

Benson Memorial UMC Preschool and Kindergarten Prep

Curriculum Information for Children 3-5 Years of Age

We practice a student centered emergent curriculum, providing intentional, meaningful learning experiences. These experiences are developed from widely held expectations, the children's interests and a child's inherent motivation to learn. Our curriculum, like a child, thrives in a warm, supportive classroom setting that encourages strong relationships between teachers and students.

Our teaching teams:

- Engage children in discussions employing open ended questions to determine student's interests.
- Observe students and listen to students as they play.
- Discuss their observations and strategize how best to meet students' needs and meet our curriculum guide's goals and objectives.
- Incorporate project based activities and collaborative group work into their plans.
- Include/integrate symbolic language in the literacy experience.
- Endeavor to create a vibrant and dynamic group identity by giving purposeful attention to each component of our community: the locality we serve, our school, our classrooms, small groups with in the classroom, and individual relationships.

We plan carefully considering the following elements.

- **Age appropriateness** – We consider the ages of the children in the class. We also consider the developmental range of our students.
- **Individual appropriateness** - We consider each individual child's development. Children follow similar growth patterns, but the time frame for each child differs. Individual interests and abilities are taken into consideration when planning and developing goals and objectives.
- **Family and culture** -We plan activities with respect and sensitivity for our families.
- **Transitions** - We use themes that are relevant to and relate to our children's interests.
- **Projects** – Projects may be group or individual. Children learn the basics of project management. They learn to isolate tasks and manage them alone and as a team. Projects can be used to incorporate collaborative group work into our plans.
- **Group times, individual time and activities** – All interactions are thoughtful and intentional keeping our goals and objectives in mind. They are not only opportunities to share information; they are also a means to strengthen our relationships and sense of community.
- **Physical environment** – Our classrooms include learning centers designed to promote our children's development. Here are a few centers to look for in our classrooms.
 - **Dramatic play center** - Dramatic play allows children to role play and explore social dynamics.
 - **Block area** - Blocks are extremely valuable learning tools. Children can explore size, quantity, space, length, shape, special relationships and so much more.
 - **Writing center and or free art center** - This area allows children to explore, create and to strengthen fine motor skills.
 - **Book area** - Book areas encourage children to value and enjoy reading.
 - **Manipulatives** - Manipulatives are items which children manipulate in order to enhance cognitive skills and to refine fine motor skills. Manipulatives include puzzles, peg boards and shape sorters.

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We use, *Foundations: Early Learning Standards for North Carolina Preschoolers and Strategies for Guiding Their Success* to determine age appropriate goals and objectives for our students. This book provides early learning standards and expectations for developmentally appropriate practice. *Foundations* is a guide for teachers, administrators, families or any adult working with preschool children in North Carolina. We also incorporate strategies from Dr. Becky Bailey's *Conscious Discipline* into our curriculum. *Conscious Discipline* is a comprehensive classroom management program and a social-emotional curriculum. In addition, we integrate *Handwriting Without Tears* a developmentally-based handwriting program, into our curriculum.

I. Social – Emotional Development

1. Build a sense of self-esteem

- Feel valued as a member of a family and community
- Feel proud of one's heritage and background
- Gain confidence in their growing abilities
- Increase their independence
- Develop ability to stand up for themselves
- Increase ability to make positive choices

2. Develop positive attitudes towards life

- Build trust and relationships with adults, primary care givers and peers
- Learn to separate from parents and primary care givers
- Demonstrate an interest in and participate in classroom activities
- Transition through and participate in routine activities easily
- Increase their ability to cope with change

3. Develop cooperative and pro-social behavior/positive sense of self with others

- Seek out others when needing help, assistance or comfort
- Recognize and respect the rights, viewpoints, and feelings of others
- Have and express empathy and care for others
- Develop an understanding of how personal behaviors effect others
- Resolve social conflicts constructively
- Play and interact with positive expectations and intentions

