

Philosophy of Learning at the Bartlett Park District Preschool

The overall goal of our preschool program is to provide a recreation-based environment with many educational elements. This will promote optimum development at a period when growth is rapid and the child is vulnerable. All aspects of growth are to be considered in the program; physical development, the development of social relationships, the emotional development, (confidence in and understanding of oneself as a person) growth in the ability to express thoughts, feelings, and intellectual development which includes language and speech.

1. Every child is an individual with their own rate and style of learning and growing. Their genes and experiences have made him / her unique, and he/she is to be regarded as such.
2. Intelligence develops as it is nurtured. Cognitive development depends on adequate and appropriate physical, mental and social nourishment supplied by the home, the preschool and the community working together.
3. All aspects of the 3 and 4 year old development are interrelated and this shall be considered when planning our preschool curriculum.
4. Play is an important avenue for learning. A child learns through actively experiencing play, using all their senses, through doing things themselves and using a variety of materials. The value of play is increased by informed guidance and a wide variety of appropriate material and equipment as well as space and uninterrupted time.
5. Attitudes and feelings are important in learning and in healthy personality growth. If a child is to develop well, a child needs to feel that the people around them are safe and involved and make them feel that they are a capable person. A positive self-concept or self-image enables the child to use his /her capacities to their fullest.
6. Understanding and positive guidance is necessary if a child is to develop their potential. Children at a very young age need caregivers who can set limits for them, set up boundaries and who will also create an environment that will stimulate a child's ability to explore their world.

Our preschool teachers believe that recreation-based "Growing through Play" describes our strategy in meeting the needs of young children. Based on the theory that children learn through play, our classroom routines encourage active involvement with materials and reinforcement through repetition. Classroom schedules are designed to balance structure and free choice as well as active and quiet times. We plan to provide a caring and positive atmosphere, using themed/unit topics, group time, gross motor and fine motor activities, field trips and special guest speakers. Children will explore interest centers and are encouraged to use their skills as they become developmentally ready.