

Academic Overview

This is a rough overview of our planned academic school year. It is important to remember that, while academics play an important role in our classrooms by guiding and giving shape to our school year, their primary importance in our classroom is to provide a vehicle for the most critical learnings of preschool; social and emotional education.

Our children's preschool years are a critical time in the development of both social skills and emotional skills. It is during this time that children will learn how to be and make friends, how to solve problems., how to express emotions in a healthy way, and how to join in play. Studies support the link between well-grounded socio-emotional learning and future academic success and financial security.

Stephen Elliott, of Vanderbilt University, and Frank Gresham, of Louisiana State University, surveyed 8000 teachers and identified the top skills that students need to succeed in the classroom.

"If we increase social skills, we see commensurate increases in academic learning. That doesn't mean that social skills make you smarter; it means that these skills make you more amenable to learning....In our research we found that elementary kids and teachers value cooperation and self-control. When we teach and increase those behaviors, we reduce problem behaviors and maximize learning time."

The top ten social skills the researchers identified were; listening to others, following the steps, following the rules, ignoring distractions, asking for help, taking turns when talking, getting along with others, staying calm with others, being responsible for one's behavior, and doing nice things for others.

With this in mind, our curriculum is primarily used as a vehicle for putting these skills into practice. It is also subject to change without notice. Changes may be made based on the children's interests and abilities or additional resources becoming available.

**Circle of Life Cooperative
Curriculum Calendar
2009-2010**

September: Welcome to School, I am Me, Classroom Community, Rainbow Promises
Special Days: Yom Kippur

October: Nocturnal/Diurnal Animals, Fire Safety
Violet Promise, "We value, Earth, our Home that we share with all living things."
Letters: A,B,C; Math: Matching Sets
Special Days: Halloween

November: Harvest and Sharing, Apples and Pumpkins
Orange Promise, "Offer Fair and Kind Treatment to all People."
Letters: D,E,F; Math: Graphing
Special Days: Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving

December: Winter Holidays
Letters: G,H,I; Math: More Than/Less Than
Special Days: Hanukkah, Christmas, Solstice, Kwanzaa

January: Winter Season
Indigo Promise, "Insist on a Peaceful, Fair, and Free World."
Letters: J,K,L,M; Math: Patterns
Special Days: Martin Luther King Day

February: Friends and Families
Red Promise, "Respect all People."
Letters: N,O,P,Q; Math: Patterns and Measurement
Special Days: Valentines Day, Presidents Day, Chinese New Year

March: Weather Changes, Spring Planting
Green Promise, "Grow by Exploring What is True and Right in Life."
Letters: R,S,T,U; Science: Wind Power
Special Days: St. Patrick's Day

April: Spring Changes, Insects
Yellow Promise, "Yearn to Accept and Learn About Ourselves, Others, and the Mystery."
Letters: V,W,X; Science: Botany
Special Days: April Fools Day, Easter, Earth Day

May: Teacher for a Day, Sharing Stories
Letters: Y,Z; Science: Water Power
Blue Promise, "Believe in our Ideas and Act on them."
Special Days: May Day, Cinco De Mayo, Mother's Day, Graduation Day