



## **PK & K CURRICULUM**

Our multiage PreK/K/1 classroom was developed to provide students ages four through six with a play based, nurturing, and collaborative community, where children are celebrated and respected for their individuality. Students who begin Grizzly Hill in this classroom benefit from our teaching team, ensuring continuous academic and social growth. Our program is also designed to welcome new students in the Kindergarten or First year, integrating them into our classroom community and tailoring our program to fit each child's needs.

In PreK/K, themes are presented. One being the overarching concept of windows and mirrors: the process of looking at and reflecting on ourselves and the world around us. During each year, three themes are bound by a common thread. Within each thematic curriculum, our students explore subjects rich with opportunities for hands-on learning and play, and full of content that is meaningful and accessible for each child. Our educators develop and adjust curriculum content each year to meet the interests and passions of our students.

Our classroom teacher, aide(s), behaviorist and TOSA work as a team to meet each child's individual developmental needs, with consistent and ongoing observation, assessment, and support. Core subject areas of Math, Language Arts, Social Studies, and Science are integrated meaningfully into each of our themes. PreK/K students also regularly go to "Specials," where they explore Art, Music, P.E., Technology, and Library. Students also spend weekly time in the Collaboratory, our early childhood makerspace.

In order to ensure that our students meet curriculum standards and develop necessary skills within our thematic, play-based approach to learning, teachers draw on developmentally appropriate scope and sequence in each subject area.

## **OVERVIEW**

In kindergarten, students begin the study of history–social science with concepts anchored in the experiences they bring to school from their families and communities. Students explore the meaning of good citizenship, national symbols, work now and long ago, geography, time and chronology, and life in the past.

Teachers are encouraged to build understanding of history–social science concepts while furthering beginning literacy skills, as outlined in the California Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects (CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy). For example, shared readings of narrative and informational texts related to the history–social science standards can reinforce academic content vocabulary and provide opportunities for students to work on a variety of reading, writing, speaking, and listening activities. Teachers should also work collaboratively with colleagues who teach grades one through three to avoid repetition. The content themes in kindergarten—such as understanding of and appreciation for American culture and government, geographic awareness, and (starting in grade one) economic reasoning—serve as a multigrade strand that can allow an extended and relatively in-depth course of study.

## **LANGUAGE ARTS**

### **LITERACY**

Literacy is taught in the context of children's explorations, investigations, communications, and background knowledge, otherwise known as the inquiry process. In our multiage classroom, both reading and writing are tools in learning literacy. Student ownership of the process is at the heart of reading instruction, and skill instruction and exploration are adjusted to correspond to the developmental readiness for each individual child. The multiage environment plays a role in all language arts instruction, as early readers model communication skills, vocabulary, and literacy skills that benefit less experienced students. Every day children engage in literature through the inquiry process, participating in storytimes, taking part in dramatic play, dictating stories, performing their work, conversing with their peers, and learning about letters, sounds, and their relationship to each other.

### **READING**

Keeping in mind the wide range of learning modalities in a multiage classroom, teachers use the Experiential Learning (EL) curriculum to support their approach in teaching letter formation, sound awareness, and phonics. Children explore environmental print, thematic literature, and vocabulary in a print rich environment. Direct skill instruction takes place in the context of thematic activities and morning messages in whole group settings, and in weekly small group literacy sessions, during which students work collaboratively on targeted emergent reading tasks with a teacher. In the PreK/K multi-age setting, age appropriate developmental reading skills range from the emergent reader, working on uppercase letter identification and corresponding sound work, to the semi-fluent decoding reader, who reads a variety of books independently with some support with phonics and vocabulary identification. All readers are met at their individual level of development and brought forward.

### **WRITING**

Our PreK/K children explore the value of learning to write as they bring their own individual learning, creativity, and discoveries to the class as a whole to discuss and share them with each other. They develop written documentation in the form of illustrations, written stories and narratives, and teacher supported dictations, such as Weekly News, and regular Journal entries. We practice and use standard letter formation from Handwriting Without Tears, beginning with upper case letters and progressing to lower case at an individual pace. Students are encouraged to use inventive spelling, and teachers work both one-on-one and in small groups with students to introduce and practice strategies for hearing and applying letter/sound concepts and early phonetic rules to their writing.

