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At Saint Ambrose School, we believe that a high quality early childhood program should provide a safe and nurturing environment that promotes the emotional, social, physical and cognitive development of young children while responding to the needs of families. The appropriate curriculum is developed based on teachers' observations and recordings of each child's different needs, developmental progress and special interests. The curriculum emphasizes learning as an interactive process. The teachers develop an environment for the age span of the children within the group to learn through active exploration and interaction with adults, other children, and materials.

Our Pre-Kindergarten classroom is set up in learning centers that provide a developmentally appropriate learning environment for the Pre-Kindergarten aged child. We have an art center, block center, reading center, manipulative center, math center, science center and a dramatic play center. Young children learn best in a hands-on environment that provides materials that are interesting and meaningful. Young children that are engaged in challenging activities become creative as they solve problems.

Learning centers provide the opportunities for the children to make choices about where and what they will work with each day. This choice makes the work interesting and personal and provides a sense of independence. It requires planning to better engage the children in the learning process. The materials at the learning centers can be varied depending on the children's changing interests. Learning centers allow the children to use the same materials in different ways depending on their stage of development.

We start each day with the child finding his/her name tag, getting out his/her fruit or vegetable snack, finding a clothes pin with his/her name on it, placing the clothes pin on the snack and putting the snack in the color basket that matches their table color. A morning project is done in small groups while we are waiting for our friends to arrive. These projects reinforce colors, shapes, size of objects, numbers and letters. Before we start work each day, we pray together, recite the Pledge of Allegiance, take attendance and have a morning meeting to discuss the calendar, weather and the events of the day.

ASSESSMENT

Evaluating a child's progress in the learning center styled classroom is completed through observation and informal assessment. We work with small groups of children in the centers or one on one with a child. We observe each child's development and introduce materials that will capture his/her interest. When we see areas where a child needs practice or reinforcement, we add materials to the learning centers to strengthen these skills. Pre-Kindergarten students receive progress reports in January and June. In the spring, Pre-Kindergarten students participate in a program to assess the

student's readiness for Kindergarten. This testing identifies strengths and weaknesses on a wide variety of developmental skills and assists the teacher in making recommendations for interventions if needed.

RELIGION

Daily prayer is an important part of who we are at Saint Ambrose School. Our Faith Theme this year, "Calling on you to Pray", is incorporated into each day as we come to learn more about our church family. Religion is taught formally four days each week. The series *God Made the World* is Christ centered and teaches the child that Jesus loves them, cares for them, and that God has given them many gifts to be used to show their love. We attend a school wide mass on Wednesdays at 8:30am accompanied by our 6th grade prayer partners.

SCIENCE

Science is part of the Pre-Kindergarten curriculum and is taught through discussion and discovery. Children explore God's gifts starting with themselves, their five senses, their families, friends and the wider community. We study the basic elements of the Earth: land, air, light, color, seasons and weather. Children are led to be amazed at the wonderful variety of creations: plants, seeds, trees, animals, birds, and fish. The Scholastic – *Let's Find Out* – Weekly Reader and *Science Spin* help to engage the students' natural curiosity about the real world and develop early literacy skills.

MATH

Math is taught daily to develop an understanding of math readiness through counting, one-to-one correspondence, ordering, sequencing, sorting, and classifying objects by size, color and shape using manipulatives. Students demonstrate understanding of addition (how many in all) and subtraction (how many are left) using objects. They learn to identify and copy circles, squares, triangles and rectangles and develop a basic understanding of math terms (first, last, half and some).

SOCIAL STUDIES

Social Studies is taught using the Scholastic - *Let's Find Out* -Weekly Reader and through children's literature. It encompasses seasons, holidays, cultures, community and occupations.

MOTOR SKILLS

The students engage in many activities to train and strengthen small muscles to work efficiently before we teach handwriting. The students do lots of coloring, beading, lacing, painting, rolling of clay, play dough, cutting, working with legos, tearing paper to make art projects, etc. to strengthen small muscles. Give your child small things to pick up – beans, beads, buttons, stickers to peel and stick on paper. Providing your child with play dough, scissors, glue, paper, and crayons will help strengthen small motor skills.

We also work on large motor skills. We practice walking up and down the stairs by placing one foot on every step. We go outside every day to play ball, use the play equipment, run and jump. We also do a lot of marching, dancing, skipping and crawling.

SPECIAL CLASSES

PHYSICAL EDUCATION Monday & Wednesday – Ms. Dunston (msdunstonsas@gmail.com)

In Physical Education class students work on large motor skills, stability, manipulating objects and health and safety practices. Pre-Kindergarten students wear the Saint Ambrose gym uniform (t-shirts, shorts, sweatpants and sweatshirts) white crew socks and athletic shoes. Sweatpants, sweatshirts and a uniform t-shirt are to be worn when the weather is cool.

COMPUTER Monday – Mrs. Rowe (mrsrowesas@gmail.com)

Mrs. Rowe chooses different sites online that reinforce what is being taught in Pre-Kindergarten. We work on letter and number recognition, letter sounds, counting, and coloring. We also learn to use the mouse and keyboard.

LIBRARY Tuesday – Mrs. Porcari (mrsporcarisas@gmail.com)

Children have library on Tuesday but may return their book to school any day after someone has read the book to them. Mrs. Porcari concentrates on library behavior and how to treat books. She reads stories that relate to our curriculum and leads the children in discussions about the stories.

MUSIC Wednesday – Mrs. Fitzmaurice (mrsfitzmauricesas70@gmail.com)

Music is taught daily in the classroom. We learn to appreciate different kinds of music; instrumental, classical music and also sing and dance to our favorite children's songs. Pre-Kindergarten has a period of concentrated music activity with Mrs. Fitzmaurice on Wednesday.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE Friday – Mrs. Castillo (mrscastillosas@gmail.com)

Spanish class is held on Fridays. We learn greetings and basic conversation, useful commands, body parts, songs, religious vocabulary, counting, and colors.

ART

Art is taught in the classroom daily. We work with many different media.

HOMEWORK

Homework is not assigned in Pre-Kindergarten; however, reading to your child, as well as talking and asking questions has been shown to build a rich vocabulary which is an asset when learning to read. We encourage you to read to your child fifteen minutes a day and complete the Monthly Book Tracker.

BEHAVIOR

School-wide, it is expected that the children use good manners. When adults model good manners, the children naturally do too. The school also emphasizes good character by encouraging trustworthiness and integrity. In Pre-Kindergarten, we use positive reinforcement by praising the children for displaying good manners and being kind to their classmates.

CLOTHING

Pre-Kindergarten students are required to wear school uniforms; however, they may wear the Physical Education uniform every day or the dress uniform with black athletic shoes. No light up, slip on, or knee high tennis shoes are permitted. Belts are **not** required for Pre-K students. Students must wear the gym uniform and an athletic shoe for physical education class and on all field trips. A seasonal change of clothes (shorts or pants) is kept in the classroom and does not have to be a school uniform.