

Preschool Program Guide

Accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children



Accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement



WELCOME TO THE UHCCC PRESCHOOL PROGRAM!

Preschool children are growing and developing in many ways every day. The preschool program at UHCCC is designed to meet the needs of all children by providing many experiences for them to practice and build upon the skills they already have while incorporating new knowledge. Our primary goal is to provide access to the opportunities that promote school success at the same time as recognizing and supporting each child's individual differences.



WHAT TO EXPECT

MULTIAGE CLASSROOMS

At UHCCC, the preschool program utilizes multiage classrooms to serve children age three to five years old. Multi-age education is the purposeful placing of children of different ages, (and abilities) in the same classroom. This practice assists the overall development of the child within a family-like community of learners. Using multi-age classrooms allows UHCCC to:

- Limit multiple caregivers and classroom transitions
- Create consistent personal relationships with the child and encourage healthy emotional attachments
- Increase opportunities for interactions between children and teachers
- Avoid segregating children by age and developmental milestones
- Promote cognitive and social growth through heterogeneous grouping
- Increase the use of research-based developmentally appropriate instructional practices
- Support children's development of friendships and provide opportunities for children to play and learn from each other
- Improve overall children outcomes

Within a multiage classroom, children stay with the same teacher for more than one year and new and/or younger children join the class. Teachers plan lessons and activities according to developmental stages rather than chronological ages. A multiage classroom is a diverse environment where children are encouraged to do their best which can assist children in developing a positive self-concept that lays a foundation for life.

TEACHING STAFF - CHILD RATIOS

UHCCC preschool classrooms are limited in group size to 22 children; each classroom has two fulltime teaching staff and multiple part-time student staff that help maintain developmentally appropriate teaching staff-child ratios of 1:10. Whether a teacher works alone with a group of children or the teaching team works together with a group of children, the environment is designed to support children's positive learning and development across all areas.

KODÁLY MUSIC CLASSES

Through a collaboration with the UH Moore's School of Music, UHCCC offers music classes two times a week for all preschool children. The Kodály music education program contributes to the emotional, intellectual, aesthetic and physical development of the child, providing the child with tools to help him/her achieve a fuller life.

PROMOTING INDEPENDENCE & SELF-REGULATION

Teaching staff coach and support children as they are learning to manage daily routines. Children are provided varied opportunities that encourage good health practices such as serving and feeding themselves, tooth brushing, hand washing, and toileting. Teaching staff support children to:

- Persist when frustrated
- Use language to communicate needs
- Gain control of physical impulses
- Learn turn taking
- Play cooperatively with other children
- Express negative emotions in ways that do not harm others or themselves
- Learn about self and others

CURRICULUM GOALS

Our curriculum is designed with specific objectives for each age level based upon NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) and SACS (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools) guidelines. Our classrooms are set up to create an environment that is rich with learning opportunities, safe, nurturing and developmentally appropriate. The following goals are incorporated into every classroom:

- Developing safe and healthy habits in young children
- Fostering positive self-esteem
- Providing opportunities for creative expression
- Supporting the development of social skills
- Stimulating cognitive problem-solving skills
- Strengthening communication skills necessary for listening, reading, writing, and speaking
- Enhancing fine motor and gross motor skills
- Assessing the individual needs of each child

CURRICULUM DOMAINS

The Preschool program uses the revised Learning Accomplishment Profile (LAP-3) as one assessment tool. It is designed to provide the teacher of the young child with a simple criterion-referenced tool for systematic assessment of the child's existing skills. This instrument is a valuable guide for observation of typically developing children as well as young children with disabilities. It is broken down into the following seven domains:

1. The Gross Motor area examines the child's development in large muscle coordination, strength, and stamina. This section involves postural reactions, balance, and ambulation. Skills with play equipment and physical activities such as hopping, skipping, running, and jumping are included.

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2. The Fine Motor domain focuses on skills in eye-hand coordination that involve reaching, grasping, and manipulating objects. A sequence of fine sensor motor behaviors using cubes, scissors, clay, puzzles, and toys are included.

3. Pre-Writing- Written language constitutes a basic form of communication in our society. For this reason, writing skills are a primary focus of the child's early schooling. These behaviors address the stages of grasping writing instruments, the role of finger and easel painting, and a hierarchy of pre-writing skills for appropriate developmental levels.

4. The Cognitive area addresses intellectual functions such as reasoning, problem solving, and knowledge. The specific skills that are included in this section are basic prerequisites to academic functioning such as numbers, colors, shapes, money, and measurements. Concepts of similarities/differences, size, position, weight, and textures are also assigned to the cognitive section.

