

Saint Ambrose School
Pre-Kindergarten Classroom Information

Mrs. Heer -Teacher

Mrs. Settle- AM Assistant

Mrs. Queen- PM Assistant

It is felt at St. Ambrose School that a high quality early childhood program should provide a safe and nurturing environment that promotes the emotional, social, physical and cognitive development of young children while responding to the needs of families. The appropriate curriculum is developed based on teachers' observations and recordings of each child's different needs, developmental progress and special interests. The curriculum planning emphasizes learning as an interactive process. The teachers develop an environment for the age span of the children within the group to learn through active exploration and interaction with adults, other children, and materials.

Our Pre-Kindergarten classroom is set up in learning centers that provide a developmentally appropriate learning environment for the Pre-Kindergarten aged child. We have an art center, block center, reading center, manipulative center, science center and a dramatic play center. Young children learn best in a hands-on environment that provides materials that are interesting and meaningful for the children to work with. Young children that are engaged in activities that are challenging become creative as they solve problems.

Learning centers provide the opportunities for the children to make choices about where and what they will work with each day. This choice makes the work interesting and absorbing for the children and provides a sense of independence. It requires planning to better engage the children in the learning process. The materials at the learning centers can be varied depending on the children's changing interests. Learning centers allow the children to use the same materials in different ways depending on their stage of development.

We start each day with the child finding his/her name tag, getting out his/her fruit or vegetable snack, finding a clothes pin with his/her name on it and placing the clothes pin on the snack and putting the snack in the color basket that matches their table color. A morning project is done in small groups while we are waiting for our friends to arrive. These projects reinforce colors, shapes, sizes of objects, numbers and letters. Before we start work each day, we say prayers, the Pledge of Allegiance, take attendance and have a morning meeting to discuss the calendar, weather and the events of the day.

ASSESSMENT

Evaluating a child's progress in the learning center styled classroom is completed through observation and informal assessment. We work with small groups of children in the centers or one on one with a child. We observe each child's development and introduce materials that will capture his/her interest. When we see areas where a child needs practice or reinforcement, we add materials to the learning centers to strengthen these areas. Pre-Kindergarten students receive progress reports in January and June. In the spring, Pre-Kindergarten students will participate in assessment program to assess the student's readiness for Kindergarten. This testing assesses students on a wide variety of developmental skills to identify strengths and weaknesses and to make recommendations for interventions if needed.

MOTOR SKILLS

We do lots of activities to train small muscles to work before we teach handwriting. We do a lot of coloring, beading, lacing, painting, rolling of clay, play dough, cutting with scissors, working with legos, tearing paper to make art projects, etc. to get small muscles working. Give your child small things to pick up – beans, beads, buttons, stickers to peel and stick on paper. Provide them with play dough, scissors, paste, paper, and crayons.

We are also working on large motor skills. We practice walking up and down the stairs by placing one foot on every step. We go outside every day to play ball, use the play equipment, run and jump. We also do a lot of marching, dancing, skipping and crawling.

HOMEWORK

Homework is not assigned in Pre-Kindergarten; however, reading to your child, talking and asking questions has been shown to build a rich vocabulary which is an asset when learning to read. We encourage you to read to your child fifteen minutes a day and ask him/her questions about the school day.

BEHAVIOR

School-wide, it is expected that the children use good manners. When adults model good manners, the children naturally do too. The school also emphasizes good character by encouraging trustworthiness and integrity. In Pre-Kindergarten, we use positive reinforcement by praising the children for displaying good manners and being kind to their classmates. Please refer to pages five to eight in your handbook for additional information.

BOOK BAGS

Each child is to have a large backpack. Backpacks keep us organized. It needs to be large enough to hold his/her sweater, office envelope, take-home folder, artwork, lunch box, library book, hat and mittens. **Tuesday take-home folders and Thursday Communication Envelopes need to be returned the NEXT DAY.** Take-home folders may be sent home on others days so please check your child's backpack daily.