



Nursery School



PROGRAM INFORMATION

Welcome to Nursery School

Nursery School is a play based program where children are able to construct their own learning through varied play experiences offered and supported by the teachers both indoors and outdoors. The Nursery School teachers look forward to getting to know you and your child throughout the year. This booklet is designed to answer some of the questions you may have and give you some information about how we work with children.

“Children who play regularly in natural environments show more advanced motor fitness, including coordination, balance and agility, and they are sick less often. (Grahm, et al. 1997, Fjortoft & Sageie 2001)

“When children play in natural environments, their play is more diverse with imaginative and creative play that fosters language and collaborative skills. (Moore & Wong 1997, Taylor, et al. 1998, Fjortoft 2000)

“Early experiences with the natural world have been positively linked with the development of imagination and the sense of wonder.” (Cobb 1977, Louv 1991) - (Claire Warden, 2010)

The Reggio Emilia Approach

In Nursery School, we are interested in learning about and incorporating the Reggio Emilia principles into our program. This approach to child care was developed in the city of Reggio Emilia in Northern Italy where municipal funding has been providing a combination of school and child care for children under the age of six since World War II. Since it is difficult to take a philosophy from another culture and duplicate it, the principles are interpreted to fit within our Canadian culture. If you are interested in learning more about Reggio Emilia, we have books that we are willing to lend out.

The following principles talk about how children, teachers and parents are viewed in the Reggio Emilia approach. These principles guide the work we do with children.

1. The Child as the Protagonist

Children are strong, rich and capable. All children have preparedness, potential, curiosity, and interest in constructing their learning, negotiating with everything their environment brings to them. Children, teachers and parents are considered the three central protagonists in the educational process. (Gandini, 1993)



2. The Child as the Collaborator

Education has to focus on each child in relation to other children, the family, the teachers and the community rather than on each child in isolation (Gandini, 1993). There is an emphasis on work in small groups, allowing for discussion.

3. The Child as the Communicator

The Reggio Emilia approach fosters children's intellectual development through a systematic focus on symbolic representation, including words, movement, drawing, painting, building, sculpture, shadow play, collages, dramatic play and music which lead children to surprising levels of communication, symbolic skills and creativity.

4. The Environment as a Third Teacher

The design and use of space encourages encounters, communication and relationships (Gandini, 1993). There is an underlying order and beauty in the design and organization of all the space and the equipment and materials within it (Lewing, 1995). Every corner of every space has an identity and a purpose. It is rich in potential to engage and to communicate. It is valued and cared for by children and adults.

5. The Teacher as a Researcher

Teachers work together and maintain strong, collegial relationships. They engage in continuous discussion and interpretation of their work and the work of the children.

6. Documentation as Communication

Careful consideration and attention are given to the presentation of the thinking of both the children and the adults who work with them. Teacher's commentary on the purposes of the study and the children's learning process, transcriptions of the children's verbal language (i.e. words and dialog), photographs of their activity and representations of their thinking in many media are composed in carefully designed panels or books to present the process of learning.

7. Parents as Partners

Parent participation is considered essential and takes many forms. Parents play an active part in their children's learning experience and help ensure the welfare of all the children. The ideas and skills that families bring, and even more important, the exchange of ideas between parents and teachers favour the development of a new way of educating.



Helpful Hints for Nursery School

- Nursery School starts at 8:50 am and ends at 11:20 am. Please be here on time for pick up. Arrival after 11:25 am will result in a late fee.
- The children and teachers in Nursery School spend a lot of time playing on the carpeted area of the room. Please help us in keeping the carpet clean by removing your outside shoes and keeping strollers in the hallway.
- Please dress your child in appropriate “work clothes” as we have an optional smock policy. We will be involved in painting, water, sand and mud exploration as well as other messy activities. Children will be encouraged to wear a smock but if they shy away from an activity because they have to wear a smock or if it hinders their activities, they have the option of removing it.

Things to Bring Everyday

Please send the items listed below with your child every day. It is helpful to have all items sent to Nursery School **LABLED** with your child's name.

- Extra full change of clothes
- Indoor runners
- Outdoor clothing appropriate for play outside
 - o Fall/Spring: hat, outside runners, rain boots, sweater, splash pants, rain jacket
 - o Winter: boots, hat, scarf, mitts, ski pants, jacket



Journals

Journals are an important part of our Nursery School program. Children receive their own journal at the beginning of the year and it becomes a way to communicate their learning experiences to parents, friends, and teachers. During Nursery School, on a regular basis, the teachers will work with each child to decide what the journal entry will be. When the journal travels home, parents will add one entry that the child will be able to talk about the following Nursery School days.

General Strategies for Journal Entries

1. When you and your child go out in the community, save a remnant of where you went and place it in the journal. The remnant should be something that is meaningful to your child and that he or she is able to associate with the place it came from. Let your child help select the remnant.
2. Encourage your child to say the words for the place or activity the remnant represents. Your child may not be able to read words in the journal, however, the remnant may remind him/her of the activity and will be able to tell a story.
3. Make the journal readily available to your child at all times so that he or she can initiate interactions by simply opening the book and pointing to the remnants.



Programming and Journals

The framework of the program reflects a connectedness with nature where the children play an active part in their growing understanding of the world. Journals provide parents and teachers with a snapshot of each child's learning and thinking. As the children "read" their journals to their friends, the teachers are listening to and observing the reactions of the children. The children and teachers can become inspired by a journal entry and this can lead to a new toy, a group- activity, a relevant story or a class project. In this way, parents and families can influence the program.

Benefits to Children

Journals help develop pre-reading skills, verbal skills and self-esteem in children. The children begin to recognize their name that is on the cover and become familiar with the front, back and different pages in a book. They gain confidence in themselves by having a turn to tell their story to the group. Parents have reported how much their children enjoy sharing their journals with family and friends at home.

Nursery School Schedule

1. Arrival 8:45-8:50am

During this time please take your child to use the bathroom, get dressed and ready in appropriate outdoor/indoor clothing. A sign on the classroom door will indicate where our group will meet and we will start our day. A teacher will be available.

2. Outside/inside Play 8:50-9:30am

We will start our day outside every day, except in extreme weather conditions. The children will engage in many play opportunities which will further develop their large muscles, social and cognitive skills. Using large muscles enhances their fine motor skill and concentration.

3. Bathroom Break and Snack Time 9:30-9:45

For the first while, we will have a scheduled bathroom break as your child may need time to feel comfortable in the surroundings. Once a comfort level is achieved, we encourage independent toileting and let the children go alone. Please be assured that we are close by if we are needed for any reason. Following the bathroom break and hand washing, snack is served. Our snack menu is posted beside our classroom door. Snack may take place indoors or outdoors.

4. Free Play 9:45-10:45am

Free play will take place in the classroom and/or deck. We as teachers will help guide and facilitate each child's learning choice. During this time, your child will have the chance to explore the play environment, as well as engage in imaginative play. A table activity will also be offered at this time. The goal of the table activity varies and may be selected to correspond with the group's interest, introduce a new skill or provide a new and different experience. There will also be an opportunity for each child to share their journal during free play.

5. Meeting Time 10:45-11:00am

During our meeting time, teachers offer songs, games and a chance for new topics to be introduced. It is a time to come together as a group and discuss our morning as well as any upcoming events.

6. Active Play 11:00-11:20am

Active play may take place in several places; outside (weather permitting), in the gym, or in the large muscle room. The children will be able to explore their physical abilities through different mediums, such as climbers, bikes, balls, etc. We will be encouraging your child to take small steps in trying new things in order to learn new skills and become confident in their abilities.

