



St. Anne's-Belfield School

PRE-SCHOOL

Curriculum Guide

2023-24

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ALL-SCHOOL INFORMATION	4
OVERVIEW OF THE PRE-SCHOOL PROGRAM	6
THE SOCIAL CURRICULUM	6
PRACTICAL LIFE AND SELF-CARE	7
SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING	7
TWO-YEAR-OLDS PROGRAM	8
INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH	8
Curricular Goals: Area of Focus	9
EARLY LITERACY	9
MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE	9
FINE ARTS	9
PHYSICAL EDUCATION	10
FINE MOTOR SKILLS	10
PRE-SCHOOL 3 & 4	10
INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH	10
Curricular Goals: Area of Focus	11
EARLY LITERACY	11
ORAL LANGUAGE	11
READING & WRITING	11
FINE MOTOR SKILLS	12
MATHEMATICS	12
SCIENCE	12
SOCIAL STUDIES	13
FINE ARTS	13
PHYSICAL EDUCATION	14
JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN	14
INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH	14
Curricular Goals: Area of Focus	15
EARLY LITERACY	15
ORAL LANGUAGE	15
READING & WRITING	15
FINE MOTOR SKILLS	16
MATHEMATICS	16

SCIENCE	16
SOCIAL STUDIES	17
FINE ARTS	17
PHYSICAL EDUCATION	18

ALL-SCHOOL INFORMATION

MISSION

“We wish our students to become strong in body, broad of mind, tender of heart,
responsive in soul.”

— Mary Hyde DuVal, Founding Headmistress

CORE PURPOSE

To inspire and prepare the next generation of exemplary citizens and visionary leaders.

CORE VALUES

- Integrity: Cultivating responsible, honorable, ethical behavior
- Curiosity: Fulfilling our desire to question, to know and to learn for a lifetime
- Diversity: Seeking to know, learn from and value one another
- Creativity: Expecting imaginative, critical and divergent thinking
- Agency: Empowering students to own their learning
- Impact: Accomplishing meaningful, significant work for the greater good

HISTORY

St. Anne’s-Belfield School is a co-educational, independent school for students in Pre-School through Grade 12. The School also offers a seven-day Residential Life Program for students in Grades 9 – 12. The School’s present structure is the result of the merger of St. Anne’s School, a girls’ boarding school founded in 1910 by the Reverend Dr. Henry Bedinger Lee, Rector of Christ Church (Episcopal) of Charlottesville, and Belfield School, a co-educational elementary school established in 1955. Situated on two campuses totaling more than 50 acres, St. Anne’s-Belfield School graduated its first class in 1974.

PHILOSOPHY

We at St. Anne’s-Belfield School believe that our students will become exemplary citizens and visionary leaders because of the inspiration of exceptional teachers and the nourishment of every child’s innate curiosity. Our mission is to feed this curiosity through exceptional, innovative teaching and learning in an intentional Pre-School through Grade 12 community in which close relationships provide the foundation for achievement and where every child is known well. Curiosity — that desire to grow, know, ask, create, and solve — is both the fuel of learning and an essential ingredient to success in an ever-changing world; it must be encouraged from the earliest years and throughout life. Our goal is to nourish our students’ curiosity about themselves, their

world, and the diverse people around them, in an educational experience that inspires, challenges, and stimulates innovative, empathetic, and creative thought. We pose compelling questions and seek answers through inquiry, application of core skills, development of essential habits, thoughtful reflection, collaboration with others, and the appropriate use of technology. The questions we ask and the answers we seek reflect our commitment to the cultivation of responsible, honorable behavior and to a mindfulness of the needs of others.

We strive to equip our students with the knowledge, skills, habits, and attitudes that will allow them to pursue their dreams in a rapidly changing and increasingly technological world, and to be exemplary citizens in life and work. Ours is a challenging yet charitable community distinguished by superior instruction that is cutting edge and student driven; by exceptionally knowledgeable and highly-trained teachers who are the most supportive and dedicated educators in their field; and by an environment that exalts growth over grades by providing a culture of intellectual candor and rich feedback. Our community strives for excellence in all aspects of School life and encourages students to discover and develop empathy, diversity of perspective, adaptability, flexibility, resilience, agency, self-efficacy, and inventiveness. We embrace uncompromisingly high expectations for ethical, selfless behavior and hold firmly our commitment to inclusion, civility, and kindness.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

The School admits qualified students of any race, color, national origin, place of birth, ancestry, sex, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, or any status protected by applicable law, and extends to them all the privilege to participate in the educational programs generally accorded or made available to students at the School. The School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, ancestry, sex, religion, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, or any status protected by applicable law in the administration of its admission or its educational programs.

