



Lower School

GRADES PK-5

Inspiring confidence, igniting leadership:

CDS is where your children discover who they are and who they can become.

Welcome to CAROLINA DAY

"We work to ensure the wellbeing of each child, keep them connected to their shared community, and build deep and meaningful learning experiences across all environments.

Our Lower School leaders don't trace a straight path. They adapt, grow, and rebound from setbacks. Such periods of change and transformation

are to be celebrated, much like an insect molting its skin. It's during these moments that they leave behind their earlier selves, draw lessons from their experiences, and emerge stronger.



In this journey, there are no final destinations, only significant milestones. This is a time of intense learning and growth, most of which is hidden beneath the surface."

LAUREN EVANS

Lower and Middle School Principal



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Carolina Day consistently provides thoughtful education and support. **The teachers and coaches set the tone for personal excellence and compassionate growth, teaching the students (and us) what it means to show up with integrity and do your best.**

~ Elizabeth, Carolina Day School parent





LOWER SCHOOL

Education for a Lifetime

At Carolina Day, we believe a well-rounded liberal arts education goes beyond the textbook. Encouraging exploration, developing leadership skills, and inspiring curiosity are built into everything we do. Your child will go well beyond learning facts and figures, they will uncover their true strengths while becoming empathetic citizens of a global community.

In our classrooms, your child receives focused, individualized attention and instruction. Teachers across all grades are responsive, innovative, and compassionate, and focus on knowing your child on a deeper level to continually improve their learning experience. In addition to a foundation of core academics, your child will be free to discover their own individual interests, learn

unique problem-solving skills, think carefully about real-world problems, and develop lasting relationships with peers and teachers that will fuel a love of learning and a unique, personal value system that will help them make smart, positive, and healthy choices for themselves and their community.

We can't wait to help your child grow.

To learn more about the Lower School at Carolina Day, visit carolinaday.org or call **828-407-4442**.



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At Carolina Day, we provide families with a powerful and rich educational experience by weaving together leadership development, social-emotional supported instruction, and strong academic achievement, creating a learning environment full of curiosity and joy.”

~ LAUREN EVANS, *Lower and Middle School Principal*





Ubuntu: “I am because we are.”

This year, the theme that guides our Lower School culture is the powerful philosophy of “Ubuntu,” teaching that our individual identities are shaped by our collective connections. Students of all ages explore this concept through age-appropriate readings and discussions. As part of our Pathways to Leadership program, they’ll have opportunities to showcase leadership skills while embracing Ubuntu’s essence. Together, we’re nurturing a culture of empathy, respect, and collaboration, shaping the compassionate leaders of tomorrow.

Pre-K students participate in a mock migration of Monarch butterflies after studying a unit on the Monarch lifecycle.

Signature Program: Pathways to Leadership

Every child is a leader.

The Pathways to Leadership program at Carolina Day School offers a holistic educational experience for students, aiming to cultivate not just academic prowess but also social-emotional intelligence and leadership skills.

Focused on four core domains—**Identity, Community, Leadership,** and **Action & Agency**—the program nurtures a well-rounded understanding of self, community engagement, and proactive agency. Students engage in self-exploration, learn to appreciate and foster diversity, acquire strategic problem-solving skills, and gain practical know-how to drive social change.

Through structured guidance and a responsive educational approach, this signature program equips our young students with the tools they need to lead fulfilling lives and effect meaningful change in their communities, built on a foundation of strong academic rigor.



Above: Fourth grade students give a presentation on recycling at an Upper School student body meeting.

Cornerstone Tasks

Each grade level has a final Cornerstone project meant to foster their leadership abilities and equip them with the knowledge, skills, and emotional intelligence to flourish in our complex and interconnected world.



Kindergarten students visit classrooms to collect food donations as part of their "Feeding Families" cornerstone task.

Pre-Kindergarten: Monarch Migration

Students learn about climate action while building their identity. The unit features a mock migration of Monarch butterflies, a field trip to an arboretum, and concludes with a parent presentation on the migration topic.

Kindergarten: Feeding Families

Students focus on addressing hunger issues and teaching the values of contribution and community. Through field trips to grocery stores and farms, students gain knowledge about food distribution and nutrition. To actively involve parents, we organize activities such as potluck meals, food drives, and the adoption of zero-waste classroom practices.

Grade 1: Our Home, Now and Then

Students delve into the theme of "Origins in WNC," with a particular emphasis on peace, justice, and the importance of strong institutions. Field trips to the Cradle of Forestry and Cherokee areas culminate in an "Appalachia Day" presentation for parents.

