

How Your Preschool Child Learns

Your child is at a special stage. Children ages 3 to 5 are learning all the time—and they learn best by being active. Like other preschool children, your child probably asks lots of questions: How does this work? What makes plants grow? How do worms move if they don't have legs? What's inside this old clock? Preschoolers are very curious about their world.

We could answer these questions, and sometimes we do. But because we want children to see themselves as inventors, problem solvers, discoverers, and capable learners, we help them develop their natural curiosity. We encourage them to observe, explore, take things apart, build, create, draw, and see what they can find out. The more active children are in their work, the more they learn and remember.

While preschool children are alike in many ways, no other child is exactly like your child. And no one knows your child better than you do. You know how your child learns and reacts to new situations, so you can help your child's teachers. If you share with us what is happening to your child at home—the arrival of a new baby, the death of a pet, nightmares, temper tantrums, trips, separation, or divorce—we can understand your child better. We can support positive and difficult events through reassuring stories, soothing art activities, imaginative dramatic play, and extra love and attention.

If your child has a health problem such as an allergy, diabetes, or asthma, please let us know what we can do to keep your child safe. We also want to know if your child has a diagnosed disability or any other type of special need. While a child may have a disability in one or more areas of development, in other areas a child may be developing at a completely normal rate. We will do everything we can to help your child participate as fully as possible in all aspects of our program.

The Goals of Our Curriculum

The most important goals of our preschool curriculum are for children to get along well with others and become enthusiastic learners. We want children to become independent, self-confident, curious learners who can work well with others. We're teaching them **how** to learn, not just in preschool, but all through their lives. We do this by creating purposeful and productive play experiences that help children grow in all areas.

Our curriculum identifies goals in four areas of development.

Social/emotional: to help children develop independence, self-confidence, and self-control; follow rules and routines; make friends; and learn what it means to be part of a group.

Physical: to increase children's large muscle skills—balancing, running, jumping, throwing and catching—and to use the small muscles in their hands to do tasks like buttoning, stringing beads, cutting, drawing, and writing.

Cognitive: to acquire thinking skills such as the abilities to solve problems, to ask questions, and to think logically—sorting, classifying, comparing, counting, and making patterns—and to use materials and their imagination to show what they have learned.

Language: to use words to communicate with others, listen to and participate in conversations with others, understand the purpose of print, recognize letters and words, and begin writing for a purpose.

Through the activities we plan and the way we organize the classroom, select toys and materials, plan the daily schedule, and talk with children, we seek to accomplish the goals of our curriculum and give your child a successful start in school.