

K/1 Program Snapshot

Dear Families,

This snapshot of our K/1 program has been designed to provide families with the basis of our approach to this new program. It is important as we navigate through this school year that everyone that is a part of the child's learning team stay mindful that this program is new, and the current environment of our world is uncertain. We want to provide our vision for the program and the basis from which we plan to structure our days, but we are intentionally allowing this program to stay flexible as the needs of our children and our world change. We want to back this snapshot with an understanding from families of our professional experience. The goal of this outline is to give you the confidence to trust us to provide an alternative program for your child that meets the needs of the child on an individual level and prepares your child for their next school experience.

Warmly,

Christi and Josh

Mission Statement of Little Explorers: Our curriculum is a student-centered curriculum, which keeps flexibility at the forefront. We strive to respond to the ever-changing needs of our students and families and stay up to date and incorporate current best-practices in early childhood education.

Reggio-Inspired Learning

In our K/1 program, we will provide an extension of the curriculum used in our preschool through Reggio-inspired provocations and learning units.

In a Reggio classroom, children:

- Learn through a cooperative, inquiry-based curriculum with units based on the children's interests
- Are encouraged to explore and play through inquiries and provocations
- Use many different methods to express their thoughts, creativity and understanding
- Learn in a play-based setting

In a Reggio-inspired classroom, teachers:

- Interweave teachings of core subject areas in addition to social-emotional teachings into play-based, student-interest response units
- Document student learning and observations through pictures, videos, dictations and written observations
- Respond and adapt to student engagement, interests, and needs

Individual Learning

With a background in special education, Christi has always believed that if teachers had the resources to develop an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for every student, that is truly how each child would be challenged on their personal needs and abilities to the greatest extent. Our goal is to provide a class of 10 students a K/1 experience that is centered around each child's individual needs. It is our goal that no child's learning experience be identical to another child in the class. In the season of COVID-19, this approach will be even more useful for social distancing purposes.

The K/1 teacher, Josh Gillette, completed his own elementary years as a homeschooled student. His mother created a curriculum centered around his individual needs and adjusted the balance between work and play to fit Josh's abilities. He feels that this experience gives him the passion for this model for our students.

Each child will have an assignment book and will work together with the teacher to determine what assignments are important to complete each day. The teacher will meet with each child individually during outdoor arrival time/ outdoor play.

Transition from Little Explorers to Public/Private School

In his career so far, Josh has spent 9 out of his 11 years of teaching as a first-grade teacher in both King George County Schools and Charlottesville City Schools. He spent two years as a third-grade teacher. He has a thorough understanding of what is required of K-3 students in the state of Virginia. It is our goal that children leave our program at or above grade level across all subject areas with a smooth transition into their next school. We will interweave the Virginia Standards of Learning into our approach, while also giving children more time to learn the things they want to learn.

Outdoor Time

Little Explorers keeps ample outdoor time at the forefront of our days under normal circumstances, but in the season of COVID-19, outdoor time will be an even greater priority. We will bring as much of our curriculum outdoors as possible. We will play outside for a lot of our free play time. We will eat outdoors when the weather permits. Our field trips, although limited during this time, will be to places that we can remain outdoors.

Schedule:

8:15am-8:45am: Arrival, outdoor play, individual meetings

8:45-11:15am: **Morning Learning Block**

- During this time, children will engage in the following activities through whole group meetings, small group meetings and individual work and play time:
 - Phonics Instruction
 - Independent reading
 - Group story time
 - Writing
 - Comprehension
 - Imaginative Play
 - Art
 - Social studies
 - Music
 - Independent play
 - Cooperative play

11:15am-11:45am: Movement/ Outdoor Play

11:45-12:15: Lunch

12:15-1:30pm: **Explorations**

- During this time, children will engage in the following activities through whole group meetings, small group meetings and individual work and play time:
 - Math instruction
 - Scientific investigation
 - Group research
 - Interest-led projects
 - Daily/weekly provocations

1:30-2:30pm: **Individual Learning Time**

- During this time, children will be given extra time to complete unfinished assignments, continue projects or explorations, or use this time for their choice.
- This time will be an important learning experience for the children, because some children may decide they enjoy taking more frequent breaks in the morning, leading them to need this time to complete their work. Other children may find that completing all of their work before this time will give them this afternoon time to play and have the freedom to do what they choose.

2:30pm: Dismissal