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II. Physical Development

1. Develop self-care skills related to feeding, clothing and tending to personal hygiene
 - Increase awareness of basic hygiene practices
 - Increase independence with self-care and self-help skills
 - Accept responsibility in caring for personal belongings
 - Cooperatively help with environmental routines and tasks
2. Develop an awareness of physical safety for one's self and others
 - Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of personal safety
 - Increase awareness of health and safety rules and routines
 - Recognize and avoid potentially dangerous behaviors, situations or objects
 - Cooperatively help with maintaining a healthy and safe environment
3. Enhance gross motor skills
 - Walk up and down stairs
 - Run with increasing control of speed and direction
 - Jump with both feet, introduce and encourage jumping on one foot
 - Ride and steer a tricycle or similar equipment
 - Catch ball/bean bag
 - Throw, roll, or kick an object in the intended direction
 - Use large muscles to improve balance
 - Respond to rhythm
 - If applicable, learn to use wheelchair, walker, or other adaptable equipment
 - Increase ones ability to dress ones self (put on coat, shoes, etc.)
4. Enhance fine motor skills
 - Increase control and intention with art supplies and writing materials
 - Increase and refine eye-hand coordination (puzzles, cutting)
 - Increase and refine self-help skills (feeding oneself, pouring skills)
 - Increase abilities with manipulatives (blocks, beads, lacing)

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III. Cognitive Development

1. Begin acquiring learning and problem solving skills

- Explore, observe, and make discoveries with the desire to learn
- Ask and respond to questions
- Use reasoning, planning skills, creativity to problem solve
- Use creativity and imagination
- Persist in tasks
- Apply knowledge to new contexts

2. Expand logical thinking skills

- Classify objects by similarities and differences
- Arrange objects in a sequence
- Recall a sequence of events
- Use size words and make size comparisons
- Recognize and describe shapes basic shapes
- Increase awareness of cause and effect relationships

3. Acquire mathematical concepts and information of his/her immediate world

- Experiment with numbers, counting and one to one correspondence
- Understand comparisons (more/less, larger/smaller)
- Identify relationships of objects in space (over/under, inside, up/down)
- Locate items in a familiar environment
- Recognize and duplicate or describe patterns
- Demonstrate an understanding of sorting and classifying
- Identify individual characteristics and attributes of objects or events
- Use all possible senses to gather information

4. Express or develop creativity

- Make believe with objects or about situations
- Express self with increasing detail in
 - Art – paint, drawing, clay
 - Music – singing, dancing, finger-plays, games
 - Rhythm – dancing, instruments
 - Movement – different patterns of beats, tempo, and style

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IV. Language Development and Communication Skills

1. Expand receptive communication skills

- Comprehend increasingly complex sentences
- Interpret facial expressions and interpret gestures
- Demonstrate the understanding of and use of a growing vocabulary
- Process and understand questions
- Follow two to three step directions
- Recall words in a song or finger play
- Make progress in understanding English for English as second language students

2. Expand expressive communication skills

- Use words to explain ideas or feelings
- Use appropriate communication
- Create, retell, or role play stories
- Take turns while listening and speaking
- Make progress in speaking English for English as second language students

3. Development of beginning reading skills – see additional literacy curriculum for more information

- Ask to be read to
- Independently choosing to look at a book
- Engage in pretend reading
- Listen to a story/retell what happened
- Begin to predict what will happen next in a story
- Ask relevant questions about the story
- Become aware that print carries a message
- Gain alphabet knowledge
 - Learn to identify their names and the names of others
 - Learn to identify some letters
- Gain phonological awareness
 - Become aware of language patterns such as rhyme, alliteration
 - Become familiar with songs, rhymes and finger plays well enough to supply missing words
 - Recognize rhythmic patterns, and beats in songs, chants, poems and word play

3. Development of beginning writing skills

- Experiment with a variety of writing tools
- Experience writing in the forms of labels, lists, signs and messages
- Explore drawing to represent ideas and to convey thoughts
- Learn to dictate their thoughts for an adult to share in writing
- Attempt to approximate letters and represent thoughts and ideas though these attempts

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We have a strong literacy based curriculum starting at age two, with a Literacy Enrichment Program to offer skill practice outside of the classroom experience.

Our goals and objectives for each age vary and are cumulative.

In the **two's class**, we read traditional stories and concentrate on enhancing the children's ability to attend to the story. We encourage students to recall and re-tell the story. Through the use of games and activities we expand upon the children's understanding of the characters, the sequence of events and comprehension of the text. We guide students in the use of picture cues, using illustrations to predict and hypothesize what might be coming next in the text.

In the **three's class**, we spend time on all of the above as well as helping the children to understand that text reads from left to right. We use letter sounds, rhyming, alliteration and other word play to assist students in a deeper understanding of the written word.

