

Beginning Years Curriculum

2022–23

LOWER SCHOOL CORNERSTONES

There are many things we can choose to do with our time and resources, but we must decide to act on those that are most important to us in order for them to become the fabric of our culture. In the Lower School, we've chosen to focus on six cornerstone priorities for our children, families, and teachers to help us all enact our OES Essential Competencies. We are committed to utilizing inquiry, play, and the arts as our methods for exploration, differentiation, and learning.

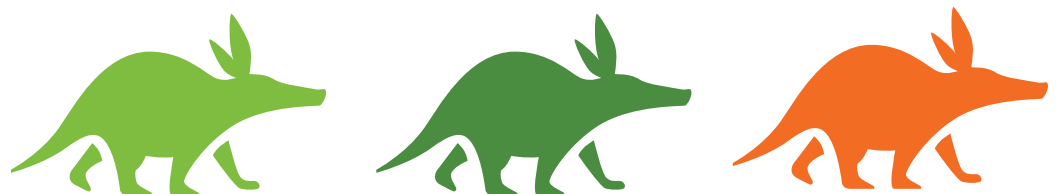
Relationship is a cornerstone of our work. By relationship, we mean being connected. It is an understanding of both the me and the we: an understanding of self, of our capacities and capabilities as individuals, our connection to larger communities that support us, of ideas and perspectives that challenge us. We actively pursue Social Justice Standards in the areas of identity, diversity, justice and action as gateways to understanding ourselves, our community, and our responsibilities to each other.

Building Meaning is central to our work together. This priority is tied to all the others, but in the Lower School, we specifically strive to help children build meaning through storytelling, thinking routines, dialogue and reflection.

Communication in many languages, with accumulating proficiency, is fundamental to our practice. By 'languages' we refer to the methods of communication that come more naturally to the playful child: dramatic arts, visual arts (drawing, clay, wire, painting, building, etc.), speaking, physical expression, rhythm, and movement. We also refer to languages that come to the child through observing, teaching and honing: the languages of reading, writing, and math.

Agency, or the power to identify needs and take action, is aligned with our OES mission and vision to help students go out into the world to utilize their power for good. This essential mission of our school begins with our youngest children and their emerging understanding of how their words and actions influence and affect their own minds and hearts as well as those around them. We strive to help students know that when they don't know the answer or solution to a problem, they can take action to learn more and affect real change.

Balance is at the heart of our planning for the children's experiences. Always we navigate the flow among safety and challenge, passion and perspective, intellect and emotion, collaboration and independence, action and reflection.



	Reading	Writing	Math	Community Investigations
PRE-K	Vocabulary development through shared stories; phonological awareness and alphabet awareness	Communicate ideas, feelings and stories through materials (collage, paint, building, etc.); fine motor skills and early alphabetic writing	Sorting, counting, predicting, instant recognition of small quantities, simple addition and subtraction, early number writing	Who am I? How can I describe my visible self? How am I the same or different to others in my community? How do I describe my inner self? What words, materials, expressions can I use to describe my emotions? How can I share my ideas, questions, and needs with others? What languages (words, materials, expressions) help me to share? How am I a part of nature? How does observing and exploring the natural world build my understanding of myself and my connections to nature?
KINDERGARTEN	Show understanding of texts read aloud by asking questions, making connections and predictions and describing mental images; connect letters to sounds; utilize letters and sounds to read 3-4 letter words	Tell stories with a beginning, middle and end or complete ideas through materials; letter formation and phonetic skills for writing	Utilize attributes of shapes and numbers, count and manipulate numbers 0-20, focus on combinations of numbers 0-10	Who am I? How do I express my personal identity through play, dialogue, and exploration of materials? How can we build connections through storytelling? Where do we find connections in the natural world? How can I use words and strategies to solve social problems? How can I regulate my emotions and/or body?
PRIMARY	Show understanding of texts read aloud by asking questions, making connections and predictions and describing mental images; utilize letters and sounds to read simple sentences	Use materials to revise versions of stories; write words utilizing phonetic spelling, including graphemes and digraphs	Fluently add and subtract 0-20, use appropriate tools strategically, use math to ask and answer problems about the world around us	What does it mean to be a community? How can we care for one another? What impact can we have on the natural world?
FIRST GRADE	Show understanding of texts read aloud and some read independently by asking questions, making connections and predictions and describing mental images; utilize decoding and known words to read new texts	Utilize writing to express ideas; write words phonetically with blends, vowel teams and word families and begin to transition to conventional spelling of some sight words, begin to edit for writing conventions	Use math tools, pictures and models to solve problems; develop efficient strategies like skip counting, combining quantities, decomposing and recomposing numbers; begin to form an understanding of place value	How do our differences make our community stronger? Who makes up the OES community? How do we show gratitude and care for our community? What is possible when we work together?