STATEMENT ON INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE

St. Anne's-Belfield School believes that exemplary citizenship and visionary leadership are best nurtured in a welcoming School community based on equity, inclusivity, and the pursuit of excellence. Our School provides a well-balanced educational experience that affirms the richness and diversity of humanity, creates an expectation of belonging based on shared human dignity, and encourages a desire to learn about and from each other.

ACCREDITATION

St. Anne's-Belfield is accredited by Southern Association of Independent Schools (SAIS). SAIS is a professional organization that seeks to strengthen member schools by providing high-quality accreditation processes, comprehensive professional growth opportunities, and visionary leadership development programs. With more than 380 member K-12 schools from 14 U.S. states, the Caribbean, and Latin America (representing 220,000+ students), SAIS is the largest regional independent school association in the country.

OVERVIEW OF THE PRE-SCHOOL PROGRAM

St. Anne's-Belfield School welcomes our youngest learners into nurturing, play-based classes designed to encourage exploration and discovery.

PEDAGOGY & PRACTICE

Going to school will be one of your child's first attempts at trusting an adult who is not a parent or a primary caregiver, so we aim to provide security and comfort. This will be a challenging task for your child, who will grow immeasurably from this experience.

Moving through the natural stages of social growth and development, with the support of the teacher, the children gain independence, verbal communication skills, and the confidence to move and work within the community. During this year, your child will move from the beginning stages of play into the new-found joy of friendship. Most importantly, the Pre-School faculty will work diligently to ensure that your child feels safe, loved, and known.

THE SOCIAL CURRICULUM

The social curriculum in the Two-Year-Olds, Pre-School 3 & 4, and Junior Kindergarten (JK) programs focuses on the social and emotional growth of our School community. We focus on community building that strengthens the qualities of each individual and supports the development of group cohesion. Our curriculum is derived from faculty training in Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (STEP) course work.

Every classroom begins the school day with Morning Meeting. Students are greeted by name and actively participate in community building games and activities that help foster self-confidence, positive assertion, cooperation, responsibility, and empathy towards others. Our teachers recognize that academic success stems from social and

emotional strength. When students feel supported and valued for their differences, they are better able to forge ahead academically.

At the beginning of every school year, teachers and children share their personal hopes and dreams. These are revisited and celebrated throughout the school year. Out of these hopes and dreams, the students help create and agree upon guidelines on how to demonstrate responsibility for themselves, for others, and for their shared environment.

Our Parent-Partnership Meetings, the first of which is prior to the start of school, enable faculty and parents to form a connection between home and School life. The best interests of the child are kept at the heart of all decision making. The relationship between parents and faculty is an important feature of our Pre-School Program. Our team is easily available for communication with parents after school hours via telephone and email. The entire staff is a valuable resource for parent support on issues both in and out of school. Volunteer opportunities are available for parents to become actively involved and weekly updates keep families and caregivers connected to special events, activities, and daily adventures.

In addition, our parents will have access to early education guidance with parent education courses and guest speakers.

Our School community is committed to creating an environment that is safe and nurturing for all.

PRACTICAL LIFE AND SELF-CARE

Our practical life materials and exercises are designed to contribute to the development of motor skills and assist children in becoming self-efficient and independent. They nurture physical skills and control of movement. In the early years, we practice and model how to dress using buttons, zippers, and snaps; wash hands and use the toilet; hang coats; put away dishes; care for playthings and art supplies; set the table for snack; knead bread; use eating utensils; listen and follow along with simple directions; practice courtesy, and use language to acquire what they want. As children mature, there is an expectation of added responsibilities to contribute to community through classroom jobs, following multi-step directions, and being accountable for their own equipment and materials each day, to name a few.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to understand and

manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. In the Two-Year-Olds Program, early childhood learners are introduced to the following initial questions that create the foundation for later SEL skills to emerge and be honed: What clues tell how we are feeling? How can we solve problems? How do we show kindness? As students continue in our Pre-School program, they begin to develop more of the foundational skills to utilize SEL tools for managing challenges and regulating their reactions and behaviors.

