

Green Acres School Early Childhood Unit Curriculum 2018-2019

The Green Acres School Mission Statement

Green Acres School challenges and inspires students to live and learn with intellect, curiosity, determination, joy, and compassion.

An Intentional Model of Progressive Education

Green Acres, as a progressive school, places a high value on helping the whole child develop. The following are the elements within the Early Childhood Unit (ECU) that reflect this philosophy.

Developing a Strong SENSE OF SELF

- **Encouraging self-regulation:** Children are allowed to discover their own physical rhythms and needs in the areas of dressing, eating, and toileting.
Example: Snack is treated as a choice – the children are responsible for eating snack when offered and determining how much they feel they need.
- **Encouraging self-direction:** Teachers structure a program and organize materials, discussions, and activities which invite children to explore, plan and direct their own work.
Example: During Choice Time, children choose from a variety of open-ended activities: art, language and literacy, math, science, blocks, manipulative, and dramatic play.
- **Encouraging self-discipline:** As teachers set limits and help children solve social and emotional problems, the goal is that each child learn to express needs and feelings, listen to peers, and develop his or her own organization of inner controls and ability to be in charge of himself/herself.
Example: Children are invited to be problem solvers and to negotiate social situations using their words. Teachers model words for children to use in a respectful and peaceful way.
- **Encouraging relationships with peers:** The early childhood programs and schedules allow for a great deal of time for the children to interact with peers. Learning to appreciate and cooperate with one another, and to be able to follow as well as to lead, is the foundation for becoming a contributing member of a democratic society.
Example: In Pre-K, there is a Kindness Jar where attention to the importance of acts of kindness between people is both drawn and reinforced. This teaches children how to be a friend and to be a kind member of a group. In all of ECU, the children learn songs about taking care of each other and working collaboratively with each other.
- **Encouraging group participation:** Teachers help children in developmentally appropriate ways to feel comfortable and competent as participants in class activities.
Example: Children work in groups of varying sizes, where they have many opportunities to contribute their ideas and thoughts (e.g., homecorner time in a small group and group time in a large group).

- **Encouraging multiculturalism and inclusion:** We respect, appreciate and celebrate our diversity based on differences and commonalities.
Example: The classrooms reflect an inclusive environment for all different people through books, stories, posters, songs, photographs, art materials, and multicultural figures to enhance play. Families are encouraged to come into class to share about what makes their family special and unique.

Encouraging THINKING AND PROBLEM SOLVING Skills

- Encouraging a **focus on the process rather than the product** when children work with materials and practice different skills.
Example: In the art room, a variety of materials are provided for children to use in their own creative way, only limited by their imagination. Open-ended art activities allow children to focus on the process and not the product.
- Encouraging **experimentation** as children explore the possibilities of their environment, as well as their own abilities.
Example: While engaged in the Fix-It Shop, the Pre-K children use real tools to explore the inside components of non-working, electrical devices such as VCRs and computer hard drives, as well as imagine their own inventions.
- Encouraging children to **ask questions and take risks** versus an emphasis on getting one right answer.
Example: Participate in activities and songs during group time, ask open-ended questions, and encourage and value a myriad of creative answers.

Defining THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER

- Balance the needs of children individually and the group as a whole.
- Provide **appropriate challenge and support for each child** to grow academically as well as socially and emotionally.
- Plan a **program oriented toward the developmental needs of children**: a program full of opportunities to move, explore, talk, and become personally involved in their whole school experience.
- Intentionally plan **experiential learning opportunities** that are informed by the Theory of Multiple Intelligences, involving all the senses. The philosophy of “Knowing in the Doing,” where learning is interactive and hands-on, is valued.
- Follow an **emergent curriculum** where teachers include the children’s ideas to determine themes and activities of the curriculum.
Example: When a Pre-K child shared his enthusiasm for garbage trucks and his love of *I Stink* by Kate and Jim McMullan, a transportation theme emerged in the classroom. This curiosity fueled the investigation of all things that move. Teachers brought out pictures, photographs, and books. Children created docks, runways, and parking lots in the big block area and made

paper airplanes and boats that could float. The culminating project was the creation of a garbage truck that visited various Green Acres buildings to help recycle and compost.

- Build an **integrated curriculum**. When learning about a theme, all areas of the classroom are connected to the current theme.
Example: During a Kindergarten unit on reptiles, the students have the opportunity to closely inspect the science classroom reptiles and engage in activities to learn about the characteristics of reptiles; the language area has books and offers opportunities to write about their experiences; a visiting expert presents an assembly on reptiles; art includes materials to design reptiles; and relevant songs are introduced during group time.

It is in these three categories: helping the child develop a **SENSE OF SELF**, placing a priority on **THINKING AND PROBLEM SOLVING**, and **THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER**, that Green Acres School expresses its commitment to progressive education in the Early Childhood Program.

The Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum

The Pre-K program at Green Acres is designed to match the developmental growth of 3, 4, and 5 year old students. In keeping the “whole child” at the center of promoting growth both emotionally and academically, the following elements are cornerstones of our program:

- The program is "child-centered." Planning for the class includes keeping each child's unique needs and skills in mind.
- The Pre-K program is designed so that it continually attends to children's development in four areas: social/emotional, academic, physical, and aesthetic. Problem solving skills are developed across all domains.
- The classroom environment is structured in such a way that all children are given common materials. Each child has many opportunities to select and direct his/her own activities and to work in a personal and creative style. Additionally, the children learn to work cooperatively with each other in sharing supplies and learning to balance their needs and wants with those of others.
- Several times each day, the teachers plan experiences for the children, which include small group (homecorner) special projects, whole class time (for songs, stories, discussions, and games), and small groupings with specials teachers. The goal is for each child to develop an ability to work successfully in a variety of situations and to learn how to be an active participant in group settings.
- During much of the day, the teachers work with children on a one-to-one basis, responding to and stretching each child individually. Understanding where each child is developmentally allows teachers to foster the attainment of beginning skills in literacy and mathematics.
- The process of “integrated learning” is valued and promoted by the teaching staff. In other words, we recognize that the child is learning in many ways at the same time. For example, while interacting with peers and working with blocks, a child may be developing language skills, reading and writing skills, social negotiation skills, logical mathematical skills, visual patterning skills, and motor and manipulative skills.

- Although children learn in an integrated manner, we recognize and provide for specific skill development. Teachers often select materials and plan activities to challenge children in particular subject or curriculum areas. Throughout the year, times of the day and areas of the room will be devoted to particular themes, which are selected by both teachers and students. Examples of themes might include: self, family, celebrations, seasons, Arctic adventures, or transportation.
- Attention is paid to aesthetic development in all domains, which allows the children to develop their artistic and creative talents.

What follows are the benchmark skills that the program develops in each Pre-K child:

Social/Emotional Development

Making Decisions

- Being able to select a task or an activity
- Beginning to engage in problem solving

Taking Care of Oneself

- Being able to care for oneself and one's belongings

Expressing Oneself

- Being able to express one's feelings verbally

Becoming Independent

- Being able to work alone
- Feeling confident about one's work

Developing Self-Control

- Being able to control one's impulses
- Being able to adjust one's own behavior to fit the dynamics of various groups and situations

Interacting with Adults

- Feeling comfortable with adults
- Being able to use adult support
- Being able to cooperate with adults
- Being able to participate successfully in teacher-directed group activities

Interacting with Peers

- Feeling comfortable with peers, one-on-one
- Feeling comfortable with peers in small groups
- Feeling comfortable with peers in larger groups
- Being able to participate in child-initiated group activities
- Being able to follow the ideas or examples of others
- Being able to take a leadership role
- Being able to take turns
- Being able to work through disagreements with peers
- Beginning to develop the understanding of group dynamics, mutual respect, and responsibility
- Beginning to develop an awareness of and respect for individual differences

Academic Development Literacy Skills

Listening Skills

- Listening without interrupting
- Listening with sensitivity to others
- Listening for information/multiple-step directions
- Demonstrating the ability to repeat information heard
- Demonstrating through actions an understanding of instructions
- Developing sound discrimination

Speaking Skills

- Expressing needs and solving problems
- Becoming comfortable speaking in a variety of settings
- Speaking with sensitivity to others

Dramatization

- Participating in social-dramatic play
- Acting out familiar stories

Developing Comprehension and Pre-Reading Skills

- Understanding the orientation of a book
- Becoming familiar with the concept of left to right, top to bottom
- Recognizing the role of author and illustrator
- Recalling and retelling events of a story
- Understanding a sequence of events within a story
- Making predictions
- Responding to questions of why and how
- Contrasting and comparing books and stories
- Exposing children to a variety of reading genres
- Engaging in reading books for pleasure

Developing Beginning Reading and Writing Skills

Writing:

- Being exposed to the written word through a print-rich environment
- Experimenting with lines and curves to build letters
- Becoming familiar with the form of lowercase and uppercase letters
- Recognizing uppercase letters
- Writing uppercase letters using the *Handwriting Without Tears* curriculum
- Experimenting with writing lowercase and uppercase letters
- Writing one's own name
- Writing the numerals 0-9
- Copying words from a model
- Using "invented" spelling
- Using writing tools to develop fine-motor strength and control
- Sharing written work with peers
- Dictating thoughts and stories

Reading:

- Recognizing one's own name and the names of classmates
- Associating letters and sounds
- Recognizing simple words and labels
- Participating in rhyming activities
- Naming and recognizing colors
- Developing and expanding vocabulary
- Creating dictated books

