

# *Spotlight on Early Childhood*

## Curriculum Guide







## CONTENTS

**PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION IN THE  
EARLY CHILDHOOD UNIT 3**

**PRE-K CURRICULUM 5**

**PRE-K BENCHMARKS 6**

**KINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM 9**

**KINDERGARTEN BENCHMARKS 10**

**PRE-K SCIENCE 13**

**KINDERGARTEN SCIENCE 14**

**EARLY CHILDHOOD MUSIC 15**

**EARLY CHILDHOOD ART 17**

**EARLY CHILDHOOD SPANISH 18**

**PRE-K CREATIVE MOVEMENT 19**

**KINDERGARTEN CREATIVE  
MOVEMENT 20**

**PRE-K PHYSICAL EDUCATION 22**

**KINDERGARTEN PHYSICAL  
EDUCATION 23**





## PROGRESSIVE EDUCATION IN THE EARLY CHILDHOOD UNIT

The Early Childhood Unit program at Green Acres School provides a strong foundation for future learning. Fostering a strong sense of self and encouraging critical thinking and problem solving skills are basic tenets of a progressive education. To nurture learning in young children, the teacher provides an intentional and carefully designed environment in which teaching practices are based on an understanding of child development. Below, we seek to expand on these ideas and to provide examples of what learning looks like in our Early Childhood Unit.

### **Developing a Strong Sense of Self**

Encouraging self-regulation: Children are allowed to discover their own physical rhythms and needs in the areas of dressing, eating, and toileting.

*Example: Snack is treated as a choice; children are responsible for eating snack when offered and determining how much they feel they need.*

Encouraging self-direction: Teachers structure a program and organize materials, discussions, and activities that invite children to explore, plan, and direct their own work.

*Example: During Choice Time, children choose from a variety of open-ended activities: art, language and literacy, math, science, blocks, manipulative, and dramatic play.*

Encouraging self-discipline: As teachers set limits and help children solve social and emotional problems, the goal is that children each learn to

express needs and feelings, listen to peers, and develop their own organization of inner controls and ability to be in charge of themselves.

*Example: Children are invited to be problem solvers and to negotiate social situations using their words. Teachers model words for children to use in a respectful and peaceful way.*

Encouraging relationships with peers: The Early Childhood Unit programs and schedules allow for a great deal of time with which children can interact with peers. Learning to appreciate and cooperate with one another—and to be able to follow, as well as to lead—is the foundation for becoming a contributing member of a democratic society.

*Example: In Pre-K, there is a kindness jar in which attention to the importance of acts of kindness between people is reinforced. This teaches children how to be a friend and to be a kind member of a group. In ECU, the children learn songs about taking care of each other and working collaboratively with each other.*

Encouraging group participation: Teachers help children in developmentally appropriate ways to feel comfortable and competent as participants in class activities.

*Example: Children work in groups of varying sizes, where they have many opportunities to contribute their ideas and thoughts (e.g., homecorner time in a small group and group time in a large group).*



Encouraging multiculturalism and inclusion: We respect, appreciate, and celebrate our diversity based on differences and commonalities.

*Example: The classrooms reflect an inclusive environment for all different people through books, stories, posters, songs, photographs, art materials, and multicultural figures to enhance play. Families are encouraged to come into class to share what makes their family special and unique.*

### **Encouraging Thinking and Problem-Solving Skills**

Encouraging a focus on the process, rather than the product, when children work with materials and practice different skills.

*Example: In the art room, a variety of materials are provided for children to use in their own creative way, only limited by their imagination. Open-ended art activities allow children to focus on the process and not the product.*

Encouraging experimentation as children explore the possibilities of their environment, as well as their own abilities.

*Example: While engaged in the Fix-It Shop, the Pre-K children use real tools to explore the inside components of non-working, electrical devices, such as VCRs and computer hard drives, as well as to imagine their own inventions.*

Encouraging children to ask questions and take risks, as opposed to emphasizing getting one right answer.

*Example: Participating in activities and songs during group time, asking open-ended questions, and encouraging and valuing a myriad of creative answers.*

### **Defining the Role of the Teacher**

- Balance the needs of children individually and the group as a whole.
- Provide appropriate challenge and support for each child to grow academically, as well as socially and emotionally.

- Plan a program oriented toward the developmental needs of children, full of opportunities to move, explore, talk, and become personally involved in their whole school experience.
- Intentionally plan experiential learning opportunities that are informed by the Theory of Multiple Intelligences, involving all the senses. The philosophy of “Knowing in the Doing,” where learning is interactive and hands-on, is valued.
- Follow an emergent curriculum in which teachers include children’s ideas to help determine themes and activities of the curriculum.
- Build an integrated curriculum. When learning about a theme, all areas of the classroom are connected to the current theme.

At Green Acres, teachers wholeheartedly embrace a progressive educational philosophy. ECU teachers guide children in developing a sense of self and cultivating thinking and problem solving skills through a hands-on, experiential approach to learning. In all aspects of the Early Childhood Unit program, teachers are committed to nurturing a love of learning and learning by doing.