TWO-YEAR-OLDS PROGRAM

Two-year-olds are introduced to school during a half-day, morning program within a small peer group among nurturing teachers. Nestled within a growing garden with direct access to woods and trails, our natural classroom includes a large play-yard with equipment where children can explore, practice motor skills, observe the seasons, grow and garden, and immerse themselves in the elements. Activities are designed to support social-emotional learning, physical foundational senses, self-care, cognitive development, and exposure to early math, science, and literacy components. The Two-Year-Olds Program consists of periods of independent play, child-directed learning, and teacher-structured group activities. Two, three, and five days per week participation options are available.

Our Two-Year-Olds Program encourages learning through play. Play is any activity that is intrinsically motivated, involves active engagement, and results in joyful discovery. Play often nurtures the imagination, contains elements of make-believe, and is non-literal. Materials and environment reflect an intentional invitation to children to explore hands-on, using a variety of senses, and with an appropriate measure of risk-taking and consideration for self and others. Teachers create a predictable routine to the school day and model actions. They guide language and physical activity through artistic projects, open exploration times, fingerplays and songs, cooking, told and read stories, and meaningful work. In this way, the young child learns, not through direct instruction, but through direct experience of the world.

INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

All activities are designed to emphasize emotional, social, physical, and cognitive development. There is an emphasis on open-ended play using sensory-rich materials to encourage exploration and discovery. The Two-Year-Olds Program consists of periods of independent play and exploration, as well as teacher-structured group activities. The

program is designed to offer numerous opportunities to expand their knowledge and learn new skills.

Curricular Goals: Area of Focus

EARLY LITERACY

The Two-Year-Olds Program focuses on language development and early literacy foundation. Teachers bring stories, songs, rhyming games, movement, and puppet plays into various aspects of the day at school. Children also learn to observe and engage in simple conversations, demonstrating interest, offering questions, and responding accordingly. They grow to use an expanding, expressive vocabulary over time.

MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

Our two-year-old children explore basic math and science concepts through hands-on activities and investigation of the world around them. Activities support a variety of mathematical concepts which include one-to-one correspondence, comparing, sorting, and identifying patterns and shapes. In the realm of science, students use their senses to observe the world around them and its predictable cycles. They also begin to sort and classify objects.

FINE ARTS

The visual arts are an integral part of the Two-Year-Olds Program's curriculum. Children are given the opportunity to explore and experiment with a wealth of materials, processes, and ideas that emphasize self-expression and creativity. The emphasis in the Two-Year-Olds Program is on the process, not the product.

Music infuses daily life in the Two-Year-Olds Program. Songs mark transitions throughout the day, signal daily activities, and are introduced during circle-time each morning. Our repertoire of songs and rhyming games changes monthly and often features seasonal themes, traditional folk tunes, or special music to mark a festive occasion of the year. The children sing for enjoyment, explore dance and movement, and are exposed to manipulatives such as rhythm sticks, shaker eggs, and other hand-held instruments.

Dramatic play rounds out the Two-Year Old Program's fine arts experience. There are many dramatic play opportunities including poems, acting out stories with literacy story baskets, and imaginative play stations. Dramatic play activities provide opportunities for

students to practice real-life social interactions and independent living skills, such as putting on coats and shoes and caring for others.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Foundational physical skills create the children's connection to their own bodies. Through active play, children learn to move through space, imitate what they see around them, and process all that they have absorbed. Activities and environment are designed to encourage development in the following areas: tactile exploration, well-being, proprioception, body geography, balance, and spatial orientation. While our two-year-old students do not participate in formal physical education classes, the development of motor skills is an important part of our curriculum. We offer daily opportunities for gross motor experiences, in both teacher-directed and student-initiated situations, providing for individual differences and varying levels of maturity. The teacher promotes the development of fundamental movement abilities involving locomotion, control, quality of movement, and stability.

FINE MOTOR SKILLS

Fine motor development is also at the forefront of our physical development curriculum. Children manipulate sensory-rich materials and use a variety of tools and instruments. They paint with brushes, draw with crayons and chalk, sew with yarn, bead buttons, hammer pegs, use tweezers to grip, and grind grain. They are exposed to a variety of experiences meant to hone motor skills, all in service to meaningful work and joyful play.

PRE-SCHOOL 3 & 4

The Pre-School 3 & 4 Program (PS 3 & 4) is a two-year program for three- and four-year-old children who interact and learn in mixed age groups. Each day consists of independent play, teacher-directed group activities, and individual instruction in a nature-based outdoor setting.

The Pre-School teachers collaborate extensively to implement the program in a 10:1 student/teacher ratio. Participation is five days per week.

INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

The PS 3 & 4 experience at St. Anne's-Belfield School is designed to be an enticing and dynamic environment which recognizes that children learn through play. We know that

children need to connect through their senses, exploring through self-discovery to make sense of their world. To support this exploration, teacher-created learning stations are at the heart of our multi-age classrooms. Each outdoor learning station provides different opportunities for hands-on exploration of nature, the chance to care for live creatures, and the ability to use the natural world to extend curriculum concepts. Each child is able to relate to the materials in their own unique way. The teachers serve as facilitators, encouraging and supporting the child's individual needs and interests. We know that these creative stations lay the groundwork for the development of a curious mind and the love of learning that will extend well beyond the Pre-School years.

Curricular Goals: Area of Focus

EARLY LITERACY

At the Pre-School 3 & 4 level, the children are exposed to the language arts through an integrated approach. The goal is to create a language- and literature-rich environment which develops literacy skills and the joy of reading. The program is designed to accommodate a range of literacy levels. Children who are ready for more challenging experiences have opportunities to work in small groups and one-on-one during the school day. The program includes significant exposure to phonemic awareness, alphabetic knowledge, rich vocabulary, and a wide variety of quality children's literature, both fiction and non-fiction titles.

ORAL LANGUAGE

Oral language development is an important part of the PS 3 & 4 Program. Students verbalize about their experience. Teachers intentionally model language use to expand vocabulary and promote communication. Students are encouraged to ask questions and to share ideas. Our daily Morning Meeting and community-building activities promote friendly greetings, encourage clear storytelling, emphasize turn taking while speaking, develop listening skills, and build problem-solving techniques. Students learn to connect with one another, wonder about the world around them, and play an active role in their learning experiences.

READING & WRITING

Students are immersed in reading and writing activities throughout the day. The teachers ensure that the program includes:

- Phonemic awareness games
- Alphabetic knowledge
- A rich vocabulary

- Opportunities for writing during teacher-directed activities, outdoor exploration, and learning stations
- A wide variety of stories reinforcing concept of word, book, print directionality, and letter recognition
- Poetry, fiction, and non-fiction books available in baskets for daily exploration and enjoyment
- Poems, signs, labels, and captions on display
- The class list of children's names, posted and used for visual recognition games
- Printed lyrics to children's songs
- Big books, posters, and choral reading

FINE MOTOR SKILLS

Children have numerous opportunities to learn and practice fine motor skills which emphasize correct pencil grip and scissor use, as well as body posture. A variety of materials are readily available to strengthen these skills. The writing centers, outdoor desks, and easels display words so that children who are able to can copy letters, words, or captions and practice writing with their own creative spelling.

MATHEMATICS

Pre-School 3 & 4 students discover mathematics through exploration. We recognize and build upon each child's level of mathematical readiness and understanding by integrating it across subject areas through verbal interaction, hands-on activities, and individual instruction. Children learn at each stage that mathematical concepts have real life applications, and our goal is that children develop understanding and insight into the patterns of mathematics through the use of concrete materials. Our activities support a variety of mathematical concepts which include: one-to-one correspondence, recognizing numbers, comparing and ordering sets of objects, categorizing manipulatives by feature, identifying and comparing shapes, sorting, graphing, measuring, counting, understanding and using positional words, and recognizing and extending patterns. The outdoors offers many materials for mathematical use. For example, outdoors, sticks are used for tallying the number of days in school. Pinecones, acorns, and rocks also become organic patterning and sorting materials.

SCIENCE

Pre-School 3 & 4 students explore basic scientific principles through a variety of hands-on experiences. We encourage students to question and wonder about the natural environment around them. Our science curriculum engages students in the scientific method of inquiry: predicting, experimenting, observing, and changing

predictions based on new observations. At their level of inquiry, children are encouraged to connect their ideas to new experiences to add to their knowledge base. Pre-School teachers stimulate curiosity and exploration as students continue the initial steps of becoming life-long learners.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Because of the rapidly changing world, children will need to develop the ability to communicate cross-culturally with people from a wide variety of language and cultural backgrounds. Therefore, through carefully chosen literature, curricular materials, music, and media from around the world, our teachers strive to instill in our PS 3 & 4 students curiosity and interest in a variety of cultures and communities. Through teacher-supported activities, our youngest learners begin to negotiate what it means to be a global citizen. Our goal is to learn to live and work together in diverse and inclusive environments. Through social studies, students will develop positive self-identities, listening skills, empathy for their community members, a respect for the natural world, and an appreciation for how we identify ourselves and how we experience belonging in a group.