Mathematical Skills

Shapes

- Learning and identifying the names of basic shapes
- Drawing basic shapes

Numeration/Counting

- Understanding and using 1:1 correspondence 1-10
- Recognizing written numbers 0-10
- Associating number names with collections of items
- Adding and subtracting through games and materials
- Understanding the concept of zero

Geometry

- Sorting items by attributes
- Patterns
 - Recognizing patterns
 - Reproducing patterns
 - Creating own patterns
- Spatial
 - Exploring and experimenting with materials
 - Copying geometric designs with a variety of materials
 - Creating own geometric designs

Developing Mathematical Concepts and Problem Solving Skills

- Becoming familiar with graphs and charts
- Creating class graphs
- Discussing data shown on graph or chart
- Being exposed to measurement through non-standard and standard units
- Experimenting with the concept of conservation
- Exploring, comparing, and evaluating the concepts of larger, smaller, same, and different
- Being exposed to time, fractions, and money
- Demonstrating logical thinking
- Predicting
- Estimating

Physical Development

- Developing awareness of one's body in space

- Improving coordination and balance
- Developing spatial awareness
- Engaging in creative movement and expression of emotion through movement
- Building large and small motor skills

Aesthetic Development

- Developing self-realization through a variety of materials, media, and color
- Experimenting with color mixing: primary, secondary, and tertiary
- Developing an appreciation for individual differences by observing how classmates use materials in unique ways
- Developing a focus on process rather than product
- Developing a willingness to explore and experiment with the physical properties of materials
- Developing an ability and willingness to value one's own individual style

The Kindergarten Curriculum

The Kindergarten curriculum is designed to support growth in all areas of a child's development: social/emotional, academic, aesthetic, and physical. The Green Acres Kindergarten program encourages the growth of each child's curiosity, self-esteem, independence, and abilities at working well with others. The following statements are reflections about the Kindergarten program:

- The program is "child-centered." Planning for the class includes keeping each child's unique needs and skills in mind.
- The classroom environment is structured in such a way that all children are given common materials. Each child has many opportunities to select and direct her/his own work and to work in a personal and creative style.
- Throughout the day, the teachers work with children on a one-to-one basis, responding to and challenging each child individually.
- Each Kindergarten day includes many varied group experiences for children. They meet as a homecorner, in half groups, and as a whole group. Special subject teachers meet with the children in whole and smaller class groups. Children develop an ability to work successfully in many different types of group situations.
- The Kindergarten program includes the study of several topics or themes over the period of the school year. Thematic topics may be selected by the children or the teachers. The goal is for the children to experience, as a group, an intensive, extensive study of a topic.

The process includes:

- Introducing the topic or subject
- Identifying information or assumptions which children already have about a topic
- Exploring questions to be answered
- Using research and resources: other people, books, the library, trips, first-hand exploration and observation
- Creating and sharing visual records (e.g., pictures and artifacts)

The process of "integrated learning" is valued and promoted by the teaching staff. In other words, there is a recognition that the child is learning in many ways at the same time. For example, while interacting with peers and working with blocks, a child may be developing language skills, reading and writing skills, social negotiating skills, logical-mathematical skills, visual patterning skills, and/or motor and manipulative skills.

Although children learn in an integrated manner, the program provides for specific skill development. Teachers select materials and plan activities to challenge children in particular subject or curriculum areas.

As they organize the Kindergarten program, teachers keep the following six areas of development in mind:

- Social and emotional development
- Knowledge of the physical world
- Mathematics
- Language arts: speaking, listening, reading, and writing
- Development of social knowledge
- Physical development

Language Arts: Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing

The literacy program for Kindergarten at Green Acres involves the following components of development:

- Using oral language: developing new vocabulary, using appropriate language, speaking in sentences
- Developing listening skills: processing what is heard, following directions both individually and in groups
- Fostering an appreciation of stories and books: teachers reading aloud, children exploring and reading books on their own
- Heightening awareness of written words: pointing out titles, letters, words, sentences, punctuation
- Providing dictation by writing down a child's own language in signs and stories

Development of Reading and Literacy Skills:

- Developing handwriting skills including upper and lowercase letter formation using the *Handwriting Without Tears* curriculum
- Encouraging children to write, using their developing abilities to spell words phonetically
- Formally introducing basic sight words
- Dictating words, signs and stories
- Recognizing names, labels, signs
- Working with rhyming words
- Focusing on beginning and ending sounds
- Working with short vowel sounds and letter blends
- Segmenting and blending words
- Introducing "Author's Chair" – sharing stories aloud created by the children
- Creating a print-rich learning environment

- Building an understanding of how a book works
- Surrounding students with quality literature
- Exposure to a variety of reading genres

Children grow through the stages of reading and writing at their own pace. Teachers assess children's growth and guide them through the progression of literacy skills throughout the year.

Development of Mathematical Reasoning

Children's increasing knowledge of the physical world leads them towards logical-mathematical reasoning, which becomes more symbolic as they mature in their cognitive development.