5. Language- This domain examines the child's ability to perform the following functions of language: reporting, questioning, predicting, and relating information; following and giving directions; describing actions, sources of actions, and functions; and expressing needs, feelings, and preferences. This area includes items, which address both expressive and receptive aspects of language development.

6. The Self-Help area examines the child's ability to cope independently and responsibly with the skills of daily living. This area includes items that involve: feeding, dressing, toileting, bathing, and grooming.

7. The Personal-Social component of the LAP-3 focuses on the child's responsiveness to his social environment. This area of development not only reflects the child's perception and knowledge of his personal life but it examines interpersonal behaviors such as cooperation, ability to relate to a group, sensitivity to others, and helpfulness.

LEARNING CENTERS

We accomplish curriculum goals by providing learning centers to practice mastered skills and encourage emerging ones. Some of these centers include:

Language & Listening Center: Although the children use language in all areas of the classroom, the Language and Listening Center is a focal point for introducing a variety of experiences involving talking, listening, questioning, labeling and other pre- reading behaviors.

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Dramatic Play Center: The Dramatic Play Center provides a safe setting for children to role-play, express feelings, dramatize stories and try out social behaviors observed in adults. Much of what takes place in this center requires children to share materials and roles. Deciding who will play the part of “Baby Bear” and who will cook the dinner becomes an important lesson in negotiating with others.

Manipulative & Math Center: The purpose of the Manipulative and Math Center is to provide many opportunities for children to count, sort, explore and group objects. As the children investigate concrete materials, they begin to understand the more abstract concept of numbers, shapes and relationships.

Block Center: The Block Center allows children to build imaginative structures using blocks and miniature real life objects. In the process, the children role-play and interact socially with their peers. Building with blocks also fosters a wide range of growth in large and small motor skills, plus allows for experimenting with balance, recognition of simple number concepts, and classifying by shape, size and color. “*Ramps and Pathways*” curriculum activities incorporate basic knowledge of physics and architecture.

Science & Nature Center: The Science and Nature Center provides opportunities for children to experience the world around them. In this area they discover how things function, perform simple experiments and sharpen thinking skills.

Writing & Art Center: The Writing and Art Center provides many opportunities for the children to be creative, develop fine motor skills and build self-confidence. In addition, language development occurs through the discussion of their experiences, projects and writing.

Reading Center: The Reading Center is a book area arranged with comfortable seating. This center provides children a quiet and cozy setting for exploring the printed word and examining delightful illustrations. By providing this area, we hope to build enthusiasm for books, develop prediction skills and increase attention spans.

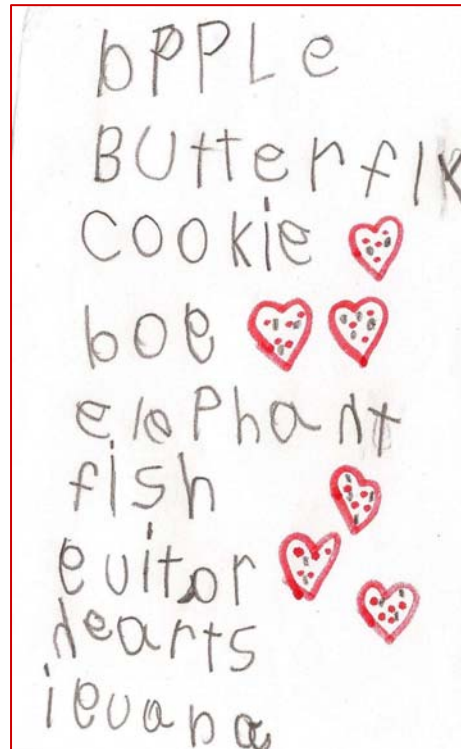
SCHOOL READINESS

“School readiness involves more than just children. School readiness, in the broadest sense, is about children, families, early environments, schools and communities. Children are not innately ready or not ready for school. Their skills and development are strongly influenced by their families and through their interactions with other people and environments before coming to school.” (Maxwell & Clifford 2004, 42)

UHCCC participates in the *Texas Early Education Model* (TEEM) and is certified as Texas School Ready™. Readiness does not happen at the same time or in the same way for all children. Readiness expectations should include all areas of learning. The content areas below include desired outcomes and specific topics covered across all areas.