## PRE-K CURRICULUM

The Pre-K program at Green Acres is designed to foster the developmental growth of 3-, 4-, and 5-year-old students. The program continually attends to children's development in four areas: social/emotional, academic, physical, and aesthetic. Problem-solving skills are developed across all domains. In keeping the development of the "whole child" as the foundation of our program, teachers introduce our youngest learners to the joys of learning through imagination, exploration, and discovery. The following elements are cornerstones of our program:

- The program is child-centered. Planning for the class includes keeping each child's unique needs and skills in mind.
- The classroom environment is structured in such a way that children share classroom materials and resources. Children have many opportunities to select and direct their own activities and to work in their own personal and creative style. Additionally, children learn to work cooperatively with each other by sharing supplies and to understand how to balance their needs and wants with those of others.
- Several times each day, the teachers plan experiences for the children, which include small group (homecorner) special projects, whole-class time (for songs, stories, discussions, and games), and small groupings with specials teachers. The goal is for each child to develop an ability to work successfully

in a variety of situations and to learn how to be an active participant in group settings.

- During much of the day, teachers work with children on a one-to-one basis, responding to and stretching each child individually. Understanding where each child is developmentally allows teachers to foster beginning literacy and math skills.
- The process of integrated learning is valued and promoted. In other words, we recognize that children are learning in many ways at the same time. For example, while interacting with peers and working with blocks, a child may be developing language skills, reading and writing skills, social negotiation skills, logical mathematical skills, visual patterning skills, and motor and manipulative skills.
- Although children learn in an integrated manner, we recognize and provide for specific skill development. Teachers often select materials and plan activities to challenge children in particular subjects or curriculum areas. Throughout the year, times of the day and areas of the room will be devoted to particular themes, which are selected by both teachers and students. Examples of themes might include: self, family, community, seasons, forest friends, and an author study.
- Attention is paid to aesthetic development in all domains, which allows children to develop their artistic and creative talents.



# PRE-K BENCHMARKS

## Social-Emotional Development

### Making Decisions

- Being able to select a task or an activity
- Beginning to engage in problem solving

### Taking Care of Oneself

- Being able to care for oneself and one's belongings

### Expressing Oneself

- Being able to express one's feelings verbally

### Becoming Independent

- Being able to work alone
- Feeling confident about one's work

### Developing Self-Control

- Being able to control one's impulses
- Being able to adjust one's own behavior to fit the dynamics of various groups and situations

### Interacting with Adults

- Feeling comfortable with adults
- Being able to use adult support
- Being able to cooperate with adults
- Being able to participate successfully in teacher-directed group activities

### Interacting with Peers

- Feeling comfortable with peers, one-on-one
- Feeling comfortable with peers in small groups
- Feeling comfortable with peers in larger groups
- Participating in child-initiated group activities
- Being able to follow the ideas or examples of others
- Being able to take on a leadership role
- Being able to take turns
- Being able to work through disagreements with peers
- Beginning to develop the understanding of group dynamics, mutual respect, and responsibility
- Beginning to develop an awareness of and respect for individual differences





## Academic Development: Literacy Skills

### Listening Skills

- Listening without interrupting
- Listening with sensitivity to others
- Listening for information/multiple-step directions
- Demonstrating the ability to repeat information heard
- Demonstrating through actions an understanding of instructions
- Developing sound discrimination

### Speaking Skills

- Expressing needs and solving problems
- Becoming comfortable speaking in a variety of settings
- Speaking with sensitivity to others

### Dramatization

- Participating in sociodramatic play
- Acting out familiar stories

### Developing Comprehension and Pre-Reading Skills

- Understanding the orientation of a book
- Becoming familiar with the concept of left to right/top to bottom
- Recognizing the role of author and illustrator
- Recalling and retelling events of a story
- Understanding a sequence of events within a story
- Making predictions
- Responding to questions of why and how
- Contrasting and comparing books and stories
- Being exposed to a variety of reading genres
- Engaging in reading books for pleasure

### Developing Beginning Reading and Writing Skills

#### Writing

- Being exposed to the written word through a print-rich environment
- Experimenting with lines and curves to form letters
- Becoming familiar with the form of lowercase and uppercase letters
- Recognizing uppercase letters



- Writing uppercase letters using the *Handwriting Without Tears* curriculum
- Experimenting with writing lowercase and uppercase letters
- Writing one's own name
- Writing the numerals 0–10
- Copying words from a model
- Using “invented” spelling
- Using writing tools to develop fine motor strength and control
- Sharing written work with peers
- Dictating thoughts and stories

### Reading

- Recognizing one's own name and the names of classmates
- Associating letters and sounds
- Recognizing simple words and labels
- Participating in rhyming activities
- Naming and recognizing colors
- Developing and expanding vocabulary
- Creating dictated books

## Academic Development: Mathematical Skills

### Shapes

- Learning and identifying the names of basic shapes
- Drawing basic shapes

### Numeration/Counting

- Understanding and using 1:1 correspondence, 1–10
- Recognizing written numbers 0–10



- Associating number names with collections of items
- Adding and subtracting through games and materials
- Understanding the concept of zero

#### Geometry

- Sorting items by attributes
- Recognizing patterns
- Reproducing patterns
- Creating own patterns
- Exploring and experimenting with materials
- Copying geometric designs with a variety of materials
- Exploring spatial relationships
- Creating own geometric designs

