



GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR PRE-KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS

We believe that all children are unique creations whose lives are a gift from God. We recognize that parents are the child's first teachers in the faith and prepare children for success in school by being involved in their child's education from birth.

We recognize and value every child's diversity in culture, home environment, development, learning style, and ability. Collaboration and partnership among all those associated with the child (parents, child-care professionals, teachers, health care providers, and community resources) contribute to the child's development and school success.

Children entering a three-year old or multi-age program in the Diocese of Wilmington must be three years old by August 31st.

Children entering Pre-Kindergarten Programs in the Diocese of Wilmington must be four years old by August 31st.

The following principles are the foundation for Pre-Kindergarten Programs in the schools of the Catholic Diocese of Wilmington.

- Children will understand that prayer is a gift from God, and will be taught to pray.
- The child's work is their play and builds the foundation for later learning.
- Classroom environment and learning opportunities are developmentally appropriate and foster spiritual, cognitive, social, emotional, physical, and creative growth in the preschooler's educational experience.
- Multiple instructional modalities include hands-on learning, teacher-directed instruction, whole-group instruction, and peer interaction which fosters Kindergarten readiness.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Various members of a child's circle of life play a role in catechesis. (178) As young people enter school, parents, catechists, and school teachers, should collaborate to use every suitable moment to lead the child to Christ. (179) *General Directory for Catechesis in Plain English pp.70-71*

Religious education during the early childhood years seeks to foster growth in a wider faith community. This is accomplished by educating our children in the ways of our faith through knowledge and practice.

Knowledge of Faith

- Identify God as the Creator of all things
- Begin to recognize that the Holy Trinity is three names for God – Father, Son, Holy Spirit
- Understand that making the Sign of the Cross demonstrates knowledge of the Trinity
- Recognize that Jesus, Mary and Joseph are the Holy Family
- Develop an awareness of the stories in the Bible

Liturgical Education

- Learn the liturgical seasons of the Church: Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter
- Learn about the saints and their feast days
- Understand that the Mass is the most perfect prayer of the Church
- Learn the appropriate gestures during the Eucharistic celebration

Moral Formation

- Understand that life is a gift from God and that we must care for all living things
- Demonstrate understanding that God calls us to be kind and loving to all people
- Demonstrate the ability to express sorrow when we have hurt others and to forgive others when they apologize for wrong doing
- Demonstrate understanding that followers of Jesus show others that we are Christians

Learning to Pray

- Learn that prayer is a way that we talk to God
- Learn to make the Sign of the Cross correctly and reverently
- Learn and participate in daily prayers (*morning prayer and grace before/after meals*)
- Learn to be respectful and reverent during prayer and religious activities

LANGUAGE AND LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

Language and literacy development is an integral part of early childhood education. The following skills will be taught and integrated during formal and informal classroom instruction and play in the Pre-Kindergarten program. Parents are also encouraged to provide experiences that will help children to learn these skills as they prepare to enter Pre-Kindergarten.

Language

- Communicate to be understood by peers and adults
- Speak using a volume appropriate to the situation
- Communicate using multiple words and phrases when responding to questions, describing ideas, expressing feelings, needs, and wants
- Use language to enter into a play situation
- Engage in conversation by making statements or asking questions
- Make up and/or retell stories and describe experiences
- Respond to hearing his/her name, requests for action or information
- Demonstrate understanding of messages in conversation by listening and responding appropriately
- Show interest in playing with language (i.e. rhyming, tongue twisters, songs)
- Begin to develop familiarity with listening, identifying, recognizing, and discriminating sounds in words
- Follow two or three-step directions

Literacy

- Show an interest in books and/or engage in reading-related activities
- Listen with interest to a story
- Hold a book upright, turn pages from the front of the book to the back
- Recognize common sounds at the beginning of words
- Show an awareness of print, familiar signs, and labels
- Use scribbles, symbols, or drawings to express experiences through pictures, dictation, and play
- Experiment with a variety of writing tools and materials
- Begin to recognize, name, or identify some letters of the alphabet
- Become aware that there are differences in upper and lower case letters
- Recognize his/her first name in print written with the first letter in upper-case, followed by lower-case letters
- Begin to write the letters of his/her first name
- Begin to answer questions related to a story that has been read or told

MATHEMATICS EDUCATION

The mathematics curriculum in the Pre-Kindergarten program provides young children with knowledge and practice in understanding numbers and operations, geometry and spatial relations, patterns and measurement, data collection and problem solving. These skills are easily integrated in the child's world at home and play. Parents are encouraged to reinforce these skills when working with their pre-school child.

Number Sense and Operations

- Become aware of numbers and counting to understand the concept of quantity
- Begin to use language to compare numbers of objects
- Learn how numbers and number concepts relate to everyday life
- Understand more, less, and how many
- Count orally in a sequence up to 20
- Use 1:1 correspondence when counting objects up to 10
- Recognize numerals 0 – 10 in print
- Attempt to write numerals 0 – 10
- Use ordinal numbers to describe the position of objects (first, second, third, etc.)
- Learn the meaning of joining, separating, and naming how many in a set

Geometry and Spatial Sense

- Recognize, name and describe two and three dimensional shapes
- Identify positional terms, directionality and order
- Begin to understand geometric concepts through block play
- Progress in ability to put together/take apart puzzles
- Begin to recognize the concept of same and different
- Show an awareness of symmetry
- Begin to understand time intervals (morning, afternoon, evening) in everyday situations
- Use language to describe an understanding of time such as days of the week, months, years, seasons, yesterday, today, tomorrow

