



St. Martin's
EPISCOPAL SCHOOL

2025-2026
Early Childhood
Curriculum Guide

Updated: August 2025

Table of Contents (links)

[Toddlers](#)

[Beginners](#)

[Pre-Kindergarten](#)

[EC Co-curricular Offerings](#)

At St. Martin's Episcopal School, we believe the earliest years are a precious time to spark curiosity, nurture confidence, and lay the foundation for a lifelong love of learning. Guided by our mission *to provide a quality education of the whole person in a loving, Christian atmosphere*, our toddler, beginner, and PreK programs are designed to help children flourish in every area of development. Through engaging experiences in communication and language, self-advocacy and independence, gross and fine motor skills, and early social, math, and literacy growth, our youngest learners gain the skills they need to thrive. Enriched by co-curricular classes in religion, guidance, science, Spanish, music and movement, art, and library, each day is filled with opportunities to explore, create, and grow—in mind, body, and spirit.

Toddlers

(2 turning 3-year-olds)

Communication and Language Skills

In our Toddlers program, children develop foundational communication and language skills through engaging interactions with teachers and peers. Toddlers practice making eye contact, responding to their names, and using social words like “hello” and “thank you.” They begin to express their wants and needs using 2–4 word phrases, follow simple directions, and name familiar objects and body parts. Early literacy is supported through songs, rhymes, and daily read-alouds, as children start to repeat lines, identify pictures, and engage with books in meaningful ways.

Self-Help Skills

Toddlers are supported in developing independence and confidence through age-appropriate self-help routines. They learn to wash their hands, participate in classroom clean-up, and follow daily routines such as putting away toys or throwing away trash. As they grow in maturity, many begin developing toileting independence and are guided to complete tasks independently. These foundational life skills help foster responsibility, self-awareness, and a sense of pride in caring for themselves and their environment.

Motor Development

Gross and fine motor development is nurtured through play, movement, and creative exploration. Toddlers strengthen gross motor skills as they climb, run, jump, and move to music. Fine motor skills are developed through activities like painting with a brush, rolling and flattening playdough, turning book

pages, and marking with crayons. These experiences build hand-eye coordination, balance, and overall physical confidence.

Social Development

Social-emotional growth is a central aspect of the toddler experience. Children learn to participate in group activities, engage in pretend play, and begin to follow simple social expectations such as using polite words and accepting limits. With gentle guidance, they start to build relationships, navigate emotions, and develop an awareness of others in a shared environment.

Cognitive Development

Cognitive milestones are supported through exploration, play, and structured learning experiences. Toddlers develop problem-solving skills as they complete simple puzzles, match objects, and explore concepts of alphabet, size, shape, color, and number. They learn to follow one- and two-step directions, understand positional language, and demonstrate early counting skills through the use of one-to-one correspondence. Participation in circle time, music, and story activities helps build focus, memory, and engagement with early academic concepts in a joyful and age-appropriate manner.

Beginners

(3 turning 4-year-olds)

Our Beginners program is carefully designed to foster growth in every area of development. The curriculum emphasizes social and emotional learning, early literacy skills, and foundational math concepts, ensuring your child is prepared for success while enjoying every moment of their educational journey.

Social and Emotional Development

In our nurturing classroom environment, children develop the emotional intelligence needed to thrive. Our program focuses on teaching empathy, cooperation, and self-regulation through interactive activities and meaningful relationships. Children are encouraged to express themselves, make choices, and solve problems independently, all while learning how to work together and respect the feelings of others. Teachers use simple stories and songs to explore emotions, model respectful behavior during classroom routines, and guide children through social interactions such as taking turns, resolving

small conflicts, and using words to express feelings. Religion and guidance classes further support this growth by reinforcing values such as kindness, gratitude, fairness, and empathy. These experiences help children build a foundation for healthy relationships and a strong sense of community.