In this area of mathematics, children are:

- Working on their understanding of numbers (e.g., counting games, dice)
- Discovering equivalents and making comparisons (e.g., balancing, parts to whole, "same" and "different," "bigger," "smaller," "more," "less"), and playing games, block building, and using scales
- Measuring (e.g., using blocks as a unit of measure in the building process, using self as a unit of measure ("Is the building as tall as I am?"), using Unifix cubes as smaller units of measure, working with art materials)

In addition to manipulating "key" materials that invite each kind of math work, children develop mathematical thinking throughout most of their work and play. To strengthen children's development of a strong foundation in numbers, teachers introduce and work on the following mathematical skills:

- Counting
- Understanding and using one-to-one correspondence
- Recognizing written numbers
- Writing numbers
- Subitzing
- Understanding and writing number sentences and stories (addition and subtraction)
- Making graphs
- Estimating
- Introducing fractions

Social/Emotional Development

Green Acres Kindergarten teachers work with children as they develop their ability to:

- Respect and care for others.
- Interact with children and adults.
- Solve problems, settle conflicts (adults are available for support and assistance as needed). The goal is that children should feel that they have the power to make decisions, and can assume responsibility for their own actions.
- Express feelings appropriately.
- Control impulses.
- Share time and materials with others.
- Work independently or with others.
- Initiate projects.
- Care for personal, others', and school belongings.

This kind of program requires that teachers know where the child is developmentally. The teachers plan a classroom structure that encourages choices, cooperative projects, times to work with adults, and opportunities for dramatic play and role play. Teachers help the children to develop trust in one another, themselves and adults.

Development of Social Knowledge

Much of what is known about the world is transmitted from person-to-person or generation-to-generation. The whole area of cultural and societal traditions can only be learned from other people (unlike mathematical knowledge). However, each child acts upon this information in very individual ways. This personal process of working things through is consistent with the process the Kindergarten program supports in all areas of learning.

Social development can occur in the following settings:

- The classroom (e.g., taking turns, learning snack procedures and routines, participating in a group discussion or activity, sharing one's own ideas, listening, setting and keeping limits, following rules, learning guidelines for living)
- The playground (e.g., learning to be a leader as well as a follower, listening to others' ideas, working on conflict resolution, engaging in socio-dramatic play)
- The school as a community (e.g., taking trips to different parts of the school, meeting and working with other ages and with different adults, assemblies)

The social curriculum is designed to nurture multicultural understanding and to build identity and community through books, music, exploration, and conversations.

Knowledge of the Physical World

Through the process of working with many materials, the children are encouraged to observe reactions, to experiment, to become competent, and to be creative. By exploring the use of materials in this way, the children are involved actively in forming concepts and building a strong basis for beginning logical thinking. Some common examples of concepts are: color, size, shape, weight, and properties of objects.

The teachers in this area of the curriculum encourage the children's initiative and spontaneous interests. The importance of errors is not neglected, as an error corrected is often more instructive than an immediate success. Examples of physical-knowledge activities are:

- Engaging in sand play
- Doing collage work
- Mixing paints, or powder paint and water
- Making pottery
- Playing with ice and water
- Aiming a ball down an inclined plane (by varying his/her actions, different results are produced)
- Engaging in activities that encourage children to perform actions on objects (pulling, pushing, rolling, kicking, jumping, blowing, throwing, twirling, swinging, balancing, and dropping)

Physical Development

Kindergarten children are gaining knowledge of their physical selves as they develop. This growth is closely related to the child's development of knowledge of the physical world.

The school's indoor and outdoor environment provides material, space, and equipment for: walking, crawling, running, hopping, jumping, skipping, balancing, pumping, swinging, climbing, cutting, buttoning, zipping, fitting small items together, hammering, sawing, using pencils and crayons, pasting, taping, stapling, painting, dressing and undressing, pushing and pulling, lifting and carrying, and pouring.

Milestones in Kindergarten physical development:

- Children usually have developed a preference for using their right or left hand.
- Children learn to discriminate and identify each of the five senses: taste, touch, sight, hearing, and smell.
- Children develop a sense of their own endurance and physical needs: dress (I am too cold or too hot), toileting, eating patterns, realistic knowledge/assessment of own physical abilities.
- Children learn to pace themselves throughout the day— balancing active and quiet movement.
- Children develop specific physical skills (e.g., manipulation of balls, sticks, hoops, bean bags, etc.; gymnastics; movement in space). In the Physical Education program, the children are challenged to problem solve as they organize and focus on their activity.

Green Acres School Early Childhood Unit Art

2018-2019

Shellie Marker
Art Teacher

Schedule: Pre-K and Kindergarten students attend two 30-minutes art classes during each six-day cycle.

