning in fun, unique ways. According to Head of Lower School Michelle Alexander, Cannon's Early Childhood Program is characterized by four hallmarks: nurturing curiosity, cultivating autonomy, inspiring learning, and celebrating each child.

Nurturing Curiosity

JrK and K children love to ask the question, “Why?” Mrs. Alexander explains, “As they observe the world around them, they are working

to find meaning and understand everything's inner-workings.” Cannon's faculty encourages questions, values students' wonderings, and affirms that inquisitiveness is a vital part of the learning experience. Cultivating this curiosity early creates children who are invested in the learning experience and who make the most out of every learning opportunity.

Cultivating Autonomy

Autonomy occurs when students feel a level of ownership in their learning and classroom environment. This is honed through self-direction, choice, and voice. “Our children are given a set of responsibilities that can be as simple as independently completing their morning routines or freely navigating learning centers,” says Mrs. Alexander.

“They have choices in how they tackle their work, how they demonstrate their learning, and of course, in how they play. By celebrating the choices they make, JrK and K students feel their voices are heard within the classroom environment. It builds self-assurance, motivation, and an understanding of one's abilities.”





Inspiring Learning

There is a joy that comes from learning. It spurs the imagination, engenders excitement, and leaves one thirsty for more. “It is our responsibility to nurture this joy in every one of our students and present them with the gift of learning that they cannot wait to unwrap,” says Mrs. Alexander. Cannon’s early childhood faculty creates unique learning experiences that are child-centered and meet the needs of different types of learners. Many are hands-on, collaborative, experiential, and multi-sensory.

Cannon’s curriculum builds a strong academic foundation in reading, writing, and math. Students are challenged with the proper support which promotes their growth as learners and critical thinkers.

Celebrating Each Child

Each child is unique. Therefore, Cannon does not take a one-size-fits-all approach to teaching and learning. Teachers are dedicated to knowing and understanding each child, both as a learner and as an individual. There is an understanding that children develop at different paces and grasp concepts in a myriad of ways. Differences are celebrated, building children’s confidence so they feel comfortable handling new situations that come their way.

The feeling of family, warmth, and energy is undeniable in our Junior Kindergarten and Kindergarten classrooms. We hope that the next time you are at Cannon, you stop by and see for yourself. Who knows? Someone might just offer you an apple.