FINE ARTS

The visual arts in Pre-School 3 & 4 focus on experimental, exploratory, sensory, and creative activities in a wide range of media. A variety of art materials including papers, pencils, pastels, paint, and print-making tools help foster personal creativity and skill development geared to the wide range of individual interests and abilities at this age.

Music & Movement is a joyful and enriching part of each day, giving Pre-Schoolers the opportunity to experience and appreciate a variety of musical styles, genres, and traditions. The songs chosen accentuate daily activities, helping to make transitions, relax, imagine, and engage with one another. Rhythm, tempo, beat, and melody of each song are noticed along with patterns and similarities. Children are exposed to the emotion conveyed in music and how songs contribute to moods and feelings. Coordinated dances and games are made possible by listening, anticipating, and focusing on body and spatial awareness. Simple instruments and other manipulatives, such as ribbons or scarves, are utilized to enhance learning.

Dramatic play rounds out the PS 3 & 4 fine arts experience. Children enjoy dramatic play both inside and outside as they experiment with creative and imaginative roles inspired by the world around them. For example, they create “families” under the trees in Locust Grove and the Mud Kitchen, and build homes for dinosaurs in the garden sandbox area.

Stories, songs, and poems are used extensively to enrich each student's learning experience.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

While our Pre-School 3 & 4 students do not participate in formal physical education classes, the development of motor skills is an important part of our curriculum. Our goal is that each child will develop gross motor skills, spatial awareness, agility, balance, coordination, and strength. We offer daily opportunities for gross motor experiences in both teacher-directed and student-initiated activities that take into account individual differences and varying levels of maturity. Our teachers promote the development of fundamental movement abilities involving locomotion, control, balance, safe and appropriate risk-taking, thoughtfulness and intention, quality of movement, and stability. Areas in the outdoor Pre-School include natural climbing logs, sandboxes, and a meadow for yoga and free play. Our Quarry space is filled with stones and natural materials that encourage lifting, loading, pulling, and building with shovels and wheelbarrows, trucks, and buckets. Large wooden planks throughout the outdoor stations serve as natural see-saws, levers, and balance beams.

JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN

The Junior Kindergarten (JK) program is designed for those children who typically have late summer and early fall birthdays. Each day consists of independent play, teacher-directed group activities, and individual instruction in a nature-based outdoor setting.

Our teachers implement a vast array of activities to expose students to specific content areas. These interdisciplinary activities function together to emphasize the major development areas of emotional, social, physical, and cognitive development.

INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

The Junior Kindergarten experience is for children who are ready for emotional, social, physical, and cognitive experiences beyond the expectations that are required in a Pre-School setting. Our program is designed to provide a dynamic environment which recognizes that children learn through play. We know that children need to connect through their senses, exploring through self-discovery to make sense of their world and allow the children to build upon teacher-directed activities. Each child is able to relate to the materials in his or her own unique way. Teachers serve as facilitators, encouraging

and supporting each child's individual needs. We know that these creative centers lay the groundwork for the life-long development of a curious mind and the love of learning.

The students are introduced to new concepts and centers through a guided discovery approach. Guided discovery is a method described in the book, "The Responsive Classroom" by Ruth Charney. Guided discovery is a teacher-directed, hands-on approach to instruction. The purpose is to prepare students to use classroom materials and develop critical thinking skills. The teacher uses a series of question and answer relationships to encourage children to compare, describe, explore, and question new concepts. This prepares students to work independently and think critically.

Curricular Goals: Area of Focus

EARLY LITERACY

At the Junior Kindergarten level, the language arts are taught through an integrated approach. The aim is to reinforce the connection between reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Activities occur throughout the day both in small group and whole group settings. The program is designed to accommodate a range of literacy levels. Children who are ready for more challenging experiences have numerous opportunities to work with the teacher one on one, and in small instructional groups. Students are immersed in reading and writing activities throughout the school day. The teacher ensures that the lessons include rich vocabulary, phonemic awareness activities, word study activities, and instructional level guided reading books when developmentally appropriate.

ORAL LANGUAGE

Oral language experiences are an important part of daily instruction as students tell about their experiences and share each day with the class.. Each day, students participate in learning through question and answer relationships. Morning Meeting is an integral part of our day when characteristics of a listener are emphasized: looking at the speaker and thinking about what the speaker is saying. Students practice these steps as they decide how to solve problems and share ideas in small and large groups.

