

St. John's Episcopal School  
Preschool Overview  
2020-2021

St. John's Preschool is a theme-based, academic program nurturing character development and faith for children ages three to five years old. Our primary mission is to provide a safe, caring, and positive environment that fosters a lifelong love of learning.

Our engaging program encourages the social, emotional, physical, creative, spiritual, and cognitive development of the whole child. We proudly focus on teaching our students our core values of kindness, honesty, respect, and compassion. These values are integrated into the daily routines that form a strong basis for all our academic and social/emotional learning throughout the school year.

Our daily schedule is designed to balance teacher-guided and child-initiated activities, along with both active and quiet time. There is a balance between individual, small group, and large group activities. We promote and provide numerous opportunities for our children to explore, interact, imagine, create, make decisions, and solve problems. Our curriculum teaches readiness skills in reading, math, science, and social studies through discovery and creative activities both inside and outside the classroom. Our children are engaged and involved in a literature rich classroom that also provides many opportunities in art, music, movement, dance, and dramatic play.

Our preschool teachers focus on each child's age and stage of development, help each child meet the goals that are right for him or her, and value and include each child's family, language, and culture. Materials, activities, and strategies are chosen and adapted with these outcomes in mind. Teachers plan activities and experiences that build upon, support, and enhance children's well being; a sense of belonging; confidence in their capacities to explore and learn; growing skill in communication; and the opportunity to contribute to the life of the classroom.

Recent brain research points out the significance of creating patterns and assisting children in figuring out the connections to learning. Learning is an integrated process. Jane Healy, a child development expert, says, "I'm increasingly convinced that patterns are the key to intelligence. Patterning information means really organizing and associating new information with previously developed mental hooks." A theme-based model encourages children to form those patterns. When all the learning activities are connected around a "theme," children see how learning is inter-connected. For example, science isn't just a subject that stands alone, but is very closely related to reading, math, and social studies. Our program promotes children's knowledge and skills, helping them make connections about the world around them.

St. John's Preschool  
Reading

During the preschool years children are emerging as language users and are developing competence as listeners, speakers, readers, writers, and observers. Each of these language arts is strengthened by integrated literacy experiences in print-rich active learning environments in homes, neighborhoods, outdoor play spaces, and all formal and informal learning settings.

Our program provides support and strengthens children's emerging competence. Intentional learning experiences which support the early learning expectations outlined below will help our preschoolers become motivated and efficient communicators who listen, speak, read, write, and observe effectively for meaningful purposes and for the pure joy of being literate.

Receptive Language (listening and reading):

1. Listen and follow directions
2. Listen and engage in group discussions
3. Learn book and print awareness
4. Listen to and discuss all forms of literature
5. Identify all uppercase and lowercase letters
6. Connect and pair letters with sounds
7. Blend sounds to make words (sound out basic three-letter-words, word families)
8. Recognize rhymes
9. Be introduced to beginning high frequency words (sight words)
10. Properly sequence a story in pictures

Expressive Language (speaking and writing):

1. Listen and engage in group discussions
2. Listen to and discuss all forms of literature
3. Respond to text by drawing and speaking
4. Answer who, what, where questions about text and be able to retell part of the story verbally with prompting
5. Write first name and create a self portrait
6. Acquire and use new vocabulary
7. Recite familiar songs, poems, fingerplays, and prayers
8. Develop expressive language through show and tell and other sharing opportunities
9. Form letters and numbers (using proper pencil grip and posture and strengthen fine motor skills)
10. Develop journal writing skills

Preschool students are exposed to a rich and varied collection of literature. Pre-reading skills are taught in a sequence that builds skills progressively, starting with being excited about reading books!

St. John's Preschool  
Math

Young children's early understandings of math are broad in scope and extend well beyond numbers and counting. Problem solving is a central focus of the math curriculum from preschool onward. We support these early understandings which then enable the children to use and expand their knowledge. Math experiences involving interactions with the environment, materials, peers, and adults give children opportunities to build, modify, and integrate simple math concepts, primarily ideas about numbers, shapes, and spatial relationships. Our program relies on many learning tools such as games, puzzles, manipulatives, and interactive activities to strengthen skills. The following lists math concepts and skills that are part of the preschool curriculum:

- Count orally from 0-10, then 0-20
- Recognize numbers 0-10, then 0-20
- Practice writing numbers 0-10, then 0-20
- Count objects using one-to-one correspondence
- Identify and name shapes
- Gain a sense of spatial awareness
- Represent numbers with concrete materials
- Compare number sets
- Understand concepts of more, less, and equal
- Identify and extend different types of patterns
- Understand basic information presented about measurement, time, and money
- Understand positional words, opposites, comparison words, and concepts of same and different
- Sort and classify objects
- Graph data
- Learn via the use of ten frames, tally marks, and unifix cubes
- Predict likelihood of events
- Use concrete materials or pictures to solve addition and subtraction problems
- Sequence events using first, next, and last
- Understand ordinal numbers (first, second, third)
- Participate in calendar math activities

The major math strands for a preschool curriculum are number sense and operations, algebra, geometry and spatial sense, measurement, and data analysis and probability. While these might surprise you, they are all vital lessons for our preschool math curriculum!

## St. John's Preschool Science

Preschoolers learn by doing, touching, and examining, so in addition to hands-on science experiments, our curriculum includes the following topics or themes to help our students gain an awareness of the world around them.

- Weather
- Seasons
- Colors
- Five Senses
- Flowers, Trees, and Plants
- Rain and Rainbows
- Shadows
- Taking Care of Ourselves
- Food and Nutrition
- Animals and Animal Habitats
- Life Cycles
- Taking Care of Our Earth
- Mammals, Amphibians, Reptiles, Birds, Fish, Bugs
- Water and Landforms
- Sky and Space Exploration
- Dinosaurs
- Building and Construction
- Machines and Inventions

We will use science tools, sort, classify, measure, observe, examine, engineer, construct, collect and interpret data, record findings, talk and collaborate with peers and teachers, predict, wonder, question, investigate those questions, and problem solve...and have so much fun in the process of learning about the world around us!

## St. John's Preschool Social Studies

Preschool gives children a sense of community outside of their own homes. Learning begins as children make friends and participate in decision making and problem solving in the classroom. It then moves beyond the school into the neighborhood and all around the world. At school, children are learning what it takes to build and maintain a community. Basically, it is going from Me to We! Our program delves into the following areas of study:

- All About Me
- Our Families
- Our Friends
- Our School
- Our Community
- Rules and the Rulemaking Process
- Feelings
- Manners
- Faith
- Character Traits
- Seasonal Holidays and Celebrations
- Let's Learn About Maryland
- All About America
- Economics (all about money and transfer of goods and services)
- Geography (taking a look at maps and globes)
- History (understanding past, present, and future)
- Children Around the World
- International Festival
- Transportation

In early childhood, children begin to develop an understanding of the different relationships between people and the role they play in society.

### St. John's Preschool Specials

Our Preschool program focuses on the cognitive, social, emotional, spiritual and character development of our students. We offer them learning in a nurturing environment that encompasses academics as well as Specials. These Specials include Physical Education classes, Religion, Library, and Media. Students also participate with their older peers in Buddy related activities to enrich their relationships within the St. John's community.