Algebraic Concepts (Patterning) and Measuring

- Reproduce, create and extend simple repeating patterns
- Sort, categorize, classify and order objects in a series or group according to one or two attributes (size, color, etc.)
- Recognize and name measurable attributes such as weight, volume, or length
- Begin to use non-standard and standard measures for time, temperature, length, etc. in everyday situations

Data Collection and Problem Solving

- Compare and contrast objects
- Sort objects and explain how sorting was accomplished
- Gather information about self and surroundings
- Contribute data for simple graphs
- Display collected data on graphs using pictures or objects
- Read and interpret findings and results using simple language
- Make predictions based on observation/information
- Use simple strategies to problem solve
- Tell others how to solve a problem
- Understand that there are multiple ways to solve a problem

SCIENCE EDUCATION

Young children are naturally curious and enjoy exploring and asking questions. The teaching of Science in Pre-Kindergarten builds upon this natural curiosity and exploration by providing the time, skills, and structures to help children formulate and investigate their questions. Children in Pre-Kindergarten are expected to learn both the content and process of science.

Knowledge

- Observe, describe, and discuss the natural world: living and non-living things, natural processes, and weather
- Learn about the environment and how to respect and care for it
- Become aware of ideas and language related to time (i.e. daily routines, order of events)
- Develop awareness and beginning understanding of changes in materials and cause-effect relationships

Scientific Skills and Methods

- Use the five senses to gather information and explore the environment
- Learn to use simple measuring devices and concepts to gather information, investigate, and observe processes and relationships
- Participate in simple investigations to test observations, discuss and draw conclusions, and form generalizations
- Collect, describe and record information through a variety of means (i.e. discussion, drawings, maps, graphs, and charts)
- Observe and discuss differences and similarities among objects
- Develop an understanding of drawings, graphs, charts, and maps as a means of recording observations
- Explore the environment through hands-on activities using simple scientific tools such as magnifying glasses, measuring devices, and the five senses
- Learn to make predictions, articulate explanations and generalizations

CREATIVE ARTS

Exposure and instruction in music, art, movement, and dramatic play, nurture the creative side of a child's early education. Besides formal instruction in these subjects, the early childhood environment lends itself to the integration of the creative arts in the daily routine of the classroom and play.

Music

- Participate in a variety of musical activities
- Develop an awareness of different musical instruments
- Learn music vocabulary (time, tone, tempo, rhythm, etc.)
- Recall and imitate patterns, songs, rhythms, and rhymes
- Experience music from a variety of cultures

Movement

- Express what is experienced and heard in various patterns of beat and rhythm in music
- Demonstrate through movement an awareness of different musical tempos, patterns, and beats
- Learn about different cultures through interaction with a variety of musical and movement activities
- Use movement to reinforce learning in all curricular areas

Art

- Recognize and name nine basic colors
- Experience and use a variety of art media (play dough, paint, etc.)
- Plan and create drawings, paintings, models, and other art creations
- Share experiences, ideas, and thoughts about artistic creations
- Learn to show respect for the creative work of others
- Express experiences and feelings through a variety of artistic processes and creations

Dramatic Play

- Participate in a variety of dramatic play activities
- Use creativity and imagination when assuming different roles in pretend-play situations

EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Classroom environment and learning opportunities are developmentally appropriate and foster spiritual, cognitive, social, emotional, physical, and creative growth in the preschooler's educational experience. While allowing the child to develop and mature at his/her own pace, the following indicators provide a guide for appropriate development of the child.

Self-Concept

- Develop and express a positive awareness of self in terms of specific abilities, characteristics, and preferences
- Develop independence in a range of activities, routines, and tasks
- Demonstrate satisfaction when completing a task or solving a problem
- Maintain individuality as well as a positive sense of self within a group

Self-Control

- Express feelings, needs, and opinions appropriately while respecting others
- Begin to understand how actions affect others; accept consequences of negative actions
- Follow simple rules and routines
- Use materials purposefully, safely, and respectfully
- Learn to solve problems in a positive manner

Cooperation

- Begin to use compromise, negotiations, and discussion in working, playing, and resolving conflicts with peers
- Demonstrate ability to give/take during peer interactions by helping, sharing, and discussing
- Learn to take turns in games or using materials
- Be a helpful member in a group through sharing tasks and chores

Social Relationships

- Accept guidance and directions from a range of familiar adults
- Show ability to develop friendships with peers
- Express empathy and care for others
- Communicate with familiar adults in an appropriate and comfortable manner
- Demonstrate positive social skills and manners

Knowledge of Self, Families, Communities

- Know full name and birthday
- Identify their own gender, family, and culture
- Recognize similarities and respect differences among people such as gender, race, special needs, culture, language, and family structures
- Learn about community helpers
- Understand the structures of home, classroom, school, parish, and community
- Learn caution in unfamiliar and/or potentially dangerous situations

PERSONAL CARE

Health Status and Practices

- Develop physical strength, stamina, and flexibility
- Participate actively in play, activities, and exercise that enhances physical fitness
- Become aware of good nutrition and manners while eating
- Become independent in personal care and hygiene
- Learn to follow basic health and safety rules

MOTOR DEVELOPMENT

Fine Motor Development

- Develop strength, dexterity, and control needed to use tools such as scissors, paper punch, hammer, play dough, and manipulatives
- Develop eye-hand coordination in building with blocks, assembling puzzles, reproducing shapes and patterns, stringing beads, lacing, and using scissors
- Show progress in using writing and art tools, and various types of technology

Gross Motor Development

- Develop an awareness of one's own body
- Learn control and balance in walking, climbing, running, jumping, hopping, skipping, marching, galloping, and creative movement
- Improve coordination in throwing, catching, kicking, bouncing balls, and using playground equipment