



# Second Presbyterian Curriculum Map

## Framework for In-depth Curriculum

### *2<sup>nd</sup> Pres Journey*

Values children for their wonder and curiosity, their perspectives and their ability to engage in meaningful work and play.

Values families for their commitment to home, work and community, their perspectives, bonds and traditions and their dreams for their children.

Values staff for their wonder and curiosity, their skill and knowledge and their commitment to families.

Children are viewed as lifelong learners and our approach uses a variety of inter-connected practices that are anchored by our image of children as capable, lifelong learners.

### *History*

The Weekday School was founded in 1954 as an outreach to the community. We currently serve 150 children and have 30 staff members. Our educational philosophy is based on meeting the developmental dimensions of the child - - physical, emotional, social, cognitive, moral, and creative development. Our program is very eclectic in nature - taking a strong strand of Piagetian theory (learning by doing), a strong strand of Maria Montessori's emphasis of encouraging respect for the environment of others, and mixed with the more recent influence and inspirations from the early childhood educational system of the municipality of Reggio Emilia, Italy.



**“Play is the highest expression of human development in childhood for it alone is the free expression of what is in a child’s soul”**

-Fredrich Froebel (founder of Kindergarten)

**“...each time one prematurely teaches a child something he could have discovered for himself, that child is kept from inventing it and, consequently, from understanding it completed.”**

-Jean Piaget (Swiss Psychologist)

**“To be with children is to work one-third with certainty and two-thirds with uncertainty and the new.”**

-Loris Malaguzzi, founder (Reggio Emilia)

## ***Curriculum Content***

Curriculum is every experience children encounter in the learning environment and with this premise our staff engages in “Intentional Teaching.” Intentional teaching includes thinking about all aspects of the learning environment from the arrangement of the room, presentation of materials, adapting routines of the day, and thoughtful responses to the many questions and comments that occur spontaneously throughout the day. Intentional teaching utilizes knowledge about what constitutes “best practice” in the early childhood program with focus on the developmental domains:

- Emotional
- Social
- Physical
- Cognitive
- Linguistic

Staff weave the content information into the developmental domains using the following areas of learning:

- Literacy
- Art
- Dramatic Play
- Outdoor Enrichment
- Mathematics
- Construction
- Group-time Experiences
- Science
- Music and Movement
- Small-group Projects



## ***Routines/Schedules***

The flow of the day will reflect our goals and mission as we strive to provide:

- An inviting environment with materials and arrangements that invite learning
- Long, uninterrupted work time
- Opportunities to get messy and have a variety of sensorial experiences
- Experiences that encourage a variety of media to represent their thoughts and feelings
- Practice with adult support to practice conflict resolution with peers that promote playing together
- Adults serving as co-learners, co-investigators, facilitating learning by preparation of the environment, moving in the rooms with respect and quiet gentleness, listening and supporting children.

## *Curriculum Provocation*

We adhere to a variety of strategies based on scientific research that allows for optimal learning for children. When brain compatible strategies are used to deliver information, memory and alertness are increased and children are able to learn without losing the joy of learning (Schiller, P. (1999) Start Smart: Building Brain Power in the Early Years).

**Nurture curiosity.** One of our most useful strategies to invite children into learning is to urge them to question, explore, experiment, compare. We encourage imaginative approaches and thinking outside the box to problem-solve and to develop critical thinking skills that leads to higher level processing.

**Present information in ways that consider children's ways of learning by using multiple senses.** The more senses that deliver information to the brain, the more likely the brain will attend to that specific information. Thus we strive to teach children using visual models, music, manipulatives, and concrete examples.

**Build on prior knowledge.** When past learning is used as a springboard or a bridge to new information, a child has a better start on processing new information. Adults are able to "scaffold" or adjust their communication and support to stimulate cognitive growth (Vygotsky and Early Childhood, Berk and Winsler, 1995).

**Keep learning active.** We adhere to the "children learn on their feet approach," a hands-on learning approach vs. rote memorization or passive learning.

**Interact with intention.** The teacher-child relationship cannot be underestimated and so our role of building a trusting relationship is the best foundation of our curriculum.

## *Emergent/Negotiated Curriculum*

Curriculum happens all day, in every routine, behavior, interaction, and preparation of the environment. Curriculum may emerge from children's interests, questions and explorations and/or be negotiated from the teacher's observations and the following principles:

### **Key Principles**

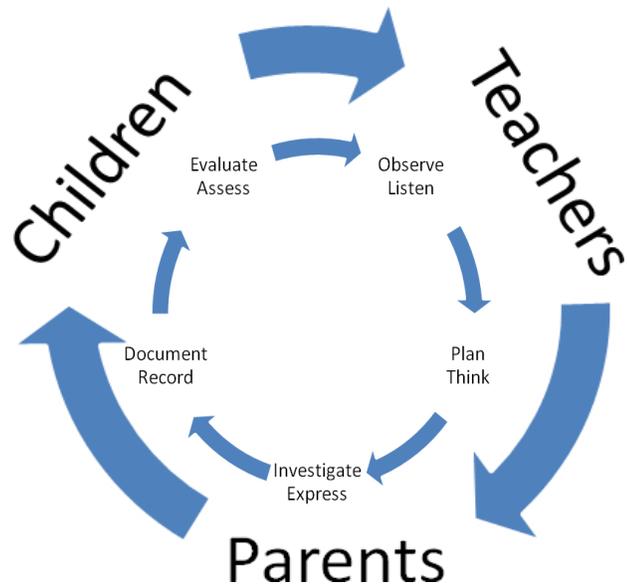
Our decision-making is guided by our knowledge and image of children  
Staff are intentional with the use of space, time and materials  
Curriculum planning is based on observation. Teachers pay close attention to children's  
Interests  
Patterns and recurring themes  
Developmental needs and strengths  
Questions

This in turn guides the teachers' planning and propels their creating of opportunities for children to expand their thinking, represent their understanding, encounter new perceptions and thus teachers will **negotiate** the curriculum with the above considerations.

Teachers document the life of the classroom, collecting "traces" of children's thinking by taking photos, creating videotapes, taking anecdotal notes about children's play and their conversation. Documentation boards and portfolios make the daily life of the classroom visible to the children and families.



# Curriculum Map Cycle



**Interconnection  
Emerging/Negotiated**

## ***Standards of Experience***

Curriculum is every experience children encounter in their learning environment, every routine, every interaction. Staff use their "curriculum map" (knowledge of development and research) to plan for each child's journey. Staff use the Kentucky Standards for Learning as a guidepost with emphasis on what renown ECE Lillian Katz refers to as "standards of experience."

The "Standards of Experience" vs. "delivering" education or "outcomes based on factory model of education" which refer to fixed series of identical outcomes are what we want for all children to experience, the intellectual dispositions in which growing, active minds can be fully engaged:

- Being intellectually engaged, absorbed, and challenged
- Having confidence in their own powers and questions
- Being engaged in extended interactions (e.g. conversations, arguments, planning)
- Taking initiative in a range of activities and accepting responsibilities for what is accomplished
- Overcoming obstacles, set-backs and solving problems
- Helping others to find out things and understand them better
- Applying their developing basic literacy and numeric skills in purposeful ways
- Feelings of belonging to a group of their peers

This list is based on philosophical commitments as well as the best empirical evidence about young children's learning and development. Children are helped to acquire academic skills in the service of their intellectual dispositions *and not at their expense*.