

LITTLE EXPLORERS



Where our emphasis is on playing, exploring, building relationships and having fun!

ART

Our guiding philosophy for preschool art is process versus product. The art program is designed to encourage the children to value the process of exploring and creating with materials, not just the finished product. The children paint, sculpt, draw, and glue - working toward the creation of their own vision rather than a teacher-oriented goal.

By emphasizing the process of creation rather than uniformity or neatness, we free the children to focus on discovery through experimentation. They ask and answer the vital question, "What happens if. . ." by mixing paints, shaping play dough, and cutting and taping construction paper.



Blocks are "raw materials" and block play is open-ended. Children's block creations become anything that they desire.

BLOCK BUILDING

In our program we use a variety of blocks for the children. We have large plastic blocks, wooden blocks, and small legos, each type offering a different building experience. Over time the children will progress through predictable developmental stages in their block play. For the youngest children, block play is often carrying, piling, pushing and lining up blocks. They feel powerful as they lift and pile blocks and gain an understanding of weight, gravity and control as they dump and load blocks. Children develop a sense of mastery as they become adept at moving their bodies through space around their peers and their block structures.

MATH CONCEPTS

The math program is designed for children to develop math skills through hands on experience. We provide many manipulatives for the children to explore including pattern blocks, beads, Unifix cubes, and plastic counting fruit. The children explore math in a variety of ways everyday in our classroom. Our program allows for individual encouragement and support based on each child's ability. The exposure to math is all around, we count the children at circle, we practice taking a guess, and we look for patterns and shapes.



SOLITARY, PARALLEL, AND COOPERATIVE PLAY

Solitary play means playing by yourself, and can often include fantasy or pretend play. Parallel play means to play in a similar fashion around or near a group, but not actually interacting with them. Cooperative play can include a group of children, any size, usually working together in some way toward a similar outcome. Examples of this type of play would be block building, board games, or puzzles. Many social skills are practiced during this time. Children who are engaged in parallel play often choose to play near these groups without actually joining into the group. As these children being to shift away from parallel play towards cooperative play and learning, they have already acquired some social skills by remaining on the fringes of the group play. This allows them to make the shift at a pace that feels comfortable and safe for them.

Fantasy Play in Preschool Children

This type of play can also include a group of any size, and it can take place in any part of the room. Children generally stick to a theme, adding layers of complexity throughout the play. This can sometimes continue over a period of days where children continue the theme by picking up where they left off the day before. This play is very social. Children try on different roles (good guy, bad guy, etc.) as they learn to self identify. The children often address many complex issues during this type of play. Examples would be developing understanding of the hierarchy of relationships, conflict resolution, recognizing and dealing with feelings, inclusion, and the sharing/ blending of ideas or themes.