In the **fours and Transition class**, we have incorporated the above strategies. We also practice reading mini books that relate to the theme of the Big Book we use for group reading practice and reinforcement of general reading rules. We want them to grasp that the written text has meaning and that each word is essentially a symbol. Therefore, we also work on sight words. We select books with repetitive text and good picture cues to promote success. We have been very impressed with the way the children have responded to our efforts.

You will receive information on early literacy. You will see why we started this program and learn some ideas to use at home.

LITERACY PRACTICE IN THE CLASSROOMS

- Using book, poems and sentence strips with picture clues as part of large group shared reading.
- Using finger, wand or other item to track print on charts, big books and morning message.
- Webbing ideas.
- Making class charts and grafts on relevant topics.
- Using mini books with predictable and repetitive text for shared reading.
- Sharing a "Morning Message" with the class each day for group reading.
- Using tongue twisters, alliteration, rhyming and word play throughout the day.
- Using predictable text, such as Nursery Rhymes during group reading and for mini books.
- High five the "hand" on the door each morning, saying the pass word, which is either a letter or a sight word.
- Having the class participate in big book making.

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LITERACY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES SPECIFICLY FOR STUDENTS IN THE FOURS AND TRANSTION CLASS

ORAL LANGUAGE

- Assist students in language acquisition
- Develop and increases vocabulary
- Promote the use of accurate language structure
- Use oral language to access reading and writing

PHONOLOGICAL SKILLS

- Build a foundation of phonemic awareness for explicit skills learning
- Teach systematic phonics

READING ALOUD

- Build vocabulary
- Increase repertoire of language and its use
- Develop comprehension strategies
- Improve listening skills
- Promote phonemic awareness

SHARED READING

- Encourage cooperative learning and child-to-child support
- Stress phonemic awareness, phonologic skills and fluency
- Focus on text comprehension
- Teach comprehension skills
- Allow students to practice strategies being learned

INTERACTIVE WRITING

- Teach letter identification and formation
- Provide an opportunity to jointly plan and construct text
- Develop letter-sound correspondence and spelling
- Teach phonics

INDEPENDENT WRITING

- Encourage writing for different purposes and different audiences
- Foster creativity

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Equipment and Activities that promote social-emotional development

Mirrors	Classroom with scheduled routines
Multi-racial dolls	Doll house / furniture
Puppets	Hats
Housekeeping equipment	Workshop / tools
Books	Music
Circle Time	Media
Toys available to play / share	Group games
Art supplies	Cooperative games
Bulletin Boards	Hands on cooperative learning experiences

Equipment and Activities that promote physical development

Blocks	Puzzles
Riding toys	Peg boards / pegs
Climbing toys	Sewing cards
Swings	Art projects
Equipment with steps / slides	Art supplies
Sand and sand equipment	Musical instruments
Media	Exercise / aerobic program
CD / Tape player	Creative movement / dance
Bean bags / balls	Easel / paint
Play dough / clay	Toy cars / trucks
Workbench / tools	Sorting cubes / games
Scissors	Toy trains
Outdoor play for running, jumping, climbing	Chalk / chalkboard
Science for hands on learning experiences	Dolls – stuffed animals
Lego	Pull toys
Housekeeping toys	Push toys
Shopping carts	Bead stringing
Hands on cooperative learning experiences	Plastic / rubber animals
Clothes pins	Dressing board (zipping, buttoning, tying, snapping)
Tunnels	Nesting toys / stacking shapes
Airplanes	Keys

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Equipment and Activities that promote cognitive development

Art supplies	Puzzles
Art projects	Puppets
Sand and sand equipment	Dolls – stuffed animals
Housekeeping toys	Music Time
Sewing cards	Circle Time
Record player	Show and Tell
Musical instruments	Sequencing games
CD / Tape player	Bean bags / balls
Workbench / tools	Peg board
Trucks / garage	Story time
Airplanes	Sorting cubes / games
Plastic / rubber animals	Easel / paint
Matching games	Records / tapes, CDs
Movement	Books
Identifying and naming games	Cooperative games
Doll house / furniture	Chalk / chalkboard
Comparison activities	Magnets
Cash registers	Toy mountains, garages, mailboxes, houses, schools, castles
Science activities	
Life sciences – animals, plants, hygiene	
Physical sciences – water, magnets, magnification	
Environment	
Opportunities for sensory explorations	
Textures – sand, play dough, cotton, texture puzzles	
Taste – snacks, food for units	
Sight – bulletin boards, stories, items at circle time	
Smell – food smells, art supplies, soap smells	
Hearing – auditory input, music, musical instruments	