Early Literacy

Literacy is the key to unlocking a world of knowledge, and we begin laying this foundation at an early age. In beginner classrooms, children engage in activities that promote listening, speaking, and language comprehension. We begin formal phonemic awareness instruction using *Heggerty*, a curriculum designed to develop essential early literacy skills by focusing on sounds, rhymes, and syllables through interactive activities. Each month, we focus on a different Author Study, introducing beloved children's authors and making connections to the stories they write. Each week, we introduce a new letter, focusing on its shape, sound, and placement in words. Our letter-based activities—ranging from storytelling and art projects to sensory play—make learning letters a fun and engaging experience. Children also begin to recognize their own names and other familiar words, strengthening their early writing skills. Through reading stories, singing songs, and engaging in interactive play, children develop a love for books and a growing understanding of letters, sounds, and word patterns.

Early Mathematics

Mathematical thinking begins early! Our early math curriculum emphasizes number recognition, counting, and shape identification, all through hands-on activities that make abstract concepts concrete. Each week, we explore a number between 1-10, helping children understand the concept of quantity, sequence, and simple problem-solving. Our exploration of shapes allows children to recognize, describe, and even create shapes in their environment, promoting spatial awareness and logical thinking. These foundational math skills will support their success as they continue their academic journey.

Pre-Kindergarten

(4 turning 5-year-olds)

Our Pre-Kindergarten program is designed to support the whole child through developmentally appropriate experiences that foster growth in communication, motor coordination, independence, social-emotional

development and academic readiness. At this age, students develop foundational language and communication skills by speaking in complete sentences, using words to express their needs and emotions, maintaining eye contact, and actively participating in both small- and large-group lessons. They learn to listen attentively, ask questions to gain information, and take turns speaking, laying the groundwork for practical verbal expression and comprehension.

Self-help skills are emphasized daily as students develop independence and confidence. Children practice following one-, two-, and three-step directions, maintaining attention during tasks, choosing activities independently, and solving problems using words. They begin to demonstrate responsibility, seek help when needed, and respond positively to redirection. Social growth is nurtured through learning to share, take turns, establish friendships, and work cooperatively or independently as appropriate.

In the area of motor development, students strengthen both fine and gross motor skills. Fine motor progress includes demonstrating proper pencil grip, using scissors with control, copying letters and shapes, and writing their names and numerals. Gross motor milestones include hopping, balancing, throwing, catching, and managing self-help tasks such as buttoning, zipping, and snapping. Together, these foundational skills prepare students for success in Kindergarten and beyond by supporting their ability to communicate, care for themselves, and participate confidently in a school setting.

Social and Emotional Development

In Pre-K, social and emotional growth remains a core focus as children continue to develop a strong sense of self and positive relationships with others. Through carefully designed activities, children build confidence, learn to share, and work collaboratively. We encourage independence, responsibility, and problem-solving through group activities, storytelling, and conflict resolution exercises. Emotional awareness is developed through role-playing, discussions, and guided activities that teach empathy and help children recognize and manage their emotions. As a result, children develop the skills needed to navigate social interactions successfully and build lasting friendships.

Early Literacy

Our Pre-K curriculum continues to lay a solid foundation for reading and writing. Through *Foundations*, a multisensory phonics program, children engage in hands-on activities to learn letter sounds, blend and segment words, and build new vocabulary. The program incorporates visual, auditory, and tactile methods to engage different learning styles, ensuring that all children make meaningful connections with the written word. *Heggerty*, our phonemic awareness program, strengthens children's ability to recognize and manipulate sounds in spoken words. This crucial skill supports later reading and writing success, and children will enjoy playful activities that promote sound awareness, rhyming, and syllable segmentation. Children practice handwriting skills with *Handwriting Without Tears*, a curriculum designed to teach proper posture, pencil grip, and letter formation. The emphasis on correct body alignment and grip supports fine motor development, helping children develop the physical skills needed for writing.