#### Developing Mathematical Concepts and Problem-Solving Skills

- Becoming familiar with graphs and charts
- Creating class graphs
- Discussing data shown on a graph or chart
- Being exposed to measurement through non-standard and standard units
- Experimenting with the concept of conservation
- Exploring, comparing, and evaluating the concepts of larger, smaller, same, and different
- Being exposed to time, fractions, and money
- Demonstrating logical thinking
- Predicting
- Estimating

#### Physical Development

- Developing awareness of one's body in space
- Improving coordination and balance
- Developing spatial awareness
- Engaging in creative movement and expressing emotion through movement
- Building large and small motor skills

#### Aesthetic Development

- Expressing one's self using a variety of materials, media, and color
- Experimenting with color mixing (primary, secondary, and tertiary)
- Developing an appreciation for individual differences by observing how classmates use materials in unique ways
- Developing a focus on process, rather than product
- Developing a willingness to explore and experiment with the physical properties of materials
- Developing an ability and willingness to value one's own individual style







## KINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM

The Kindergarten curriculum is designed to support growth in all areas of a child's development: social/emotional, academic, aesthetic, and physical. The Green Acres Kindergarten program encourages the growth of each child's curiosity, self-esteem, independence, and ability to work well with others. The following statements are reflections on the Kindergarten program:

- The program is child-centered. Planning for the class includes keeping each child's unique needs and skills in mind.
- The classroom environment is structured in such a way that all children are given common materials. Children each have many opportunities to select and direct their own work and to work in a personal and creative style.
- Throughout the day, the teachers work with children on a one-to-one basis, responding to and challenging each child individually.
- Each Kindergarten day includes many varied group experiences for children. They meet as a homecorner, in half groups, and as a whole group. Special subject teachers meet with the children in whole and smaller class groups. Children develop an ability to work successfully in many different types of group situations.
- The Kindergarten program includes the study of several topics or themes over the period of the school year. Thematic topics may be selected by the children or the teachers. The goal is for the children to experience, as a group, the intensive, extensive study of a topic.

The process includes:

- Introducing the topic or subject
- Identifying information or assumptions that children already have about a topic
- Exploring questions to be answered
- Using research and resources (e.g., other people, books, the library, trips, and first-hand exploration and observation)
- Creating and sharing visual records (e.g., pictures and artifacts)

The process of integrated learning is valued and promoted by the teaching staff. In other words, there is a recognition that the child is learning in many ways at the same time. For example, while interacting with peers and working with blocks, a child may be developing language skills, reading and writing skills, social negotiating skills, logical-mathematical skills, visual patterning skills, and/or motor and manipulative skills.

Although children learn in an integrated manner, the program provides for specific skill development. Teachers select materials and plan activities to challenge children in particular subject or curriculum areas.



# KINDERGARTEN BENCHMARKS

## Language Arts: Speaking, Listening, Reading, and Writing

The literacy program for Kindergarten at Green Acres involves the following components of development:

- Using oral language (e.g., developing new vocabulary, using appropriate language, and speaking in sentences)
- Developing listening skills (e.g., processing what is heard and following directions both individually and in groups)
- Fostering an appreciation of stories and books (e.g., teachers reading aloud and children exploring and reading books on their own)
- Heightening awareness of written words (e.g., pointing out titles, letters, words, sentences, and punctuation)
- Providing dictation by writing down a child's own language in signs and stories

## Development of Reading and Literacy Skills

- Developing handwriting skills, including uppercase and lowercase letter formation using the *Handwriting Without Tears* curriculum
- Encouraging children to write using their developing abilities to spell words phonetically
- Formally introducing basic sight words
- Dictating words, signs, and stories
- Recognizing names, labels, signs
- Working with rhyming words
- Focusing on beginning and ending sounds
- Working with short vowel sounds and letter blends
- Segmenting and blending words
- Introducing "Author's Chair" (sharing stories aloud created by the children)
- Creating a print-rich learning environment
- Building an understanding of how a book works
- Surrounding students with quality literature
- Exposing children to a variety of reading genres

Children grow through the stages of reading and writing at their own pace. Teachers assess children's growth and guide them through the progression of literacy skills throughout the year.

## Development of Mathematical Reasoning

Children's increasing knowledge of the physical world leads them towards logical-mathematical reasoning, which becomes more symbolic as they mature in their cognitive development.

In this area of mathematics, children are:

- Working on their understanding of numbers (e.g., counting games and dice)
- Discovering equivalents and making comparisons (e.g., balancing; parts to whole; "same," "different," "bigger," "smaller," "more," and "less"), playing games, building with blocks, and using scales
- Measuring (e.g., using blocks as a unit of measure in the building process, using self as a unit of measure ["Is the building as tall as I am?"], using Unifix cubes as smaller units of measure, and working with art materials)





In addition to manipulating key materials that invite each kind of math work, children develop mathematical thinking throughout most of their work and play. To strengthen children's development of a strong foundation in numbers, teachers introduce and work on the following mathematical skills:

- Counting
- Understanding and using one-to-one correspondence
- Recognizing written numbers
- Writing numbers
- Subitizing
- Understanding and writing number sentences and stories (addition and subtraction)
- Making graphs
- Estimating
- Introducing fractions

### **Social-Emotional Development**

Green Acres Kindergarten teachers work with children as they develop their ability to:

- Respect and care for others
- Interact with children and adults
- Solve problems and settle conflicts (adults are available for support and assistance as needed). The goal is that children should feel that they have the power to make decisions and can assume responsibility for their own actions
- Express feelings appropriately
- Control impulses
- Share time and materials with others
- Work independently or with others
- Initiate projects
- Care for personal, others', and school belongings

This kind of program requires that teachers know where a child is developmentally. The teachers plan a classroom structure that encourages choices, cooperative projects, time to work with adults, and opportunities for dramatic play and role play. Teachers help children develop trust in one another, themselves, and adults.