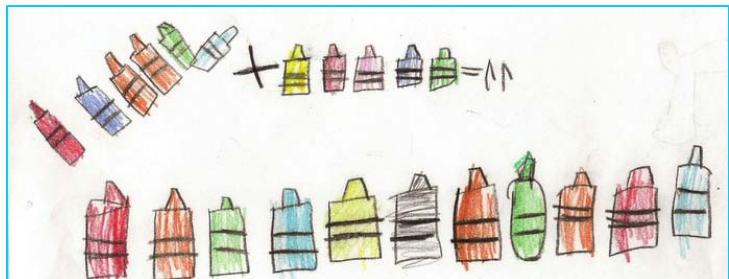
Language Arts:

- Develop listening & speaking skills
- Describe things & events
- Participate in discussions
- Communicate needs & thoughts
- Write name
- Track print
- Expand listening comprehension
- Retell stories & reenact events
- Identify parts of books
- Sequence stories and events
- Predict and draw conclusions
- Name characters and settings
- Develop phonological awareness
- Recite nursery rhymes
- Participate in guided reading
- Practice beginning writing
- Participate in shared writing
- Develop writing journals
- Make up endings to stories
- Use rhyming words
- Read sight words
- Identify words
- Write upper and lower case letters
- Know alphabet sounds



Math:

- Use the calendar
 - Days of the week
 - Months of the year
- Identify shapes
- Recognize, create and extend patterns
- Sort and classify by attributes
- Use spatial and directional words
- Recognize numbers 1 to 20
- Write numbers 1 to 20
- Create sets of objects
- Recognize fractions
- Identify money:
 - Pennies
 - Nickels
 - Dimes
 - Quarters
- Use measurements
- Understand time
- Recognize two/three dimensional shapes
- Use of addition/subtraction



Discovery of Science:

- Astronomy
 - Day, night, sun, moon, stars & clouds
 - Earth
 - Weather, water, soil & rocks
 - Human Body
 - Senses, body parts, needs & health
 - Chemistry
 - Solids & liquids
 - Physics
 - Magnets, ramps & pathways
 - Botany
 - Seeds & plants
 - Zoology
 - Insects & animals
 - Technology
 - Simple tools
- Observe processes & life cycles
Explore scientific reasoning/thinking
Collect data
Perform simple experiments



Computers & Technology:

- Practice problem solving
- Explain & record observations
- Developmentally appropriate programming
- Use independently & collaboratively
- Extend learning

Creative Expression & Appreciation for the Arts:

- Music
 - Develop listening, singing & rhythm
 - Explore instruments
 - Express appreciation
- Theater
 - Explore puppetry
 - Develop performance awareness
- Perception
 - Self-awareness & space
 - Develop & organize ideas
 - Respond to art of others
 - Demonstrate understanding
- Creative expression
 - Safe use of movement
 - Dramatic/imaginative play
 - Create two/three-dimensional art
 - Build vocabulary



Social Studies:

- Historical heritage
- Cultural heritage
- Diversity awareness
- Foster positive identity
- Participate in community
- Explore family structure & social roles
- Build foundation of economic concepts
- Contribute to well-being of the classroom
- Engage in discussions about:

- Fairness, friendship, responsibility, authority & differences



Social/Emotional:

- Develop friendships, sensitivity, helpfulness & other pro-social behaviors
- Learn through interactions with others
- Recognize and name feelings
- Practice skills to regulate emotions, behavior & attention
- Develop persistence, engagement, curiosity & mastery



Health & Safety:

- Practice good health habits
- Learn about nutrition and valuing healthy food
- Participate in safety procedures
- Discuss health and safety practices

Self:

Practice independence & responsibility with the skills of daily living

- Feeding
- Dressing
- Toileting
- Bathing
- Grooming

Reflect knowledge of self

- Age
- Gender
- First & last name
- Birthday
- Address & phone number



Physical Development:

Fine motor development encouraged with materials and opportunities

Large motor development

- Stimulate a variety of skills
- Enhance sensory-motor integration
- Practice familiar to new and challenging
- Learn physical games with rules & structure



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VISION & HEARING SCREENING

The Special Senses and Communication Disorders Act, Texas Health and Safety Code requires that all children enrolled for the first time in a Texas Department of Family and Protective Services licensed child-care center in Texas, or who meet certain grade criteria (specified below), must be screened for possible vision and hearing problems.

WHO MUST BE SCREENED WHEN SCREENING MUST BE DONE

4-years-old by September 1st	Within 120 days of admission
Kindergartners	- or -
Any other first-time entrants	Before end of first semester
(4 years* through 12th grade)	

UHCCC preschoolers are screened, identified early and linked to appropriate remedial services.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

Vision and Hearing Screening
Texas Department of Health
1100 West 49th Street
Austin, Texas 78756-3199
(512) 458-7420

PARENT CONFERENCES

All parents are invited to participate in parent/ teacher conferences in the fall and spring semester. These conferences will be held during school hours and at a time that is convenient for both the parent and the teacher. Occasionally a teacher may request a parent conference when there are special concerns in the classroom. We ask that parents respect this request with prompt attention.

FIELD TRIPS

The preschool program may take field trips (on campus only) throughout the year. Permission slips must be signed before your child may attend any of these functions.

Please refer to the UHCCC Parent Handbook for more information.