

Parent Information

This document provides parents with a brief overview of the philosophy of Kindergarten. It offers suggestions as to how parents can support children in Kindergarten.

Supporting Kindergarten

April 2011

Kindergarten

Children are capable, competent, and active learners who have many ways to show what they know, understand, and are able to do. Children need daily opportunities to develop and learn socially, emotionally, intellectually, spiritually, and physically. These holistic learning opportunities will enable them to grow beyond their current levels of knowledge, skills, interests, and abilities. Relationships offer children an opportunity to connect with people, the environment, ideas, and beliefs while creating a sense of self, identity, and belonging as they learn about the world around them.

Kindergarten offers opportunities for children to learn through the environment, conversations, and play. The learning environment can enrich and expand children's experiences. Children construct their own understanding of the world by reflecting on and responding to their environments. Learning environments should facilitate play, exploration, and discovery while stimulating children's imaginations. Conversations enable teachers to learn about the children's ideas, interests, and knowledge. Teachers use what they learn about children through conversations to plan further learning experiences. Play is the foundation for the kindergarten program. Children practice skills, learn new skills, and develop many social skills as a result of play.

Teachers are provided with a set of outcomes and indicators for each subject in kindergarten. These outcomes tell the teachers what it is that the children should know, understand, and be able to do by the end of kindergarten. Teachers integrate these outcomes and plan meaningful and relevant activities based upon the children's interests.

Parents can expect teachers to display examples of the children's learning experiences. These examples, called documentation, may include such things as photos, quotations, or work samples. The purpose of documentation is to show what the child is thinking and learning. This documentation can stimulate conversation between children, parents, and the educator.

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Parents can...

Engage in discussions with your child on topics that interest your child, following his/her lead

- (e.g., if your child enjoys playing in mud puddles, ask where the puddles came from and where do they go?)
- (e.g., if your child is interested in insects, ask your child why ladybugs have spots).

Provide opportunities for your child to play and interact with other children of a similar age

- (e.g., take your child to the park to play with other children)
- (e.g., make arrangements with other parents for your children to get together for play dates).

Encourage your child to wonder, ask questions, and explore

- (e.g., model wondering for your child by asking such questions as, "I wonder why the sky turns red at sunset")
- (e.g., take your child down a walking path that you don't know where it leads, "Let's explore where this path. I wonder where it goes").

Give your child opportunities to interact with nature

- (e.g., take your child for a walk in a park, pointing out the flowers, plants, birds, insects, and other wildlife)
- (e.g., let your child play outside in the rain, or make snow angels).

Read to your child and discuss the stories you read

- (e.g., ask your child to guess what is going to happen next in the story. Were they right?)
- (e.g., after reading a story, ask your child what the story reminded him/her about).

Share information about your family, traditions, and culture with your child

- (e.g., tell your child how you used to do this with your parents when you were a child)
- (e.g., explain to your child what your culture is called and how there are a group of people who do some of the same things such as dance, eat the same food, and sing the same songs as your family).