Goals:

- To explore ways to visually represent thinking and learning experiences using a variety of media and techniques
- To cultivate a sense of wonder by presenting students with open-ended artistic explorations
- To provide opportunities for students to familiarize themselves with materials and techniques
- To foster visual literacy

Concepts/Skills:

- Drawing different types of lines and shapes
- Painting experimentation
- Recognizing shapes and lines
- Identifying primary and secondary colors
- Using simple shapes to draw more complex objects
- Developing gross and fine motor skills
- Manipulating three-dimensional materials
- Learning to mix colors
- Identifying different types of art materials
- Using materials safely
- Following directions
- Practicing cutting skills
- Foster creativity and open-ended thinking
- Encouraging creative problem-solving
- Interpreting and discussing art images

Program Description: Art is one of the many tools embedded in the Early Childhood Unit program that allows children to experiment with the creative process and express their ideas and learning experiences with a variety of materials. Children will explore the properties of art materials to uncover infinite visual languages with which they can tell stories and represent their unique experiences. Students will learn to observe and visually represent the world around them. Art teachers will engage in meaningful dialogue with children to help uncover their thoughts and ideas experienced during the artistic process, making their learning visible to all. Through close collaboration with classroom teachers, art experiences will offer children the

opportunity to extend their investigations and explore concepts with a variety of materials, document student understanding, and enrich the overall learning experience. While students will be offered ample opportunity to use art materials and build confidence in artistic techniques, the goals of the art program are to cultivate a sense of wonder through open-ended artistic exploration, cultivate craftsmanship, and to familiarize students with a variety of artistic media and techniques.

Green Acres School Pre-Kindergarten Creative Movement

2018-2019

Mary Sing
Teacher

Grouping: The Pre-Kindergarten students participate in creative movement class for the entire school year. They attend Creative Movement in their homecorner groups for 30 minutes twice during a six-day rotation and in mixed homecorner groups for 30 minutes once during a six-day rotation.

**"I am learning what my body does, how and where my body moves,
and relationships my body creates."**

Goals:

- Encourage creativity and spontaneity through safe, fun movement activities that are developed using the children's ideas.
- Develop body awareness: **relationships my body creates:** body parts, body shapes, roles with others (i.e. lead, follow, solo, group).
- Develop action awareness: **what my body does:** move in place (stability: i.e. twist, stretch, bend) and around room (locomotor: i.e. walk, run, gallop).
- Develop effort awareness: **how my body moves:** time (speed, rhythm), force (stop/start).
- Develop space awareness: **where my body moves:** space (self/shared), directions (i.e. up/down), levels (high/middle/low).
- Increase familiarity with basic movement vocabulary.
- Integrate classroom themes into movement-based activities.
- Introduce music and movement styles from other cultures.
- Encourage development of social skills, including participation in class activities, turn-taking, listening to others, and following directions.

Format of Classes:

Opening Activities: Sessions begin with a song or greeting to help focus the children. These opening activities recognize each child individually, bring the group together, smooth the transition to movement time, and help the children focus on the teacher. Warm-up activities are an extension of these opening activities.

Warm-up Activities: The warm-up activities allow for vigorous, high-energy release within a structured framework. General objectives are to loosen the muscles, to stimulate the brain, to practice breathing and stretching exercises.

Movement and Body Awareness: These activities concentrate on the development of movement elements. General objectives are to explore movement styles and body shapes, modulate movement, move rhythmically, and explore movement with whole body or isolated parts. At times, these movement explorations are the main class activity.

Theme Development: This part of the session incorporates ideas and themes. Movement structures bring the ideas to "life." The themes may emerge from the children's ideas, a

homecorner focus, or perhaps something completely different. In this way, the creative movement sessions balance connecting to the classroom themes with opportunities for spontaneous ideas. Books, created costumes, and other props may be used to enhance this process.

Closing Activities: These activities help the children re-focus on their own bodies, practice relaxing and settling themselves physically, and smooth the transition to the next class.

Green Acres School Kindergarten Creative Movement

2018-2019

Mary Sing
Teacher

Grouping: The kindergarten students participate in creative movement class for the entire school year. They attend creative movement in mixed homecorner group for 30 minutes twice during a six-day rotation.

**"I am learning what my body does, how and where my body moves,
and relationships my body creates."**

Goals:

- Encourage creativity and spontaneity through safe, fun movement activities.
- Develop body awareness: **relationships my body creates**: body parts, body shapes, roles with others (i.e. lead, follow, partner, mirror, unison, solo, group).
- Develop action awareness: **what my body does**: move in place (stability: i.e. twist, stretch, bend) and around room (locomotor: i.e. walk, run, gallop).
- Develop effort awareness: **how my body moves**: time (speeds/rhythms), force (stop/start, degrees of force: strong/light), flow (single movements/combinations of movements).
- Develop space awareness: **where my body moves**: space (self/shared), directions (i.e. up/down), levels (high/middle/low), pathways (i.e. straight/curved).
- Use basic movement vocabulary to create personal dances.
- Integrate classroom themes into movement-based activities.
- Introduce music and dance from other cultures.
- Encourage participation in class, following directions, and trying new things.
- Strengthen social skills of listening, turn-taking, sharing materials, and speaking in a friendly way.

