

# Program of Studies

Berkshire Country Day School

*Where you belong.*

**Preschool**  
2009–10

# Preschool

BCD's preschool program provides a nurturing and stimulating educational environment for young children. A child-centered curriculum supports each child's learning style and developmental readiness, engaging them in activities and play that spark imagination, build independence, and present ample opportunities for exploring and discovering their world. Learning to respect others is a goal of the program.

## **Ellen Hayford Atwater, Pre-Kindergarten Joni Guerette, Beginner Threes**

The Preschool curriculum is based on the developmental needs of the three-, four- and five-year-old child. The program is designed to promote the positive growth of each child emotionally, socially, physically and intellectually.

The daily schedule is organized to give each child an opportunity to work and play in small and whole group activities, as well as interacting individually with the teacher. Children are encouraged to become more independent in making choices about activities, building relationships, and solving problems. At the same time, they are given the guidance and support to feel safe and successful.

Social and academic learning goals are addressed through integrating practices of The Responsive Classroom® Approach, such as Morning Meeting, developing classroom Rules and Logical Consequences, Guided Discovery, Academic Choices, and Classroom Organization. This inquiry-based approach allows children to engage in active learning, experimentation, and problem solving. Reaching out to parents to participate actively in aspects of the Preschool Program is intrinsic and valued. These practices provide children with predictable expectations and routines so that children can develop positive social skills, a sense of community, and allow all children to reach their potential. They will develop an awareness of learning to care for themselves, each other, and the environment.

The language arts curriculum gives primary emphasis to listening and verbal skills. The child has many opportunities to express him/herself individually and in front of the group whether communicating feelings, experiences, or ideas. In addition, listening and comprehension skills are increased through discussions, stories, tapes, games, and sharing time. The children are introduced to children's literature, information books, poems, rhymes, songs, and finger plays in order to provide a rich basis in language. Books, charts, and all types of print are available and displayed in the classroom to give children an exposure to letters and environmental print. Auditory and visual recognition of letters and sounds are introduced as developmentally appropriate.

The art curriculum involves exposing children to a variety of tools and media. Adults teach, model and provide children with opportunities to practice using a variety of materials and equipment which may include crayons, markers, paint brushes, scissors, clay, glue, glue sticks, and a variety of paper and materials from our natural environment. Children are provided with tools and materials to explore their own creativity and develop fine motor skills with an emphasis and focus on the process of art activities rather than the final product.

The math curriculum encourages hands-on exploration of manipulatives and beginning number concepts. Teacher-Child interactions frequently involve noting shapes, numerals, and quantity within various activities and as children engage in play throughout the day. Other concepts developed through exploring manipulatives and teacher-directed activities include the classification of objects regarding various attributes, sequencing, patterning, measuring, estimating, and comparisons.

The social studies curriculum in Preschool revolves around learning more about ourselves, our families, our community and the world around us. Children explore their physical selves by measuring height and weight, tracing their bodies, and discovering that they each have unique opinions and ideas. They discuss how their minds and bodies grow and develop. Children talk about how they are alike and celebrate their differences. Star Day and Grandparents' and Grandfriends' Day are special aspects of how these areas are explored. Opportunities in dramatic play, reading stories, discussions and field trips help children learn about the community. Families are welcomed encourage families to share cultural or ethnic traditions throughout the school year.

The science curriculum encourages exploration, questioning, and discovery. Children study how the seasons affect animal life and the environment, various aspects of the human body, nutrition and growth. In addition, students observe seasonal birds and other wildlife at outside feeders. In the classroom, children care for plants, explore native vegetation, and plant a variety of seeds and bulbs. Walking the nature trail and visiting the pond are wonderful activities, as they provide an abundant outdoor classroom. Cooking experiences help students learn about nutrition,

measurement, and taste. Perhaps most important is the acceptance and encouragement of children's questions with appropriate follow up. One final goal is to foster the curiosity of the young child within a stimulating environment.

Themes may include self-awareness and families, community helpers, healthy bodies, peace, dinosaurs, seasonal changes, tools and machines, holidays, plant life, and insects. Topics are chosen that are interesting and relevant to the children, in order to build an excitement and a love of learning. Preschool is a place for children to grow through play and exploration in a safe, warm and loving atmosphere.

## French

### **Mme. Rachel Siegel**

Students meet for French twice a week for 20-minute lessons. Our goal is to introduce the French language. The teaching will be based on children's natural curiosity and the instinctive learning abilities of their age. The child's capacity to imitate will be used to help the students to articulate the very different French sounds.

The focus will be placed on making the students comfortable in learning French and making the lessons enjoyable and interesting.

By the end of the year, the students should develop confidence and interest in learning French, and will have obtained some basic vocabulary and phonetic skills necessary for future progress.

#### *Teaching Methods*

Extensive use of games, songs, rhymes, and interactive exercises as teaching tools.

#### *Subjects*

Simple greetings, numbers, colors, body parts, family, animals, clothes, fruits, vegetables, and familiar objects.

Connections will be made to homeroom units such as food and animals in Preschool as often as possible.

## Library

### **Jeff Uhas**

The library program at BCD seeks to support the overall mission of the school through providing an atmosphere which promotes inquiry, discovery, and academic excellence while realizing each student's unique potential.

The library serves as a resource for the entire BCD community equipping faculty as well as students with materials that complement their courses of study. In addition to serving as a resource, the early childhood library program will introduce students to the excite-

ment and opportunities that the library has to offer. Students will become familiar with the organization of the library while learning of some of the different materials and genres available in the library.

In addition to exploring the library, students will engage in weekly read alouds during which participation and active listening will be stressed. These high interest stories will be selected to complement areas covered in the classroom as well highlight aspects of story form. Finally, the opportunity to borrow materials will provide the students with the responsibility of caring for and returning books. Students will be encouraged to visit the library outside of their scheduled class period to further explore their own areas of interest.

## Music

### **Heather Fishman**

The Music Curriculum in Preschool and Lower School is based on the belief that each child can do well and enjoy music in a supportive environment that fosters creativity and freedom of expression.

Preschool children participate in a wide range of musical activities that include listening, dancing, simple instrumental work, and singing. While singing is planned as the basic activity, the lessons often include art, dance, and drama. Movement is a central part of this class.

## Physical Education

### **Gail Heady**

The physical education program in Preschool is separated into three areas of development for each class: equipment play, a theme for the month, and small games. Equipment play activities help develop the abilities children need to participate in actual sports later on. Small equipment play activities include: Balls, Hoops, Ropes, Cones, Bean Bags, Balloons, and Scarves. Large equipment play activities include: Parachutes, Tires, Scooters, Mats, Beams, and the Climbing Wall.

Each physical education class has a theme so we can concentrate on an area appropriate for four and five year olds. We can see how they improve their motor skills, listening skills, ability to follow directions, and memory retention. A theme will usually last four weeks. Themes include: Signals, Animals, Shapes and Pathways, Obstacle Courses, Ball Skills, Stunts. Alphabet Letters, and Exercises.

To finish each class the children gather for a small game that is fun and designed to promote positive interaction among the group. Small Games include: Pac Man, Gingerbread Man, and Two-Headed Monster. Please dress children appropriately on gym days.