Grade 2: Wildcat City Simulation

In the city simulation, students learn about local business management and the theories behind city planning. Field trips to City Hall and local businesses offer practical insights, and the unit ends with a "Tourist Season" where parents can experience student-created businesses.

Grade 3: Climate Connections

Students explore climate action through the "Weather/Water" unit. Enriching field trips and guest speakers from weather-related fields enhance learning, culminating in student project presentations for parents.

Grade 4: Sustainable CDS

"Sustainable CDS" focuses on responsible consumption and production. Students explore recycling and sustainable energy through field trips to recycling centers and solar panel installations. The parent presentation showcases student art projects inspired by recycling.

Grade 5: Love Hall Leaders

We delve into what it means to belong in a community with a focus on peace, justice, and strong institutions. Students present their learnings in a TED Talk format for parents.

Field trips serve as valuable extensions of these cornerstone tasks, offering experiential learning to enhance your child's academic journey.

Curriculum

At Carolina Day, we tailor instruction to the unique needs and developmental stages of students. Our Lower School curriculum adheres to national educational standards and incorporates research on social-emotional learning, which is seamlessly woven into our daily activities as a foundational element for effective learning.

Core Academic Areas

English Language Arts

Our trained teachers provide tailored reading instruction to younger students, following a structured, sequential approach that builds over time. With Orton-Gillingham training, our teachers use a multisensory method for phonics and literacy, enhancing their ability to offer personalized support and boost students' confidence while improving their reading and writing skills. Younger students learn letter recognition, sound blending, and word decoding with a focus on repetition, reinforcement, and positive feedback. As students progress, they explore diverse writing styles, learn grammar, sentence structure, punctuation, effective storytelling, note-taking, research and citation, and organizing their writing logically. Effective communication and clear writing are essential skills applicable across subjects, empowering students to excel in their academic journey.

Math

The Lower School mathematics curriculum focuses on nurturing active problem-solvers and developing confidence around mathematical reasoning and communication. Pre-K learners are introduced to math concepts with "Building Blocks for Math." From kindergarten through Grade 8, math lessons follow the Math in Focus curriculum, which emphasizes a rigorous and inquiry-based approach to mathematics education, promoting deep conceptual understanding and problem-solving skills. Daily number talks, open-ended problem solving, small group instruction, and student choice define this division's mathematics experience. With a workshop model structured

around accessible tasks and student discourse, instruction covers numbers and operations, algebraic expressions and equations, geometry, measurement, data analysis, problem solving, and reasoning.

Science

Our Lower School science program is rooted in hands-on investigation, outdoor learning, comparison, organization, inference, application, scientific inquiry, and experimental labs in alignment with Next Generation Science Standards. K-5 students learn through FOSS (Full Option Science System), a field-proven curriculum that engages students in three-dimensional learning. Students also engage in Computer Science and STEM programming.

Social Studies

Lower School social studies covers a range of topics and focuses on establishing historical thinking skills. Students learn about civics, including roles of authority and community participation, democratic principles, and rules. They explore history by sequencing events, comparing past and present, and examining different cultural perspectives. Geography involves mapping, understanding environmental impacts, and global connections. Lastly, economics covers decision-making, production, markets, and government roles. By fifth grade, students will have a comprehensive foundation in civics, history, geography, and economics, but they will also have the skills to think critically about historical narratives, enhancing their understanding of the world, its many cultures, and its systems, and preparing them for Middle School.

Assessment Cycle - Formal assessments administered by our classroom teachers are done at the beginning, middle, and end of the year. None of our instructors ever "teach to the test" or create high stress testing environments, but regular check-ins give us detailed data about each student's progress. These assessments inform our instruction so that we can provide personalized responses that best meet your child's learning needs, as well as the overall needs of the class.



Above: Lower School students perform at Grandparents & Friends Day.

Co-curricular Classes

The following classes promote cross-curricular studies and foster connections across several disciplines. Their curriculum is also guided by our Heritage Months. Each month, co-curricular teachers tailor their lessons to celebrate women’s studies, neurodivergence, African American studies, Hispanic heritage, and more.



A fourth grade student holds a Chivichana, a Cuban skateboard-like vehicle made from reclaimed materials, built in Señora Blanco’s Spanish class.

Art

In Lower School art classes, students build their artistic skills and understanding gradually. Starting in PK, they explore creativity with art materials and connect art to other subjects. In K, they learn to use various materials for self-directed artwork. By 5th grade, students emphasize personal expression, experimentation, craftsmanship, problem-solving, and design principles. Guided by our heritage month structure, students might learn about self portraiture by studying famous Mexican painter Frida Kahlo or graffiti by studying the Black artist Jean-Michel Basquiat. While they learn about new art forms and create those art forms themselves, they also learn about history and the significant cultural impact of famous artists across several different races, cultures, and disciplines.