Format of Classes:

Opening Activities: Sessions begin with a song or greeting to help focus the children. These opening activities incorporate acknowledging each child individually, bringing the group together, smoothing the transition to movement time, and helping the children focus on the teacher.

Warm-up Activities: The warm-up activities allow for vigorous, high-energy release within a structured framework. General objectives are to loosen the muscles, to stimulate the brain, to practice breathing and stretching exercises.

Movement and Body Awareness: These activities concentrate on the development of movement elements. General objectives are to explore movement styles and body shapes, modulate movement, move rhythmically, and explore movement with whole body or isolated parts.

Group Theme: This part of the session incorporates ideas and themes. Movement structures bring the ideas to “life.” The themes may emerge from the children’s ideas, a homecorner focus, or perhaps something completely different. In this way, the creative movement sessions balance connecting to the classroom themes with opportunities for spontaneous ideas. Books, created costumes, and other props may be used to enhance this process.

Closing Activities: These activities help the children re-focus on their own bodies, practice relaxing and settling themselves physically, and smooth the transition to the next class.

Green Acres School Early Childhood Unit Music

2018-2019

Chip Carvell
Music Teacher

Groupings: Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten students sing every day with their homecomer teachers. In addition, they meet with their homecorner groups and the music teacher in the music room. Kindergarten meets once in each six-day cycle and Pre-Kindergarten meets twice in each six-day cycle. They also sing at Lower School assemblies throughout the year.

Philosophy:

Making music together as a group stands at the center of the music program in the Early Childhood Unit at Green Acres. Students gather to sing, dance, and play music while learning about musical conventions, their world, and themselves. Our approach uses ideas and methods taken from the teachings of Carl Orff and Zoltan Kodaly, two composers and music educators who developed systems for teaching children. Kodaly developed a system of music education that focuses on singing, beginning in early childhood. His method begins with simple tunes and progresses through more complicated pieces and uses many folk tunes from various countries around the world. Children are encouraged to sing, play instruments, dance, learn folk music of their own culture, and explore the music of other cultures. Orff's teaching focuses on using language as a basis for rhythmic and melodic exploration. Children use various instruments including xylophones, glockenspiels, and simple rhythm instruments to create ensembles supporting singing. Throughout the school year, they will perform, listen to, and analyze great music of the world. In addition, they will learn musical skills such as music reading and writing, singing, and part-singing. They will improvise and compose at each level. While the primary purpose of the music program in the early childhood unit is the enjoyment of making music together, it is also used to build community, as a form of self-expression, and to lay the groundwork for the program which follows in the Primary Unit.

Skills and Concepts:

Essential questions for the year include:

- How do people work together to make music?
- How can music help us learn about our world?
- How do music and culture affect one another?
- How are the elements of music used to communicate?

Skills include keeping a steady beat, singing melodies, learning song lyrics, adding movement, and individualizing songs by adding new lyrics.

Materials:

- Multiple library and music resources, including picture books, music books, records, tapes, CDs, and videos
- Rhythm instruments: maracas, drums, tambourines, shakers
- Guitar and autoharp played by the teacher for accompaniment

Units and Activities:

The music program in the Pre-Kindergarten program will closely mirror events and discussions experienced by children in their daily school lives, including:

- Self, family, and community
- Seasons and weather
- Holidays and special days
- Emotions
- School favorites
- Songs just for fun

The music program for Kindergarten will complement social studies and science themes throughout the year, including:

- Community Building
- Trees
- Food
- Birds
- Reptiles

In addition, the students will observe the cycle of the year by singing songs appropriate to the seasons and the impact of the seasons and weather on their lives. Kindergarten children present a Favorite Songs assembly for their parents at the end of the year.

Green Acres School Pre-Kindergarten Science

2018-2019

Sean Smith
Science Teacher

Grouping: Pre-K students visit the science room in class or half groups twice during each six-day cycle. In addition, Sean also visits the Pre-Kindergarten area twice each six-day cycle.

Format of Classes:

Pre-Kindergarten students investigate the world of science during four different types of science lessons: Pre-Kindergarten Choice Time activities, outdoor education classes, explorations, and STEAM. During outdoor education classes, students hone their science process skills as they participate in a variety of different nature-based activities. Students also participate in exploration time during which they choose from a collection of hands-on activities and investigate the materials at their own pace. When completing STEAM activities, students will engage in a variety of activities that focus on a combination of science, technology, engineering, art, and math topics. The choice time activities will be a rotating collection of hands-on activities available in the Pre-Kindergarten homeroom.