## **MATHEMATICS**

In Math, children build and internalize math concepts by manipulating concrete objects and math tools. Domains of age appropriate math instruction and exploration include Counting and Cardinality, Operations and Algebraic Thinking, Number and Operations in Base Ten, Measurement and Data, and Geometry. Over the course of the two PreK/K years, children work to determine concrete patterns and relationships by exploring manipulatives, and begin to apply numerals and other symbols in their work. Math explorations are designed to encourage multiple levels of access and practice for children across developmental levels, and to differentiate appropriately for students at different levels of comprehension and experience. Teachers draw from Bridges in Mathematics in planning math curriculum.

## **SCIENCE**

Scientific inquiry is explored primarily through active exploration of materials, with daily Reggio Style provocations and investigations designed to engage students' curiosity. We emphasize "fieldwork" throughout the year, using the natural world as an inspiration for discovery and a tool for learning. Students in PreK/K explore science through themes such as water, light, the human body, engineering, and space. We encourage children to make meaningful connections, construct knowledge and through hands-on inquiry and open-ended discovery.

## **SOCIAL STUDIES**

The PreK/K curriculum responds to the child's developing interest in and knowledge of him/herself and the natural world. Through thematic study children explore individual and group identities, awareness and respect for differences, personal responsibility and cooperation and problem solving skills. Teachers encourage inquiry and discovery as children take part in hands-on projects, experiments and discussions.

## THEMATIC STUDIES

Grizzly Hill uses Experiential Learning (EL) curriculum at this age to instill in each student an appreciation for who they are, for others, and their sense of self in community. Each grade has three modules that follow the three trimesters in our school year. The processes of metamorphosis, growth, and change become a lens through which we revisit the beginning of the year, reflecting together on how we have grown and changed as people and as learners.

## TECHNOLOGY

The technology program at Grizzly Hill starts with the why – why should we teach technology at all? The answer is we don't teach “technology” we teach self-reflection, empathy, and problem solving (know ourselves, understand others, and shape the future). The medium we work within to accomplish this is digital tools, and we teach students both existing skills and how to learn new technology on their own. While the process of learning new tools is inherently valuable (growth mindset, exploration, logic, sequential thinking, curiosity), ultimately we teach technology because of the opportunities it can provide for students to improve themselves and make a positive impact on the world.

## ART

The PreK/K Art program is coordinated with classroom studies. The focus is on exploring a range of art materials and developing self esteem, with an emphasis on self expression.

### Shapes, Marks and Lines

- Imaginative drawing
- Drawing from life
- Paper collage (positive negative space)
- Painting explorations (brush movement)

### Color

- Painting with primary colors plus black and white
- Mixing secondary colors

### Texture and Relief

- Texture rubbings with crayons
- Multimedia collage
- Surface textures in clay
- Tissue paper collage (creating relief)
- Oil/Water resist

### 3D Form

- Clay sculpture
- Wood constructions
- Building with recyclable material

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

The Physical Education program is developmental and skill-based. Through movement the students learn how to activate and control the many ways in which their bodies move. Students practice skills through frequent repetition.

### Skills

- Manipulative skills throw, catch, kick, dribble
- Balance, coordination tumbling, animal walks, partner activities
- Locomotor skills run, hop, skip, jump, gallop
- Social skills and positive self-concept cooperative games
- Spatial skills and body awareness creative exploration
- Sense of rhythm dance, parachute, rope jumping

## **LIBRARY**

At the PreKindergarten/Kindergarten level the library is a place to develop the love of books and to know that this is a special place where books are kept, cared for, and respected. In PreK/K library classes children discover the joy of reading, enrich their vocabulary and develop listening skills during read aloud story time.

### Skills

- Listen to, view, discuss and enjoy a wide variety of literature read alouds in order to develop enthusiasm for reading.
- Differentiate between the roles of author and illustrator
- Begin to recognize the names and titles of favorite authors and illustrators.
- Use the library for pleasure reading
- Begin to recognize the role of the library in the school
- Demonstrate responsibility for borrowed materials by returning them on time and in good condition.
- Learn about checkout and return procedures