Music

The Lower School music curriculum also guides students through a progressive musical journey. In PK, they begin with singing, movement, and listening. In K, they explore elements like tempo and vocal timbres with rhythm sticks. By 5th grade, they refine their singing, rhythm understanding, and instrumental skills, including ukulele, drums, and handbells. The Lower School music curriculum not only fosters musical skills but also provides ample opportunities for students to perform in plays like *Annie* and *Seussical* and at large, schoolwide events like Grandparents & Friends Day and the Hispanic Heritage Assembly. Growing their confidence and stage presence helps our Lower School students discover and showcase their talents. Performance also builds strong self expression, public speaking, and community building. Learning through our heritage month system, students learn about famous musicians throughout history, work on singing traditional songs in other languages, and building and using instruments from a wide range of cultures.

Physical Education

The Lower School physical education curriculum begins with foundational skills like hopping, running, and throwing underhand. Our youngest students gradually develop their

abilities in balance, coordination, and teamwork. As they advance through the grade levels, they refine their techniques, incorporating more complex locomotor and manipulative skills. The curriculum encourages physical activity, motor skill development, and the importance of cooperation. Additionally, students have opportunities to perform in various practice tasks and games, fostering a love for physical activity and teamwork essential for a healthy lifestyle. The heritage month program teaches students about athletes across different cultures, and students learn traditional dances like Salsa, Flamenco, and Breakdancing. Free after school sports clinics offer chances for Lower School students to learn group sports like volleyball, basketball, and soccer in a team setting.

Spanish Language and Culture

The Lower School Spanish Language and Culture curriculum introduces students to the Spanish language and Hispanic culture. Beginning with basic greetings and expressions, students gradually expand their vocabulary and language skills. Additionally, they gain an appreciation for different cultures, traditions, and important Hispanic personalities who have made positive contributions. The curriculum emphasizes the importance of unity and caring for the planet, encouraging students to be mindful of their role in a global community. The yearly Hispanic Heritage Assembly offers all students a chance to learn more in-depth about different Spanish-speaking countries, and all co-curricular classes come together to discover historical Hispanic figures, language, artists, dances, and music.

Library

Our Library is not just a space where students check out books or read quietly, it is a co-curricular class in itself. Moving from picture books to chapter books, students participate in Newberry and Caldecott reading challenges, learn about the lives and histories of different authors, study the judging processes of book awards, plan and participate in community book drives, explore environmental stewardship through literature, write book reports, and learn the differences between genres. Heritage months help guide which forms of literature and which authors students explore. This ensures even our youngest students are widely read and prepared for Middle School.



“Emotions drive learning, decision-making, creativity, relationships, and health.”

—Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence

Social-emotional Curricular Components

We also incorporate several other curricular components that contribute to the holistic development of our students. These include the Responsive Classroom approach, the use of Marc Brackett’s work with the RULER approach and the four anchors, the Healthy Relationships curriculum, and direct instruction around digital citizenship and executive functioning.



One of the most important RULER tools is the Mood Meter, which helps students more accurately identify and name the emotions they’re feeling. Yale research shows that the ability to accurately identify emotions is directly correlated with the ability to regulate those emotions, and to take responsibility for them.

The Responsive Classroom Approach

This evidence-based teaching method fosters a positive classroom environment where students feel safe, challenged, and engaged. An example of how we apply this approach is through our daily Morning Meeting, which acts like a team huddle, setting a positive tone for the day and fostering a strong sense of community and social skills. By seamlessly integrating social-emotional learning with academics, our educators establish a supportive space where students are encouraged to step out of their comfort zones and collaborate effectively with their peers.



Developing Emotional Intelligence (RULER)

Our program, which is influenced by the work of Marc Brackett, a renowned expert in emotional intelligence and the creator of the RULER approach, places a strong emphasis on developing emotional intelligence. Through this approach, students acquire essential skills such as recognizing, understanding, labeling, expressing, and regulating their emotions. These skills not only lead to greater self-awareness and self-management but also foster social awareness, responsible decision-making, and the ability to build meaningful relationships.

Digital Citizenship Skills

In today’s increasingly digital world, it is essential for students to develop responsible digital citizenship skills. Our curriculum draws from the expertise of The Social Institute, offering direct instruction on essential topics like online safety, privacy, digital etiquette, and ethical technology use. Our approach to teaching these topics is based on the principles of social-emotional learning, which emphasizes the development of emotional intelligence, self-awareness, and responsible decision-making. Our aim is to equip students to use technology in a positive and responsible way.