READING & WRITING

Students are immersed in literature throughout the day. The teacher reads and writes with the children daily and ensures that the lessons include:

- A rich vocabulary
- A wide variety of stories reinforcing concept of word, book, print directionality, and letter recognition

- Books, available at book-looking centers and content books
- Poems, signs, labels, and captions on display
- The class list of children's names, posted and used for visual recognition games
- Poems, both rhyming and non-rhyming, and songs
- Phonemic awareness games which include rhyming games, concept of spoken word, syllable blending, and matching sound
- Manipulatives, clapping, and rhythm sticks to count words and syllables in a word
- Phonics/phonemic awareness activities with big books, pocket charts, and choral reading
- Instructional level guided reading books, as appropriate

FINE MOTOR SKILLS

Children participate in activities which emphasize correct pencil grip and body posture. Children have numerous opportunities to use materials and tools that strengthen fine motor skills. The Junior Kindergarten stations include makerspace areas both indoors and out, with a woodworking center which provides opportunities for students to creatively work, both independently and collaboratively, while at the same time building fine motor skills.

MATHEMATICS

Junior Kindergarten students discover mathematics through exploration. We recognize and build upon each child's level of mathematical information and understanding by integrating it across subject areas through verbal interaction, hands-on activities, and individual instruction. The activities support a variety of mathematical concepts which include: one-to-one correspondence, rapid identification of sets of objects, comparing and ordering sets of objects, identifying and comparing shapes, sorting by attributes, graphing, recognizing and extending patterns, measuring, and calendar concepts.

SCIENCE

Students in Junior Kindergarten explore basic scientific principles through a variety of hands-on experiences and question and answer relationships. The science curriculum engages students in the scientific method of inquiry: predicting, experimenting, observing, and changing predictions based on new observations. One of the features in the indoor Junior Kindergarten classroom is the Growing Corner. Students plant seeds and care for the plants in a large grow light center while observing and tracking their growing plant's progress. In addition, the Junior Kindergarten students have outdoor growing areas that change seasonally in the nearby garden. At their level of inquiry, children are encouraged to connect their ideas to new experiences to add to their

knowledge base. The science curriculum provides many opportunities for students to explore the natural world with opportunities for collection and observation. Two areas of focus are trees and the senses which include opportunities for class research, experimentation, art projects, and culminating in a final presentation to demonstrate what was learned.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Because of the rapidly changing world, children must eventually develop the ability to communicate cross-culturally with people from a wide variety of language and cultural backgrounds. Through carefully chosen literature, curricular materials, music, and media from around the world, our teachers strive to instill in our Junior Kindergarten students curiosity and interest in a variety of cultures and communities. Through teacher-supported activities, our students begin to negotiate what it means to be a global citizen. The goal is to learn to live and work together in diverse and inclusive environments. Through social studies, students will develop positive self-identities, listening skills, empathy for their community members, and an appreciation for similarities as well as differences.

FINE ARTS

Visual arts in Junior Kindergarten focus on experimental, exploratory, sensory, and creative activities in a wide range of media. A variety of papers, pencils, pastels, paint, printmaking, and construction materials help foster personal creativity and skill development geared to the wide range of individual interests and abilities at this age.

Music & Movement is a joyful and enriching part of each day, giving preschoolers the opportunity to experience and appreciate a variety of musical styles, genres and traditions. The songs chosen accentuate daily activities, helping to make transitions, relax, imagine, and engage with one another. Rhythm, tempo, beat, and melody of each song are noticed along with patterns and similarities. Children are exposed to the emotion conveyed in music and how songs contribute to moods and feelings. Coordinated dances and games are made possible by listening, anticipating, and focusing on body and spatial awareness. Simple instruments and other manipulatives, such as ribbons or scarves, are utilized to enhance learning.

Dramatic play rounds out the Junior Kindergarten fine arts experience. Children enjoy dramatic play at the many outdoor stations that encourage role playing, imaginary dramatic scenes, as well as puppetry under the trees. Stories, songs, and poems are acted out to enrich each student's learning experience.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

While our Junior Kindergarten students do not participate in formal physical education classes, the development of motor skills is an important part of our curriculum. Teachers offer daily opportunities for gross motor experiences in both teacher-directed and student-initiated situations providing for individual differences and varying levels of maturity. Teachers promote the development of fundamental movement abilities involving locomotion, control, quality of movement, and stability. Areas at Saints' Meadow include natural climbing logs and yoga opportunities. We also have our Quarry, which is a space that encourages loading and unloading of materials with shovels, trucks, and buckets. Our goal is that each child will develop gross motor skills, spatial awareness, agility, balance, coordination, and strength.