Early Mathematics

Children begin to explore foundational mathematical concepts using *Developing Roots*, a program that incorporates a multi-sensory approach and emphasizes the “concrete-pictorial-abstract” sequence of learning. Students develop early mathematical thinking through hands-on exploration, play-based learning, and meaningful routines that foster curiosity and problem-solving. The curriculum focuses on building number sense, recognizing and writing numbers, and understanding basic concepts of quantity and comparison. Students practice one-to-one correspondence, counting sets of objects, identifying patterns, and sorting by attributes such as color, shape, and size. They are introduced to simple measurement, calendar concepts, and basic geometry by exploring shapes and spatial relationships. Through daily activities, games, and guided instruction, children build a strong foundation for future math learning in a joyful and developmentally appropriate environment.

EC Co-curricular Offerings

In addition to our core curriculum, Early Childhood students enjoy a variety of co-curricular classes. These co-curricular classes enrich the core curriculum to ensure that each child receives a well-rounded education that nurtures not only their academic growth but also their emotional, social, and creative

development. Students enjoy each co-curricular class once in a seven-day rotation.

Science

Our science program sparks natural curiosity in young learners as they explore the world around them. Learning often takes place in our dedicated outdoor science classroom, where students observe seasonal changes, explore natural materials, and investigate their environment through hands-on discovery. Toddlers begin by engaging their senses and noticing patterns in nature. Beginners build on this by conducting simple experiments and learning about animals, plants, and weather. Pre-K students develop early scientific thinking by asking questions, making predictions, and drawing conclusions based on their observations in nature.

Religion

Spiritual development is nurtured through age-appropriate religion classes that focus on kindness, gratitude, and community. Religion class is offered in addition to weekly Chapel, allowing students to explore faith and values in both classroom and worship settings. Toddlers experience these themes through stories, songs, and simple routines that emphasize care and respect. Beginners begin to connect these values with their daily actions and relationships, while Pre-K students learn about empathy, fairness, and making good choices.

Guidance

Emotional and social growth are central to the early childhood experience. Through our guidance program, toddlers are introduced to the language of feelings and begin learning how to self-regulate with support. Beginners explore social skills such as sharing, turn-taking, and using words to express emotions. In Pre-K, children build resilience, practice problem-solving strategies, and learn to navigate peer relationships more independently.

Music & Music and Movement

Music engages the whole child—body, mind, and emotions. Toddlers experience rhythm and movement through songs, finger plays, and instruments. Beginners begin to recognize patterns in music, follow rhythms, and express themselves through movement and sound. Pre-K students expand their musical vocabulary, develop coordination, and build memory

and language skills through repeated musical experiences that support early brain development and joyful expression. All EC students attend Music and Movement class twice in a seven-day rotation.

Art

Our art program encourages creativity, fine motor development, and confidence in self-expression. Toddlers explore colors, textures, and basic materials through sensory-rich experiences. Beginners begin to make intentional choices in their artwork and experiment with a wider range of tools and techniques. Pre-K students develop greater control and attention to detail, often collaborating with the woodworking program on integrated projects. EC students attend Art class once in a seven-day rotation.

Woodworking (Pre-K Only)

Pre-K students participate in a unique woodworking program that builds fine motor strength, hand-eye coordination, and problem-solving skills. With guidance and safety at the forefront, students use real tools to plan, create, and build, developing persistence, spatial awareness, and confidence. Woodworking encourages collaboration and gives children a powerful sense of accomplishment through hands-on creation. Many projects are thoughtfully integrated with art, offering students the opportunity to express their creativity through multiple media.

Library

Library time promotes early literacy, listening comprehension, and a love of books. Toddlers enjoy read-alouds and exploring books through pictures and simple text. Beginners begin to develop print awareness and grow more curious about characters and simple story plots. Pre-K students engage with characters and story elements in books through simple, teacher-guided questions. A highlight of the program is the Mystery Reader tradition, which brings families into the joy of reading together.

Reading (Beginners and Pre-K)

Our Literacy Specialist facilitates extra reading sessions for Beginners and Pre-K students to build and strengthen foundational literacy skills. Students attend Extra Reading in small groups once every seven days to reinforce phonemic awareness, letter recognition, and listening comprehension.

Lessons are designed to reinforce the literacy learning goals for the week and to nurture early reading confidence.

Questions regarding St. Martin's curriculum or supporting materials should be directed to the Division Principal and Director of Teaching & Learning.