### **Development of Social Knowledge**

Much of what is known about the world is transmitted from person to person or generation to generation. The whole area of cultural and societal traditions can only be learned from other people (unlike mathematical knowledge). However, each child acts upon this information in very individual ways. This personal process of working things through is consistent with the process that the Kindergarten program supports in all areas of learning.

Social development can occur in the following settings:

- The classroom (e.g., taking turns, learning snack procedures and routines, participating in a group discussion or activity, sharing one's own ideas, listening, setting and keeping limits, following rules, and learning guidelines for living)
- The playground (e.g., learning to be a leader as well as a follower, listening to others' ideas, working on conflict resolution, and engaging in socio-dramatic play)
- The school as a community (e.g., taking trips to different parts of the school, meeting and working with children of other ages and with different adults, and assemblies)

The social curriculum is designed to nurture multicultural understanding and to build identity and community through books, music, exploration, and conversations.



## Knowledge of the Physical World

Through the process of working with many materials, children are encouraged to observe reactions, to experiment, to become competent, and to be creative. By exploring the use of materials in this way, children are involved actively in forming concepts and building a strong basis for beginning logical thinking. Some common examples of concepts are color, size, shape, weight, and properties of objects.

The teachers in this area of the curriculum encourage the children's initiative and spontaneous interests. The importance of errors is not neglected, as an error corrected is often more instructive than an immediate success. Examples of physical-knowledge activities are:

- Engaging in sand play
- Doing collage work
- Mixing paints or powder paint and water
- Making pottery
- Playing with ice and water
- Aiming a ball down an inclined plane (by varying one's actions, different results are produced)
- Engaging in activities that encourage children to perform actions on objects (pulling, pushing, rolling, kicking, jumping, blowing, throwing, twirling, swinging, balancing, and dropping)

## Physical Development

Kindergarten children are gaining knowledge of their physical selves as they develop. This growth

is closely related to the child's development of knowledge of the physical world.

The school's indoor and outdoor environment provides material, space, and equipment for: walking, crawling, running, hopping, jumping, skipping, balancing, pumping, swinging, climbing, cutting, buttoning, zipping, fitting small items together, hammering, sawing, using pencils and crayons, pasting, taping, stapling, painting, dressing and undressing, pushing and pulling, lifting and carrying, and pouring.

Milestones in Kindergarten physical development:

- Children usually have developed a preference for using their right or left hand.
- Children learn to discriminate and identify each of the five senses (taste, touch, sight, hearing, and smell).
- Children develop a sense of their own endurance and physical needs (e.g., dress [I am too cold or too hot], toileting, eating patterns, and realistic knowledge/assessment of own physical abilities).
- Children learn to pace themselves throughout the day, balancing active and quiet movement.
- Children develop specific physical skills (e.g., manipulation of balls, sticks, hoops, bean bags, etc.; gymnastics; and movement in space). In the physical education program, children are challenged to problem solve as they organize and focus on their activity.





## PRE-K SCIENCE

### Groupings

Pre-K students come to science class in small groups.

### Format of Classes

Pre-Kindergarten students investigate the world of science through four different types of science lessons: hands-on stations, outdoor education classes, mystery box sessions, and experiments. During hands-on stations, students cycle through four different activities designed to promote curiosity and engineering skills. During outdoor education classes, students hone their science process skills as they participate in a variety of different nature-based activities. Mystery box sessions allow students to practice making and documenting predictions based on their sense of touch. And finally, on a monthly basis, students will have the opportunity to conduct scientific experiments.

### Goals

- Pique students' curiosity about the world
- Expand their awareness and understanding of the world
- Fully engage them in the learning process with exciting sensory and hands-on experiences
- Prepare them for future cooperative learning with enjoyable social interactions and play as they explore, discover, and learn
- Provide opportunities to learn information from observations of the natural world and other materials in the classroom
- Self-advocate with active listening
- Learn and practice procedures

- Look for solutions to problems
- Develop exploratory skills
- Foster science process skills

### Topics

Pre-K students learn about the natural world, in addition to specific topics that support classroom themes, such as the seasons, the beach, and the senses. They observe natural phenomena and make predictions based on their observations. They learn to recognize similarities and differences as they observe. Examples of Pre-K exploration activities and materials include:

- Insects
- Types of animals & animal care
- Types of plants & plant care
- Magnets
- Gears
- Balls and ramps
- Marble coasters
- Magnetic structures
- Bones
- Clouds
- Shells





# KINDERGARTEN SCIENCE

## Groupings

Kindergarten students come to science class in small groups.

