

## - Kindergarten Program Overview -

As the children settle in to Kindergarten, it is important for you to have a sense of what your child experiences at school each day.

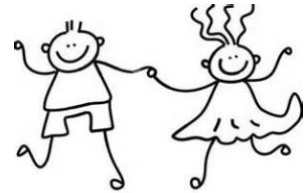
The Kindergarten program is set up to integrate curriculum areas through 'big ideas' and the initial stages of inquiry. It incorporates many subject areas that naturally overlap and build on relationships that exist in the real world.



The main elements of the program continue throughout the year but are modified to reflect the needs of the children. We start the year with an emphasis on the transition of home/preschool to Kindergarten, the establishment of classroom routines, and the social interactions of the children.

Learning activities centre around exploration and hands-on experiences. This form of learning motivates children through enjoyment while strengthening and supporting their intellectual development. The benefits of a play-based program are that children:

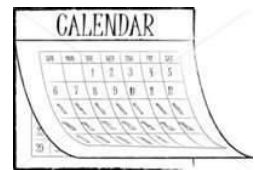
- learn at their own level of development and at their own pace
- are self-motivated and actively involved in their learning
- make sense of their world and relationships through role play at dramatic play activities
- develop social and emotional skills in areas such as confidence, self-esteem, independence, friendships, cooperation, problem-solving and learning from others
- develop thinking skills in a meaningful context such as problem-solving, observing and planning
- develop language skills through language experiences, listening and using language in different contexts
- explore academic skills (e.g. build oral language → learn the love of books → learn the value of print → reading)



## - Components of the Kindergarten Program -

**Calendar** - The children participate in many mathematical and language activities initially led by the teacher, but as the year progresses, the Special Helper takes on more of the leadership. The children are encouraged to answer in sentences to strengthen their language skills, and look at the letters and sounds in the words that we 'read'. Calendar activities include:

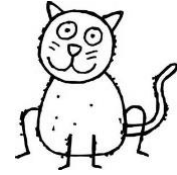
- developing a pattern throughout the month.
- reporting the weather and creating a bar graph.
- discussing the season and how it relates to the weather.
- counting the days of school by 10s and 1s and printing the number.
- reciting the days of the week and the months of the year.
- counting the days in the present month forwards and backwards.



**Morning Message / Shared Writing** – The children and teacher complete or create a message together through interactive writing. The teacher 'stretches' words, emphasizing sounds for the children to find the corresponding letters needed. Finger-spacing and punctuation are modeled, and the message is read repeatedly throughout the activity so the children gain a better understanding of the reading and writing processes.

**Phonological Awareness** – These specific skills are precursors to reading and writing. The four main areas of focus are:

- Concepts of print – parts of a book, the print (not the pictures) tells the story, reading left to right and top to bottom, and matching spoken word with printed word
- Rhyme – identifying and generating words that only differ in their initial sound (e.g. cat, mat)
- Letter-sound correspondence – identifying the letters and the relationship between letters and the sounds
- Segmenting words – breaking a word down into individual sounds (e.g. cat = /c/ – /a/ – /t/)
- Blending sounds – blending together individual sounds to make words (e.g. /c/ – /a/ – /t/ = cat)



**Poem of the Week** – The children learn concepts of print (left to right with return sweep, top to bottom), letter and sound identification, the difference between words and letters, enjoyment of verse and rhyme, as well as providing a connection between home and school. Most of all, your child learns that reading is fun. At the end of the week, a smaller version is put in their Poetry Books to be revisited time and again.

**Special Helper's Show and Tell** - The special helper gains experience speaking in front of the group as he/she presents a meaningful object to the other children. The audience is prompted for questions and comments to show good listening skills.

**Story Time** – Children need hours and hours of experience with and exposure to good quality literature. This helps them gain a love of literacy, along with sparking their curiosity of and motivation to learn to read.



**Exploration Activities** – These self-chosen play activities have numerous benefits for children socially, emotionally, academically, aesthetically and physically. They are developmentally appropriate as they cater to both the general age of the child as well as individual learning needs. The children learn through direct interaction with other children and the learning materials, making their learning meaningful. Most activities include literacy aspects such as related books or writing materials, and encourage small muscle development needed for grasping a pencil, forming letters and numbers, and creating drawings. New activities are regularly introduced but the core activities include:

- |                          |                              |                            |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| • ABC tubs + activities  | • Felt board stories         | • Math manipulatives       |
| • Art + craft table      | • Listening post (story CDs) | • Number tubs + activities |
| • Book corner            | • Paint easel                | • Sandbox                  |
| • Construction materials | • Play dough                 | • Science tubs             |
| • Dramatic play          | • Pocket chart poems         | • Water table              |
| • Doll house             | • Puppet theatre             |                            |
| • Drawing + writing      | • Puzzles                    |                            |

**Snack, Lunch and Outside Play** – The children learn health and nutrition through discussions about hand washing with soap, healthy snacks and outdoor exercise and play.



**Book Time** – The children play at and experiment with reading. They choose from a variety of books that vary in reading level from pre-emergent (one word per page with a corresponding picture), through emergent (patterned stories), to high-quality literature.

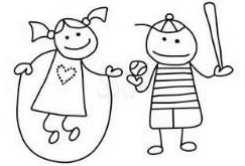
**K Stories** – The children are encouraged to use their emerging reading and writing skills in their story entries. Each entry begins with a drawing where the use of many colours and details is encouraged. The children copy the date from the calendar then sit with the teacher to talk about their picture and practice their emerging writing skills. The stages of writing development are:

1. random scribbling
2. controlled scribbling
3. random ordering of letters
4. letters corresponding to initial sounds
5. emergent phonemic spelling

**Math** – Through the use of manipulatives, interactive games and activities, the children learn about sorting, patterning, graphing, set counting, numeral writing, 2D shapes and 3D objects, measurement, and dividing sets in 2 parts (adding sentences).

**Library** – The children learn how to use the library, and borrow books weekly. The teacher-librarian shares story and discusses book characteristics, e.g. author, illustrator.

**P.E.** – The children develop gross muscle skills while learning to move safely in an active environment. They develop skills associated with different equipment and participate cooperatively in group games. The importance of physical activity and a healthy lifestyle is encouraged, along with the need to warm up muscles prior to activities to prevent injury.



**Music** – Our school's music specialist uses songs, activities and instruments to develop skills around maintaining a steady beat, repeating short rhythmic phrases, and using appropriate tone of voice while singing.

**Buddies** – Each Kindergarten child spends one-on-one time with a big buddy while participating in activities such as reading, writing, art/craft creation, and outdoor play.

**Home Reading** – Reading with your child is necessary throughout their primary years of school. Research has shown that it is the most significant factor contributing to a child's success in school. Reading 10 to 15 minutes every day will help develop your child's ability to focus and encourage imaginative thought. Your child will demonstrate increasing knowledge and enjoyment of reading, as well as learn about the story line, retain key facts, and begin to re-tell a story in his/her own words.

