Children’s Learning Centers

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 CLC PRESCHOOL PROGRAM!

Preschool children are growing and developing in many ways every day. The preschool program at CLC 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 CLC, 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 CLC 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.

LANGUAGE IMMERSION PROGRAM

A language immersion program is one in which the children spend all or a large portion of their day learning, in a natural way, a particular foreign language. The immersion approach to teaching a second language maximizes the time the children get to practice the language they are learning. Children in a language immersion program work toward fluency in the foreign language; the method of teaching revolves around conversations.

At CLC some of the children in the Program are new to the foreign language, while others come from households where family members are bilingual or even multilingual; however, all young children are still in the process of acquiring language skills. Our Program is designed to help the child easily transition into the language of the classroom by participating naturally in the language. They can use, practice and rehearse the foreign language in an emotionally supportive environment that stimulates all their senses.
As early childhood educators:

- We support the building of a community of inclusion. We know that the young child’s developmental needs are paramount; we want the language immersion process to be fun and to compliment the young child’s development.
- We seek to utilize the unique window of opportunity for learning languages that young children possess by exposing the young child to the rhythm, sounds and culture of another language.
- We strive to foster an appreciation for a multilingual and multicultural nation by making natural connections through literature, actions, relationships, inquiries, opportunities, and repetition.

Our methodology incorporates the CLC mission and the core values of early childhood education. We believe children develop at greater levels when activities include all learning domains; we know that children learn by doing, interacting and expressing.

TEACHING STAFF - CHILD RATIOS
CLC 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, CLC 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
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.

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.

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)

School 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

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

CONFERENCES
All families are invited to participate in 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 family and the teacher. Occasionally a teacher may request a 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 CLC Parent Handbook for more information.