



Kindergarten General Studies Purpose Statement Mary Grace Lentz, Kindergarten Teacher

In Kindergarten, the social curriculum is as important as the academic curriculum. Social and academic learning are inextricably connected and each is equally important. The goal of a social curriculum is to enable a child to develop characteristics that include willingness to share; knowledge of right and wrong; and respect for other people's property.

Around age five, children are aware of the social constructs of gender, age, race, and physical abilities. Children group according to similarities and differences. In the classroom we talk about these differences and similarities openly and provide opportunities for role-play and positive social interactions. We discuss and play out stereotypes and issues of race and gender with an approach that is developmentally appropriate. Sometimes these conversations are not easy and we don't have all the answers, but we are committed to finding the patience, time, and desire to help children navigate through bias and prejudice along with the adults in their lives.

Morning Meeting allows us to begin each day as a community of caring and respectful learners. This morning time creates opportunities for the development of social skills. Morning Meeting is made up of four, sequential components, including Greeting, Sharing, Group Activity, and Morning Message. The goals of Morning Meeting are to be recognized as well as to take notice of other classmates and to develop the skills of attention, listening, expression, and cooperative interaction.

The *Writers Workshop* gives children a wide-open invitation into the process of writing. Using this curriculum designed by Professor Lucy Calkins we cultivate rich conversation, storytelling, and detailed drawings during our writing time. *The Writers Workshop* provides an opportunity to make and convey meaning. In the Kindergarten classroom, this is done through drawings and printing. During the year the children have plenty of time to approximate working with print before they are expected to read and write conventionally. The purpose of Writers Workshop is for every child to believe that he or she is a Writer, and by the end of year every child will be an independent and resourceful writer.

The purpose of teaching the Handwriting curriculum developed by Jan Olsen OTR, is to develop key skills needed for writing legibly and with speed, movements, and visual cues. Handwriting skills take several years to develop and these skills begin in Kindergarten. These skills are memory, orientations, placement, size, starts, sequence, control, and spacing.

Story Time builds a sense of community as the teacher and children share the power of language through written and oral story. Story Time can be either a read aloud with pictures, a shared reading experience where the children are invited to read along, or an oral story where the children can 'act' out different parts of spoken tales. Reading aloud and oral storytelling are important to a young child's success in

learning to read and in comprehending language. Story Time works on listening skills, vocabulary and invites students to participate in language before becoming proficient in the language.

In Kindergarten, the approach to math is mostly individualized. We work with the child to establish a firm foundation in number sense. The goal and purpose of the mathematics curriculum is to ensure that all students are included in significant mathematics learning. Students spend time exploring problems in depth. They find more than one solution to many of the problems. They invent their own strategies and approaches before relying on memorized procedures. They choose from a variety of concrete materials as a natural part of their everyday mathematical work. They express their mathematical thinking through drawing, writing, and talking. They work in a variety of grouping – as a whole class, individually, in pairs and in small groups. They move around the classroom as they explore the mathematics in the environment and talk with peers. In Kindergarten class, talking about mathematical ideas and sharing work from a math activity are as much a part of the classroom culture as sitting together to listen to a story, talk about a new activity, or anticipate an upcoming event.

Life on earth today is strongly impacted by science and technology. The purpose of literacy in science is to provide a hands-on experience, using multi-sensory methods, where naturally curious kindergarten students are free to observe, explore, and describe. Small group explorations foster an interchange of ideas and a sharing of exciting discoveries. The goal is that through exploring the outdoors with children, combined with classroom investigation, will instill a love for nature through the study of natural science that builds an active curiosity and interest in the physical world.

The purpose of the social studies curriculum is to enrich our classroom culture. We look to our classroom community for our social studies curriculum. If a family member is from a different country we will explore that country; if we have several religions represented in the classroom, we touch on each one. If something significant has happened in a particular country or state during our time together, we will explore that country and event; if we are studying a particular artist or author, we will bring his or her culture into the classroom. The purpose of our field trips in social studies is to complement our units of study.

The purpose of art in kindergarten is to explore line, color, filling space, and using basic shapes to create a variety of figures. Students will learn about two-dimensional and three-dimensional work. Kindergarten goals are to develop small motor activities by cutting, drawing, writing with pencils, puzzles, sewing, beading, and the use of various manipulatives.

The purpose of recess in kindergarten is to release the imagination in safe and constructive ways through play. A goal in recess is to practice social skills, build friendships, and learn how to cooperate. Recess can also be hard and frustrating. Recess can then provide an opportunity to learn the skills of mediation and problem solving with a teacher. These are skills that will carry over into all areas of life.