## Format of Classes

Kindergarten students investigate the world of science during three different types of science lessons: outdoor education classes, explorations, and experiments. During outdoor education classes, students hone their science process skills as they participate in a variety of different nature-based activities. Students also participate in exploration time, during which they choose from a collection of hands-on activities and investigate the materials at their own pace. When completing experiments, students follow step-by-step oral instructions to investigate scientific phenomena.

## Goals

- Pique students' curiosity about the world
- Expand their awareness and understanding of the world
- Fully engage them in the learning process with exciting sensory experiences, games, art, and structured hands-on activities
- Engage them socially as they learn with partners
- Encourage students to question actively and problem solve during investigations
- Further the development of critical thinking and science process skills
- Enable students to gain experience with a variety of scientific tools
- Provide opportunities to practice various ways of recording and interpreting observations
- Practice making observations about the natural world and other materials
- Look for solutions to problems
- Develop exploratory skills
- Practice both cooperative and independent work skills
- Develop persistence and the ability to sustain focus
- Develop a respect for the environment



## Topics

Kindergarten students learn about the natural world, in addition to specific topics that support classroom themes, including the seasons, trees, food and nutrition, and animals (birds and reptiles). They conduct simple experiments to learn about the dynamics of the natural world. They explore and experiment with food as they learn about nutrition in their home corners. Examples of exploration activities, concepts, and materials include:

- Bubbles
- Leaves and seeds
- Lego
- Insects
- Marble coasters
- Chemistry
- Magnetic structures
- Sink or float
- Reptiles
- Magnets
- Balls and ramps
- Gears
- Shells
- Bones



## EARLY CHILDHOOD UNIT MUSIC

### Groupings

Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten students make music every day with their homeroom teachers. In addition, they meet in small groups with the music teacher for regular music classes. These meetings last thirty minutes and occur twice in each six-day cycle.

### Philosophy

Making music together as a group stands at the center of the music program in the Early Childhood Unit at Green Acres. Students gather to explore, dance, and play music while learning about musical conventions, their world, and themselves. Our approach uses ideas and methods taken from the teachings of Carl Orff and Zoltan Kodály, two composers and music educators who developed systems for teaching children. Kodály developed a system of music education that focuses on singing, beginning in early childhood. His method begins with simple tunes and progresses through more complicated pieces, and it uses many folk tunes from various countries around the world. Children are encouraged to sing, play instruments, dance, learn folk music of their own culture, and explore the music of other cultures. Orff's teaching focuses on using language and movement as a basis for rhythmic and melodic exploration. Children use various instruments, including xylophones, glockenspiels, and simple rhythm instruments to create ensembles supporting singing. In the Orff system, improvisation and creation plays a large role as students explore and develop their musical ideas.

Throughout the school year, students will perform, listen to, and talk about great music of the world. They will improvise and compose at each level. While the primary purpose of the music program in the Early Childhood Unit is the enjoyment of making music together, it is also used as a form of self-expression, to build community, and to lay the groundwork for the program that follows in the Primary Unit.

In each grade, students are exposed to similar concepts and challenged to develop their musical skills as well as other, more general, developmental milestones. In Pre-K, a greater emphasis is placed on developing steady beat and body control, playing simple rhythms, and singing simple tunes, while in the Kindergarten classes, we move toward playing melodic instruments and increasing the complexity of the songs.

### Skills and Concepts

Essential questions for the year include:

- How do people work together to make music?
- How can music help us learn about our world?
- How do music and culture affect one another?
- How are the elements of music (rhythm, melody, dynamics, tone, etc.) used to communicate?

Skills include keeping a steady beat, humming and singing melodies, learning song lyrics, adding movement, and individualizing songs by adding new lyrics, melodies, and rhythmic parts.



## Materials

- Multiple library and music resources, including picture books, music books, recorded music, and videos
- Glockenspiels and unpitched percussion instruments
- Guitar, ukulele, and recorder played by the teacher for accompaniment

## Units and Activities

The music program in Pre-K will closely mirror events and discussions experienced by children in their daily school lives, including:

- Self, family, and community
- Seasons and weather
- Holidays and special days
- Emotions
- School favorites
- Songs just for fun

The music program for Kindergarten will complement social studies and science themes throughout the year, including:

- Community building
- Trees
- Food
- Birds
- Reptiles

In addition, students will observe the cycle of the year by singing songs appropriate to the seasons and the impact of the seasons and weather on their lives. Kindergarten children present a “Favorite Songs” assembly for their parents at the end of the year.