Goals:

- Provide opportunities to learn information from observations of the natural world and other materials in the classroom
- During each activity, practice the scientific process: evaluate, ask, and decide
- Self-advocate with active listening
- Learn and practice procedures
- Look for solutions to problems
- Develop exploratory skills
- Foster science process skills

Examples of Pre-Kindergarten Exploration Activities:

- cup structures
- insects
- chemistry
- straw structures
- reptiles / amphibians
- magnets
- sifting
- weaving
- gears
- balls and ramps
- gyroscopes
- Legos

- marble coasters
- magnetic structures
- three dimensional structures
- People Puzzle
- tubular structures
- wooden building materials
- bones
- shells

Green Acres School Kindergarten Science

2018-2019

Sean Smith
Science Teacher

Grouping: Kindergarten students have science three times throughout each six-day class cycle, during which they visit either the science room or the STEAM room (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) in partial groups.

Format of Classes: Kindergarten students investigate the world of science during the three different types of science lessons: outdoor education classes, explorations, and STEAM. During outdoor education classes, students hone their science process skills as they participate in a variety of different nature-based activities. Students also participate in exploration time during which they choose from a collection of hands-on activities and investigate the materials at their own pace. When completing STEAM activities, students engage in a variety of activities that focus on a combination of science, technology, engineering, art, and math topics.

Goals:

- Encourage students to question actively and problem solve during investigations
- Further the development of critical thinking and science process skills
- Enable students to gain experience with a variety of scientific tools
- Provide opportunities to practice various ways of recording and interpreting observations
- Practice making observations about the natural world and other materials
- Look for solutions to problems
- Develop exploratory skills
- Learn the basics of the experimental method
- Practice both cooperative and independent work skills
- Develop persistence and the ability to sustain focus
- Develop a respect for the environment

Examples of Exploration Activities:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• bubbles• insects• chemistry• sink or float• reptiles• magnets• sifting• weaving• wooden building materials• bones | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lego• marble coasters• magnetic structures• People Puzzle• tubular structures• balls and ramps• gears• paper structures• shells• coroplast structures |
|--|--|

Green Acres School Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten Spanish

2018 - 2019

Janet Browne
Spanish Teacher

Schedule: The Spanish teacher will visit the Pre-Kindergarten classroom twice each six-day cycle. One class will include a circle time with songs, games, and stories. The second class will be embedded in choice time. The Spanish teacher will prepare choice time activities and enrich learning with Spanish vocabulary.

Kindergarten students will visit the Spanish classroom once in a 6-day cycle for Spanish class. The class will include a circle time with songs, dances, games, stories, and activities that will familiarize the students with Spanish and Latin American cultures.

Content:

Research in the second-language instruction of young children documents that young children are able to acquire accent and intonation more easily than adolescents and adults, and that language instruction for young students leads to higher levels of proficiency and accuracy in speaking, reading, writing, and understanding. By incorporating Spanish instruction in the Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten years, Green Acres students have a great opportunity to develop an awareness and sensitivity to the sounds and words of the Spanish language.

It is helpful for foreign language learners to have most of their instruction time spent in hearing only the second language. The Spanish teacher will provide Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten students with ample opportunities to hear Spanish, learn songs, vocabulary, and express themselves in Spanish.

Spanish classes at Green Acres use this research to guide instruction. Through games, songs, and other activities, the children are exposed to the structure and flow of the language. As the children spend time hearing Spanish being spoken, they begin to recognize the sounds and the different language tones used for questions, requests, explanations, and answers. This is an essential step towards gaining fluency and mastery.

In addition to learning to speak Spanish, the children are learning how language affects the ways in which people express values and how they conduct relationships with each other. The students use Spanish as a way to explore a “deeper awareness of the characteristics that bind us together as human beings even as they learn about the ways in which we are all different.”

Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten Spanish Program:

Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten students learn basic Spanish through developmentally appropriate, fun, and engaging activities. They sing songs and play in Spanish. They will learn

that Spanish is spoken in many countries around the world and will be introduced to different Hispanic cultures and traditions. The curriculum is integrated with the Early Childhood Unit curriculum. Vocabulary and activities for greetings, colors, numbers, body parts, and animals will be included.

Units and Activities:

- Greetings
- Basic commands
- Feelings
- Talking about me, my family, and my friends
- Counting from 0 to 20
- Parts of the body
- Space
- Learning basic vocabulary of the classroom
- Colors and shapes
- The weather and the seasons
- Learning basic vocabulary of animals
- Food
- Singing “Happy Birthday”

Green Acres School Pre-Kindergarten Physical Education

2018-2019

Lauren Essig
Physical Education Teacher

Grouping: The Pre-K students come to PE class three times each six-day cycle for 30 minutes.

Goals:

The goal of the PE program is to create a lifelong desire to develop the whole child physically, socially, and emotionally. This program is integral in developing the students' education as it pertains to the total fitness, growth, and overall development of the individual. Teachers provide a wide selection of opportunities to enhance the social development of a student through the participation of the child in physical activities. The program instills a sense of importance in promoting fitness, wellness, and an overall healthy attitude towards exercise and the benefits it provides. Most importantly, the PE department promotes respect for the uniqueness and differences of self and others through a wide variety of games and activities.