Executive Functioning

Our emphasis on executive functioning builds independence and self-regulation among students. By teaching critical skills such as time management, organization, planning, and self-monitoring, our students gain a strong foundation for both academic success and lifelong personal development.

Healthy Relationships

Run by our highly skilled counselor, Healthy Relationships equips students with the tools and knowledge to cultivate meaningful and appropriate connections with their peers, younger children, teens, and adults. Your child will experience sessions like these: How to manage and self-regulate emotions, creating healthy boundaries, learning how to say and accept “no,” interpreting non-verbal communication, asking and giving permission, recognizing and responding to uncomfortable feelings, and being a self-advocate.



Beyond the School Day

Extracurriculars & After School

Discover a world of opportunities for your child through athletics, extracurriculars and our extended day programs.



Athletics

It is the goal of the Athletic Department to create an experience and environment for students that mirrors what teachers create in the classroom—one which encourages engagement, growth, reflection and pushes boundaries.

- Sports Clinics (Grades K-5)
- Developmental and Competitive Team Sports (Grades 5–12)

Extracurriculars

Participating in arts and STEM extracurriculars offers students the opportunity to develop both creative expression and critical problem-solving skills, nurturing a well-rounded and adaptable skill set for the future.

- School Musical (Grades 4–8)
- Odyssey of the Mind (Grades 3–8)
- Newbery and Caldecott Reading Challenges



Early Arrival & After School Care

Early Arrival and After School Care offer parents and students with different schedules the opportunity to arrange their day in a way that suits them best. Early Arrival provides a welcoming environment for your child to start the day off right, while After School Care provides socialization, structured free time, a healthy snack, and physical activity.

After School Enrichment

Make the most of your child's extended day at CDS with our After School Enrichment program. Designed to ignite creativity, exploration, and a love for learning outside of the classroom, our range of programming introduces new and exciting disciplines into the lives of our students. With a variety of classes often including art, STEM, and nature, your child is bound to find a session that will spark their curiosity.

Classes are subject to change depending on interest and availability. Examples of classes include:

- Yoga & Mindfulness
- Art Club
- Engineering, Robotics & Coding with Zaniac
- Chess: Beyond Basics



Top to bottom: Students participating in soccer, Annie the Musical, and a Clay Club After School Enrichment class.



Annie and Sandy onstage during Lower School's production of Annie.

Meet the Lower School Faculty

CDS teachers are experts in their fields, dedicated to nurturing young minds. Many of our teachers have advanced degrees either in education or specialized fields, are trained in social-emotional teaching techniques, and participate regularly in professional development. They also constantly learn from one another in Professional Learning Communities that meet regularly throughout the school year. These communities are think tanks where our faculty brainstorm the best and most innovative teaching practices, co-curricular connections, social-emotional learning, executive functioning support, education technology, and more to make Carolina Day's classrooms a place where your child is always supported, always encouraged, and always confident.

Keith Anderson, *STEM Teacher*, B.A. University of North Carolina Pembroke

Sarah Andrea, *Grade 3 Teacher*, B.S. Winthrop University, M.A.Ed. University of South Carolina, Teacher Leadership Brandeis University

Jessica Baldwin, *Visual Art Teacher (PK-4)*, B.A. University of Montana Missoula, M.A. Boston University

Maureen Beyt, *Grade 2 Teacher*, B.S. Loyola University

Milena Blanco, *Spanish and Culture Teacher*, B.A. The Catholic University of Chile, English Language Education University of Havana

Aly Bolton, *Grade 5 Teacher*, B.A. The University of the South, M.L.I.S. UNC Greensboro

Christy Buchanan, *Grade 1 Teacher*, B.A. Georgia Southern University

Kate Schumaker Carl, *Pre-K Instructional Assistant* | B.A. Sewanee: University of the South | M.F.A. Emerson College

Lori Cavanaugh, *Grade 1 Instructional Assistant*, B.S. Appalachian State University

Patrick Davis, *Grade 3 Instructional Assistant*, B.A. Clemson University, M.Ed. American College of Education

Annie Eason, *Grade 2 Teacher*, B.S. Slippery Rock University

Adrienne Eberhardt, *Pre-K Teacher*, B.A. University of Alaska Anchorage, M.A. Kansas State University

Carla Farson, *Pre-K Teacher*, B.A. Guilford College, M.S.Ed. Bank Street College of Education

Carrie Foote, *Grade 4 Teacher*, B.S. Colorado College, M.A. Middlebury College, Graduate Certificates from Bridges Grad School of Cognitive Diversity in Education and University of Florida