# EARLY CHILDHOOD UNIT ART

## Goals

- To explore ways to visually represent thinking and learning experiences using a variety of media and techniques
- To cultivate a sense of wonder by presenting students with open-ended artistic explorations
- To provide opportunities for students to familiarize themselves with materials and techniques
- To foster visual literacy

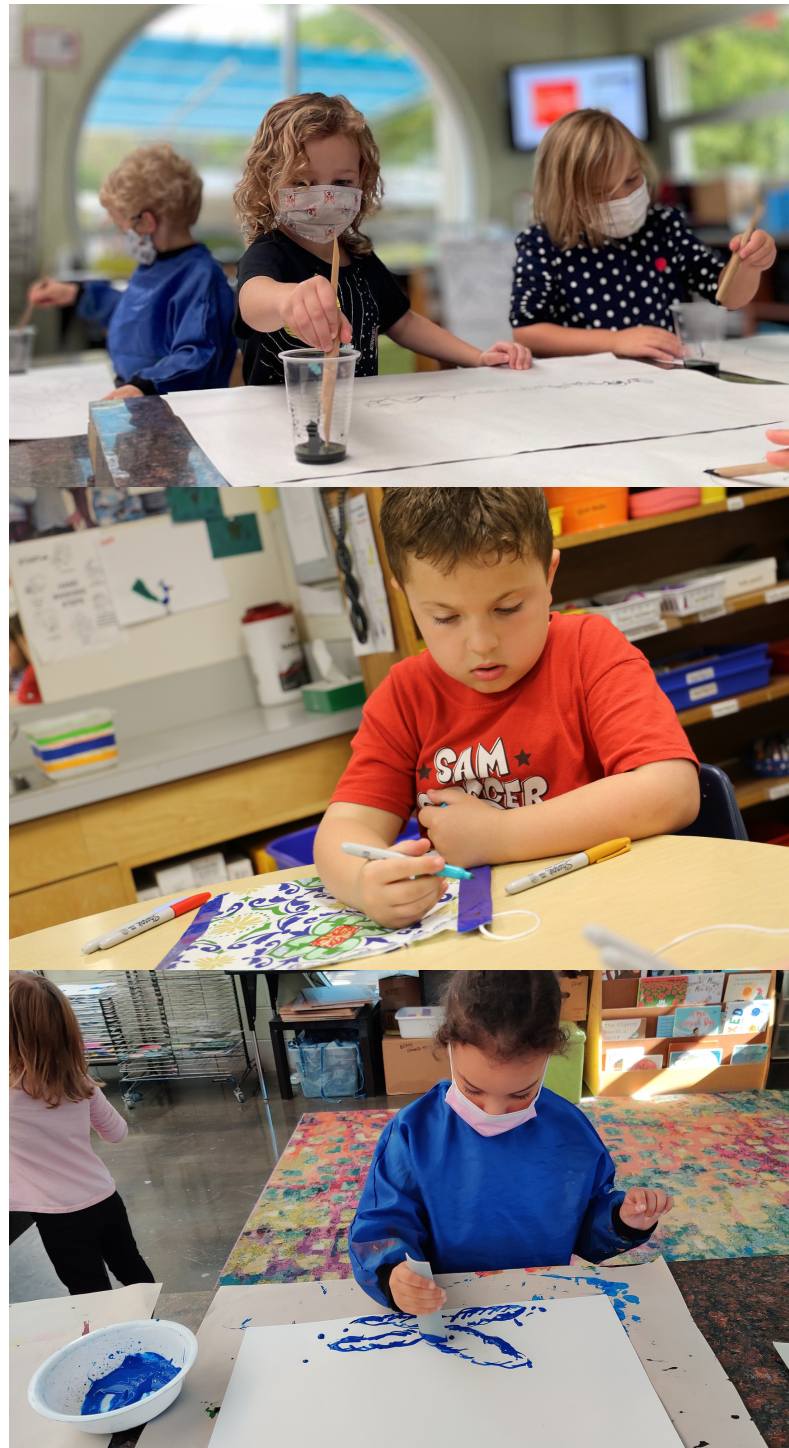
## Concepts and Skills

- Drawing different types of lines and shapes
- Painting experimentation
- Recognizing shapes and lines
- Identifying primary and secondary colors
- Using simple shapes to draw more complex objects
- Developing gross and fine motor skills
- Manipulating three-dimensional materials
- Learning to mix colors
- Identifying different types of art materials
- Using materials safely
- Following directions
- Practicing cutting skills
- Fostering creativity and open-ended thinking
- Encouraging creative problem solving
- Interpreting and discussing art images

## Program Description

Art is one of the many tools embedded in the Early Childhood Unit program that allows children to experiment with the creative process and express their ideas and learning experiences with a variety of materials. Children explore the properties of art materials to uncover visual languages with which they can tell stories and represent their unique experiences. Students learn to observe and visually represent the world around them. The art teacher engages in meaningful dialogue with children to help uncover their thoughts and ideas experienced during the artistic process. Through close collaboration with classroom teachers, the art teacher offers

students the opportunity to extend their investigations, document their understanding, and enrich their overall learning experience. The goals of the art program are to provide students ample opportunities to use a variety of art materials, to build confidence in artistic techniques, to develop craftsmanship, and to cultivate a sense of wonder through open-ended artistic exploration.







## EARLY CHILDHOOD UNIT SPANISH

### **Schedule**

The Spanish teacher will teach Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten classes by homecorner. Each class will include a time to sing, read, tell stories and engage in hands-on activities that will enrich the learning of Spanish vocabulary and short sentences.

### **Content**

Research in the second-language instruction of young children documents that young children are able to acquire accent and intonation more easily than adolescents and adults. Moreover, language instruction for young students leads to higher levels of proficiency and accuracy in speaking, reading, writing, and understanding. By experiencing Spanish instruction in the Pre-K and Kindergarten years, Green Acres students have a great opportunity to develop an awareness of and sensitivity to the sounds and words of the Spanish language.