Students develop a sense of rules, skills, and strategies associated with the physical education activities in which they participate. They do this while they work on developing their sportsmanship and team-building skills in class. There is an intentional, developmentally appropriate progression of motor skill development through activities that engage the children in active participation. Teachers work to make the classroom a safe environment in order for the students to have the confidence to take risks and improve athletically, socially, and emotionally.

A major focus of the Pre-K PE program is to enhance students' knowledge of body awareness (body part identification and various ways to use the parts of the body), spatial awareness (up, down, forward, backward, sideways, and in relationship to equipment that is used in class), motor control, locomotive skills, non-locomotive skills, and manipulative skills (such as throwing, collecting, kicking). The children practice skipping, galloping, and running at various speeds. Students work on developing balance, coordination, upper body, and core strength. The class learns how to work cooperatively within a large group. Activities such as movement exploration, parachute play, follow the leader, exploring with various sports equipment, and gymnastics are used to reach the goals for the year. Having fun during class time and building self-confidence are paramount.

Concepts

- How to play variations of games with classmates, moving from very simple to more complex movement patterns
- Bodies need exercise to stay healthy and strong.

Objectives

- To become aware of their bodies in space
- To gain confidence to experiment and express themselves physically in a creative way

- To begin to connect physical activity to personal enjoyment, self-expression, and social interaction
- To begin to work cooperatively
- To begin to learn concepts associated with sports and games

Green Acres School Kindergarten Physical Education 2018-2019

**Lauren Essig
Physical Education Teacher**

Grouping: Kindergarten students have PE class three times for 30 minutes during each six-day cycle.

Goals:

The goal of the PE program is to create a lifelong desire to develop the whole person physically, socially, and emotionally. This program is integral in developing the students' education as it pertains to the total fitness, growth, and overall development of the individual. Teachers provide a wide variety of opportunities to enhance the social development of a student through the participation of the child in physical activities. The program instills a sense of importance in promoting fitness, wellness, and an overall healthy attitude towards exercise and the benefits it provides. Most importantly, the PE department promotes respect for the uniqueness and differences of self and others through a wide variety of games and activities.

Students develop a sense of rules, skills, and strategies associated with the physical education activities in which they participate. They accomplish this while they work on developing their sportsmanship and team-building skills in class. There is an intentional, developmentally appropriate progression of motor skill development through activities that engage the children in active participation. Teachers work to make the classroom a safe environment in order for the students to have the confidence to take risks and improve athletically, socially, and emotionally.

The focus of the Kindergarten program is to increase each child's knowledge in the areas of body awareness, spatial awareness, motor control, locomotive, and manipulative skills. The main goal is for all students to feel comfortable and confident in their own abilities. Having fun during class time and building self-confidence are paramount.

Concepts:

- The **SELF Concept** will be stressed in each class – Sportsmanship, Effort, Learning, and Fun!
- Body awareness - understanding what each body part can do and how to efficiently use movement

- Spatial awareness - knowing where an individual is in relation to others and objects
- Motor control development through an understanding of appropriate times to use certain movements, and ways to control force and speed as they apply to objects
- Use of movement exploration and guided problem solving to achieve goals

Objectives:

- To work cooperatively
- To continue to learn about their bodies and how to relate to others and to objects spatially
- To enhance their peripheral vision
- To gain sufficient confidence to experiment and express themselves physically in a creative way
- To begin to connect physical activity to personal enjoyment, self-expression, and social interaction

TAGGING/DODGING/FLEEING

SOCER

Dribbling – inside, outside of foot
 Kicking
 Trapping/receiving
 Passing/Shooting
 Communicating
 Soccer Stations

Ga Ga
 Keeper of the Castle
 Trash
 Touché Turtle
 Zookeeper
 Sharks and Minnows

BASKETBALL

Dribbling – dominant and non-dominant hand
 Shooting – “L, I, wave at it”
 1, 2, 3, basketball
 Basketball Stations

JUMP ROPE

Step over forward/backward
 Single jump forward/backward
 Double jump forward/backward
 One foot jumping forward/backward
 Eyes closed jumping
 “Tricks”

FLOOR HOCKEY

Proper form
 3 parts of the stick
 3 ways to dribble
 3 different shots
 Passing/Receiving
 Hockey Pin Knockdown
 Hockey Stations

FITNESS

Running/Curl-Ups/Planks/Jumping
 Jacks/Wall Sits/Stretching
 Stations
 Popsicle Stick Fitness
 Fitness Card Game

GYMNASICS

Balance beam
Vault
Climbing ropes
Tumbling skills

BASEBALL/WIFFLEBALL

Throwing
Catching
Base running
Fielding
Batting

*This is a list of potential units/activities for the year. These may vary based on time, weather, and class interests