

Key Learning Experiences

We provide a loving Christian environment with emphasis on the developmental stages of the child. At Bethlehem Christian Pre-School we desire to provide activities that are age-appropriate and nurture spiritual, physical, mental and social development of each child. We believe children learn as they play. Learning for children takes place when information is meaningful, and is in the context of their experiences and development. Therefore, children learn best when provided with a variety of stimulating experiences in which they may freely interact.

Our program is designed to support and extend young children's learning through direct experiences. Children learn when actively engaged, so we provide a balance of teacher-directed and child-initiated activities. Throughout the year we will focus on each of the following areas.

Social Skills

This is an important focus during the pre-school years. We help children learn to relate effectively with others through a mentoring process which values their own ideas with the teacher's guidance.

- ✦ Negotiation
- ✦ Interpersonal skills
- ✦ Cooperation
- ✦ Manners
- ✦ Respect
- ✦ Expressing & understanding feelings
- ✦ Understanding the perspectives of others
- ✦ Group interaction & living skills
- ✦ Children learn to brainstorm and problem-solve in the process of learning

Language, Literacy, Phonemic Awareness, and Pre-Reading

Pre-schoolers are encouraged to communicate as they express their feelings and their thoughts. Learning to communicate effectively and to use language as a tool for thinking are two goals we have for pre-school children. BCP uses a literacy program called "Handwriting Without Tears." This hands on program helps prepare children for Kindergarten in a developmentally appropriate way. It focuses on writing readiness, strokes, shapes, letters and numbers. We also provide experiences with print so that children experience language in written form as well as verbally. Some experiences include:

Handwriting Without Tears

- ✦ Capital Letters first
- ✦ Exploration & Letter Building with wood pieces
- ✦ Finger warm ups & grip
- ✦ Magnetic Letters
- ✦ Mat Man
- ✦ Roll-a-dough
- ✦ Wet, Dry, Try

Alphabet Knowledge

- ✦ Learning to Identify and Discriminate Differences
- ✦ Recognizing Letters and Words

Oral Language

- ✦ Alliteration
- ✦ Music
- ✦ Poetry
- ✦ Repetition
- ✦ Rhymes
- ✦ Whole Language
- ✦ Storytelling/Sequencing

Print Awareness

- ✦ Environmental Print
- ✦ Dictating Stories
- ✦ Reading Signs and Symbols
- ✦ Books, Books, Books

Phonological Awareness

- ✦ Distinguishing Letter Sounds
- ✦ Experimenting with Sounds
- ✦ Identifying Phonemes

Art and Creative Expression (Hands-On Approach)

At BCP children are provided a wide variety of media with which to interact and create. It is the process of using these materials that is most valuable.

- †Self-Expression
- †Sensory-Oriented
- †Open-Ended
- †Experimenting
- †Inventing
- †Predicting
- †Building Self-Esteem
- †Problem-Solving
- †Emphasizing the Process
- †Media Rich

Math & Cognitive: Hands-On Approach

In pre-school we work on:

- †Counting
- †Classifying
- †Comparing
- †Patterning
- †Understanding Time & Temporal Relationships
- †Estimating
- †Measuring
- †Sequencing (ordering)
- †Spatial relations
- †One-to-One Correspondence

Science: (Chemistry, Physics, Biology)

Children love to explore with their senses! Group experiments and discussions, and a science area in each room allow opportunities to discover new things about their world.

- †Observing
- †Questioning
- †Interpreting
- †Critical Thinking
- †Noticing Change
- †Knowledge of Physical and Natural World
- †Predicting
- †Experimenting
- †Inventing
- †Cause –Effect Relations
- †Tracking Motion

Large and Small Motor Skills

These early years are a time of emerging small muscle strength and coordination for pre-schoolers. The following items provide opportunities for the child to experience controlled movement activities.

- †Running
- †Balancing
- †Throwing
- †Creative Movement
- †Cutting
- †Tracing
- †Jumping
- †Climbing
- †Catching
- †Rhythm Activities
- †Stringing
- †Rolling Doughs