It is helpful for foreign language learners to have most of their instruction time spent in hearing only the second language. The Spanish teacher will provide Pre-K and Kindergarten students with ample opportunities to hear Spanish, sing songs, learn vocabulary, and express themselves in Spanish.

Spanish classes at Green Acres use this research to guide instruction. Through games, songs, and other activities, children are exposed to the structure and flow of the language. As students spend time hearing Spanish being spoken, they

begin to recognize the sounds and the different language tones used for questions, requests, explanations, and answers. This is an essential step towards gaining fluency and mastery. In addition to learning to speak Spanish, children are learning how language affects the ways in which people express ideas and how they conduct relationships with each other.

### **Program**

Pre-K and Kindergarten students learn basic Spanish through developmentally appropriate, fun, and engaging activities. They sing songs and play in Spanish. They learn that Spanish is spoken in many countries around the world and are introduced to different Hispanic cultures and traditions. The curriculum is integrated with the Early Childhood Unit curriculum. Vocabulary and activities for greetings, colors, numbers, body parts, and animals are included.

### **Units and Activities**

- Greetings
- Basic commands
- Feelings
- Talking about me, my family, and my friends
- Counting from 0–20
- Parts of the body
- Space
- Basic vocabulary of the classroom
- Colors and shapes
- The weather and the seasons
- Basic vocabulary of animals
- Food
- Singing “Happy Birthday”

# PRE-K CREATIVE MOVEMENT

## Grouping

The Pre-Kindergarten students participate in creative movement classes for the entire school year.

## Goals

- Encourage creativity and spontaneity through safe, fun movement activities developed using the children's ideas
- Develop body awareness, or relationships my body creates: body parts, body shapes, and roles with others (e.g., lead, follow, solo, group)
- Develop action awareness, or what my body does: move in place (stability: e.g., twist, stretch, bend) and around the room (locomotor: e.g., walk, run, gallop)
- Develop effort awareness, or how my body moves: time (speeds, rhythms) and force (stop, start)
- Develop space awareness, or where my body moves: space (self vs. shared), directions (e.g., up, down), and levels (high, middle, low)
- Increase familiarity with basic movement vocabulary
- Integrate classroom themes into movement-based activities
- Introduce music and movement styles from other cultures
- Encourage development of social skills, including participation in class activities, turn taking, listening to others, and following directions

## Format of Classes

**Opening Activities:** Sessions begin with a song or greeting. These opening activities recognize each child individually, bring the group together, and provide a transition to movement time. Phrases such as "eyes watching" and "ears listening" provide physical cues to help children center their attention on the teacher.

**Warm-up Activities:** The warm-up activities allow for vigorous, high-energy release, coupled with a

focus on body awareness and control. General objectives are to loosen the muscles, to stimulate the brain, and to practice breathing/stretching exercises.

**Movement and Body Awareness:** These activities concentrate on the development of movement elements. General objectives are to explore movement styles and body shapes, modulate movement, move rhythmically, and explore movement with the whole body or isolated parts. At times, these movement explorations are the main class activity.

**Theme Development:** This part of the session incorporates seasonal and classroom themes, and movement brings the themes to life. The themes may emerge from the children's ideas, a homecorner focus, or perhaps something completely different. In this way, the creative movement sessions balance connecting to the classroom themes with opportunities for spontaneous ideas. The use of books, simple costumes, and other props enhance this process.

**Closing Activities:** These activities help the children re-focus on their own bodies, practice relaxing and settling themselves physically, and smooth the transition to the next class.





# KINDERGARTEN CREATIVE MOVEMENT

## Grouping

The Kindergarten students participate in creative movement class for the entire school year.

## Goals

- Encourage creativity and spontaneity through safe, fun movement activities
- Develop body awareness, or relationships my body creates: body parts, body shapes, and roles with others (e.g., lead, follow, partner, mirror, solo, group)
- Develop action awareness, or what my body does: move in place (stability: e.g., twist, stretch, bend) and around the room (locomotor: e.g., walk, run, gallop)
- Develop effort awareness, or how my body moves: time (speeds, rhythms), force (stop, start), degrees of force (strong, light), and flow (single movements, combinations of movements)
- Develop space awareness, or where my body moves: space (self vs. shared), directions (e.g., up, down), levels (high, middle, low), and pathways (e.g., straight, curved)
- Use basic movement vocabulary to create personal dances
- Use basic music notations to create simple rhythmic pieces
- Integrate classroom themes into movement-based activities
- Introduce music and dance from other cultures
- Encourage participation in class, following directions, and trying new things
- Strengthen social skills of listening, turn taking, being a leader, sharing materials, and working cooperatively with classmates



## Format of Classes

**Opening Activities:** Sessions begin with a song or greeting. These opening activities recognize each child individually, bring the group together, and provide a transition to movement time. Phrases such as “eyes watching” and “ears listening” provide physical cues to help the children center their attention.

**Warm-up Activities:** The warm-up activities allow for vigorous, high-energy release, coupled with a focus on body awareness and control. General objectives are to loosen the muscles, to stimulate the brain, and to practice breathing/stretching exercises.