Betsey Gaddy, *Kindergarten Teacher*, A.A. Converse College, B.A. St. Andrews Presbyterian College

Celeste Gay, *Grade 4 Teacher*, Mathematics Certification, B.A. Southeastern Louisiana University, M.Ed. University of South Carolina

Helene Heilig, *Learning Specialist (K-2)*, B.A. Washington & Jefferson College, M.A. Slippery Rock University

Michelle Hernandez, *Learning Specialist (3-5)*, B.A. St. Ambrose State University

Jennifer Hess, *Kindergarten Instructional Assistant*, B.A. Virginia Intermont College, M.A. Emory & Henry College

James Holt, *PE Teacher (5-8)*, B.A. Western Carolina University, M.A. Gardner Webb University, M.Ed. Ashford University

Stephanie Hope, *Grade 2 Instructional Assistant*, Bachelor's in Special Education Buffalo State College

Stephanie Howell, *Librarian*, B.A. Furman University, M.L.I.S. University of South Carolina

Ann Jennings, *Kindergarten Teacher*, B.A. Randolph College, M.A. Marymount University

Alli King, *Grade 5 Teacher*, B.A. University of Virginia, M.T. University of Virginia

Barb King, *Counselor*, B.S.Ed. University of North Dakota, M.A. University of North Dakota

Zach Knox, *Music Teacher (PK-4)*, B.A. Southwestern University at Georgetown

Charmaine Mills, *Pre-K Instructional Assistant*, Assoc. Film Degree

Stacy Montana, *Music Teacher (5-8)*, B.A. College of St. Rose Albany

Sofia Moreira, *Pre-K Instructional*

Assistant, B.A. University of North Carolina Asheville

Brian Rannie, *Physical Education* | B.S. College of Charleston | Teaching Certification Western Washington University

Kim Smith, *Grade 3 Teacher*, B.A. The University of Georgia, M.A. The University of Georgia

Sarah Tompkins, *Grade 1 Lead Teacher*, B.A. Susquehanna University | M.Ed. Grand Canyon University

Myriam Weber, *Grade 1 Instructional Assistant*, B.A. Chouaib Doukkali University, M.A. University of Phoenix

Katie Werner, *Learning Specialist (4-8)* | B.A. Skidmore College

Lida Wu Grindstaff, *Kindergarten Instructional Assistant*, B.S. Xavier University

Lower School Administration

Lauren Evans, *Principal*, B.A. University of Maryland, M.A. American University, M.A. Queens University

Jessica Roberts, *Assistant Principal of Teaching and Learning*, B.S. Champlain College, M.A. Mount Holyoke College

Peter Sullivan, *Assistant Principal of Community & Culture*, B.A. Furman University, M.Ed. Kennesaw State University

Amy Kett, *MS Librarian, Administrative Assistant*, B.S. Eastern Michigan University

Emily Klein, *Receptionist* | B.A. Dennison University

We Look Forward to Meeting You



Let's get started.

If you're interested to learn more, attend an Open House for an up close and personal visit. We look forward to sharing all that is special about the Carolina Day community with you.

Are you ready to belong to a school community that supports students in very tangible ways and ensures they have opportunities to work hard and explore their full academic and artistic potential? If so, visit carolinaday.org/apply to begin the application process.

Join us for an Open House.

You are invited to attend our informational events to hear from administration, faculty, current students and parents about the Carolina Day community, culture, curriculum, and programs. Check out carolinaday.org/visit for a wide variety of opportunities to get to know us.

Tuition & Fees

Our Tuition & Fee schedule for the current year can be found at carolinaday.org/admission/tuition. Our tuition covers many expenses, such as textbooks, activity fees, local field trips, lab/studio fees, as well as PSAT and ERB testing. It's worth noting that tuition for the upcoming year is established in January and typically sees a moderate annual increase. Your investment in education paves the way for a brighter future!

Application

We invite you to submit an application at carolinaday.org/apply which creates an account on My CDS, a user-friendly system that streamlines the application process for our families. Through your My CDS account, you will be able to receive notifications from CDS, learn about CDS admission events, and apply and track your progress toward application completion.

Annual Giving

Annual giving is a vital source of support for Carolina Day programs, materials and opportunities that allow students to experience an exceptional education. Parent participation at a level consistent with your ability is a key component of community involvement.

Financial Aid

Financial aid awards are available to applicants to grades K–11 and are based on need. Financial aid and admission are separate processes, but must be done simultaneously if a family anticipates needing aid. Visit the Tuition & Financial Aid page of our website for more information.



CAROLINA DAY SCHOOL

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