



Curriculum Guide

*St. John Paul II Early Childhood
Education Center
Preschool – Extended Care*

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Columbus, OH 43205*

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Our curriculum is a discovery-based learning experience aligned with the Ohio Early Learning & Development Standards (Creative Curriculum) which include language arts, mathematics, science, social science, physical development including fine and gross motor skills and health. We also follow the Diocesan guidelines. These guidelines meet the needs of the young children, the education objectives of Early Childhood Education, are consistent with the philosophy of Catholic Education. Religion is part of our daily routine with activities, prayer, and song that support the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd and God Made Everything Loyola Press Program.

There is opportunity for learning to take place through social experiences and dramatic play that encourages problem solving, creative thinking, and cooperation. Our goal is to create learning experiences to nurture the unique potential of each child.

The following curricular areas are included in our preschool program:

- ❖ Religion
- ❖ Reading Readiness
- ❖ Language Arts
- ❖ Math Readiness
- ❖ Science/Discovery
- ❖ Social Studies/Character Education
- ❖ Music & Movement
- ❖ Physical Education

In addition to our formal curriculum, St. John Paul II Center offers a variety of enrichment programs as part of our school day.

- Fine Arts
- Technology/Computer
- In-House Field Trips
- Classroom Celebrations

Learning Centers

A typical day includes Learning Centers, where the children have structured learning activities and also have opportunities to choose their activity through open centers. There's more than "just play" going on in the Learning Centers! The children are developing math concepts, classification, language skills and perseverance. They are learning to communicate, share, respect others, problem solve, work and play in groups, follow classroom rules, express thoughts and feelings appropriately and make good choices and decisions.

Religion

The primary focus of our religion program is to enable preschool children to develop a sense of self-worth by teaching them that God made and loves them. As they explore their interests and abilities, they come to realize that they are special.

God is presented to the children as the good God who made them and the world, who loves and cares for them, and who is always with them. The focus is on praise and thanksgiving which the children easily understand. They are encouraged to pray to God during the day. We say a morning prayer each day as we gather for circle time, a prayer before snack, and we pray for ourselves and others. A child's sense of God comes from the warm atmosphere of love and acceptance in the Early Childhood environment where the child learns about God's wonderful world. Prayer and par liturgies will prepare the young child to participate in the celebrations of the Church.

The preschool program also helps develop a foundation for good decision making by engaging children in activities that show respect for all people and all living things, value God's world and care for it, and to appreciate God's goodness and love for them. Teachers interact with children in ways that nurture kindness and model honesty, forgiveness, respect and concern for each other.

Reading Readiness

Language skills are fundamental to a child's reading development. Our reading activities are designed to offer opportunities that appropriately match how preschool children think, using hands-on experiences to explore and express their thoughts and ideas. Language skills are developed through dramatizing, listening to stories, singing songs, reciting poetry and playing rhyming games.

Our comprehensive curriculum focuses on the development of Phonological Awareness, Alphabet Recognition, Print Awareness, Oral Language and Listening Comprehension. These skills emerge as children draw, dictate and share their thoughts and ideas with others, like for example Show & Tell for each letter of the alphabet.

Letter sounds, formation, and recognition are explored and reinforced through art projects, manipulative, puzzles, and matching games.

Math Readiness

Our approach to mathematics builds on a child's natural curiosity and desire to make order in the surrounding world. Our program is organized into six areas of focus: Sorting, Classification, Patterns, Number Concepts, Shapes, Measurement and Graphing.

Stories, poems, finger plays and pictures are used to motivate children to explore mathematical concepts such as classification, patterns and numbers. Using art and games, children focus on color, shape, size or texture to develop comparison and patterning skills. Children learn counting each day through calendar activities, number games, building blocks and manipulative. The children measure and compare objects (tall, taller, tallest). They use graphs to record things in their classroom, helping them sort, compare and understand the concepts of "more", "fewer" and "equal".

Developing math concepts through hands-on materials in preschool lays the foundation for later abstract mathematical thinking.

Science/Discovery

Experiments and discovery help children experience science concepts first-hand. Discovery exercises typically revolve around each weekly theme. Some examples include...

- Theme - Pumpkins: Children experiment with a variety of objects (including a pumpkin) to determine if they will sink or float and graph their findings.
- Theme - Trees/Autumn: Children collect leaves and examine them using magnifying glasses, documenting their findings. They create leaf and tree bark rubbings.

Social Studies & Character Education

Our preschool Social Studies program focuses on developing a meaningful knowledge about people, jobs, landmarks and cultures of the surrounding community. They develop an appreciation of the similarities and differences among people and how they (and others) are important members of the community - including our their classroom community!

Our Character Education program teaches the students various concepts including: Cooperation, Friendship, Honesty, Thankfulness, Sharing, Patriotism and Respect. One of the most important skills children learn in preschool is the ability to deal with their emotions. Helping children learn about their feelings helps build self-confidence and develops empathy and compassion.

Character Education is developed through hands-on activities. For example, when discussing kindness, the children are encouraged to express their "caring feelings" through actions - simple acts of kindness, talking together, singing and drawing. These topics are utilized to develop a sense of community within the classroom as the children learn that everyone is important and valuable.

Computer/ Technology

Children learn about technology by exploring how things work. St. John Paul II Preschool focus on two basics: of using computers and uses of technology to communicate, learn new information, solve problems and create.

We apply four standard components of the technology: awareness of technology, basic operations and concepts, tools and equipment, people and technology.

Music & Movement

Music is an amazing tool to help children learn in a fun, exciting way! St. John Paul II preschool teachers incorporate music and movement throughout each class session. Music is integrated into our lessons through books, poetry and nursery rhymes. Rhythm and large motor skills are developed through marches and dances. Music is partnered with sensory objects such as scarves and bubbles to engage all the senses.

Art & Art Appreciation

Creative art projects are used to help the children identify colors, shapes and texture, refine small motor skills and develop an aesthetic sense. Children learn to take pride in their accomplishments. ABC Art Projects are used to reinforce letter concepts in an exciting way. For example, when learning about the letter "J" the children may work on a Jingle bell painting, when working on the letter "A" they may make apple prints.

Physical Education

Children learn and develop through physical play. Physical activity not only builds strength and coordination, but helps build a positive self-image. The children learn that our bodies are a gift from God and therefore we need to take care of it! Outdoor playground time is common in good weather. Each class also has a weekly big room scheduled. During this time the children play games, which explore and develop movement, balance and large motor skills. These classes take place in the school auditorium.

In-House Field Trips

With our in-house field trip program, the children are exposed to new topics by the people that know them best, without ever having to leave the classroom. Past topics have included Fire Safety with a visit from the Columbus Firefighters, an architect, Community Helpers led by a Columbus Police Officer, a visit from a local children's author and with a visit from COSI Science Museum. The kids have a great time learning about different topics from the experts in the comfort and familiarity of their own space.

Classroom Celebrations

We have fun at St. John Paul II Preschool each and every day - but some days are extra-special. With the help of parents, the children participate in many special celebrations throughout the year. All Saints Parade, Thanksgiving Party, Christmas Party and Christmas Pageant, Easter Party and some other Holiday parties are just a few examples of the fun times the kids have with their friends in school.