**Movement and Body Awareness:** These activities concentrate on the development of movement elements. General objectives are to explore movement styles and body shapes, modulate movement, move rhythmically, and explore movement with whole body or isolated parts.

**Group Theme:** This part of the session incorporates seasonal and classroom themes, and movement brings the ideas to life. The themes may emerge from the children’s ideas, a homecorner focus, or perhaps something completely different. In this way, the creative movement sessions balance connecting to the classroom themes with opportunities for spontaneous ideas. The use of books, simple costumes, and other props enhance this process.

**Closing Activities:** These activities help the children re-focus on their own bodies, practice relaxing and settling themselves physically, and smooth the transition to the next class.





# PRE-K PHYSICAL EDUCATION

## Goals

The goal of the PE program is to create a lifelong desire to develop the whole child physically, socially, and emotionally. This program is integral to developing students' education as it pertains to the total fitness, growth, and overall development of the individual. Teachers provide a wide selection of opportunities to enhance the social development of a student through the child's participation in physical activities. The program instills a sense of importance in promoting fitness, wellness, and an overall healthy attitude towards exercise and the benefits it provides. Most importantly, the PE department promotes respect for the uniqueness and differences of the self and others through a wide variety of games and activities.

Students develop a sense of rules, skills, and strategies associated with the physical education activities in which they participate. They do this while they work on developing their sportsmanship and team-building skills in class. There is an intentional, developmentally appropriate progression of motor skill development through activities that actively engage children. Teachers work to make the classroom a safe environment in order for the students to have the confidence to take risks and improve athletically, socially, and emotionally.

A major focus of the Pre-K PE program is to enhance students' knowledge of body awareness (body part identification and various ways to use the parts of the body), spatial awareness (up, down, forward, backward, sideways, and in relationship to equipment that is used in class), motor control, locomotive skills, non-locomotive skills, and manipulative skills (such as throwing, collecting, and kicking). The children practice skipping, galloping, and running at various speeds. Students work on developing balance, coordination, and upper body and core strength. The class learns how to work cooperatively within a large group. Activities such as movement

exploration, parachute play, follow the leader, exploring with various sports equipment, and gymnastics are used to reach the goals for the year. Having fun during class time and building self-confidence are paramount.

## Concepts

- How to play variations of games with classmates, moving from very simple to more complex movement patterns
- Bodies need exercise to stay healthy and strong.

## Objectives

- To become aware of their bodies in space
- To gain confidence in experimenting and expressing themselves physically in a creative way
- To begin to connect physical activity to personal enjoyment, self-expression, and social interaction
- To begin to work cooperatively
- To begin to learn concepts associated with sports and games

This is a list of potential units/activities. These may vary based on time, weather, and class interests:

- Locomotor/non-locomotor
- Spatial/Body awareness
- Manipulatives
- Throwing/Catching
- Parachute
- Gymnastics
- Dance
- Striking/Kicking
- Relays
- Fitness games



# KINDERGARTEN PHYSICAL EDUCATION

## Goals

The goal of the PE program is to create a lifelong desire to develop the whole person physically, socially, and emotionally. This program is integral to developing students' education as it pertains to the total fitness, growth, and overall development of the individual. Teachers provide a wide variety of opportunities to enhance the social development of a student through the child's participation in physical activities. The program instills a sense of importance in promoting fitness, wellness, and an overall healthy attitude towards exercise and the benefits it provides. Most importantly, the PE department promotes respect for the uniqueness and differences of the self and others through a wide variety of games and activities.

Students develop a sense of rules, skills, and strategies associated with the physical education activities in which they participate. They accomplish this while they work on developing their sportsmanship and team-building skills in class. There is an intentional, developmentally appropriate progression of motor skill development through activities that actively engage children. Teachers work to make the classroom a safe environment in order for the students to have the confidence to take risks and improve athletically, socially, and emotionally.

The focus of the Kindergarten program is to increase each child's knowledge in the areas of body awareness, spatial awareness, motor control, and locomotive and manipulative skills. The main goal for all students is to feel comfortable and confident in their own abilities. Having fun during class time and building self-confidence are paramount.

## Concepts

- The SELF concept will be stressed in each class (Sportsmanship, Effort, Learning & Fun!)



- Body awareness (understanding what each body part can do and how to use movement efficiently)
- Spatial awareness (knowing where an individual is in relation to others and objects)
- Motor control development through an understanding of appropriate times to use certain movements and ways to control force and speed as they apply to objects
- Use of movement exploration and guided problem solving to achieve goals

## Objectives

- To work cooperatively
- To continue learning about their bodies and how to relate to others and objects spatially
- To enhance their peripheral vision
- To gain sufficient confidence to experiment and express themselves physically in a creative way
- To begin to connect physical activity to personal enjoyment, self-expression, and social interaction

This is a list of potential units/activities for the year. These may vary based on time, weather, and class interests:

- Locomotor/non-locomotor
- Spatial/Body awareness
- Manipulatives
- Throwing/Catching
- Parachute
- Gymnastics
- Dance
- Striking/Kicking
- Relays
- Fitness games



## NEXT STEPS

[SCHEDULE A TOUR](#)

[LEARN ABOUT  
ADMISSION](#)

[APPLY](#)

