



HAZELWOOD PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM GUIDE



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ABOUT US

MISSION STATEMENT

Our school will be a place that promotes social, emotional, cognitive, and physical growth, as well as awareness, self-confidence, and a love of learning. For that, we are committed to providing a safe and loving environment in which children embrace exploration, discovery, and play!

Program Philosophy

Hazelwood believes that children learn best in a supportive and loving environment where they are encouraged by caring adults who observe and learn beside them. The foundation of our curriculum is giving children opportunities, appropriate materials, and tools to create awareness of themselves, others, and the world around them. With this, Hazelwood is committed to promoting hands-on learning, diversity, connection, respect, and gratitude in all areas of our curriculum and day-to-day activities. All forms of families, diversity, and culture are embraced at Hazelwood and will be reflected in our books, materials, play, and discussions.

The environment is carefully thought out and spaces are arranged to reflect a child-centered view. Materials are displayed in a functional yet inviting manner which engages and nurtures the child's creativity and curiosity. Toys, tools, and work spaces are rotated frequently to reflect the needs and interests of the group.

The role of parents to our school is vital and our collectiveness and communication is an integral piece of what will make our program strong. We encourage you to embrace the school as a community and get to know the other families and kids!

What do we Promote Through our Curriculum?

1. Social and Emotional development
2. Awareness of themselves, others, and the world around them.
3. Relationship building
4. Growth in self-confidence, responsibility, intrinsic motivation, self-help, and self-concept.
5. Development in both gross and fine motor skills.
6. An appreciation and curiosity for the natural world.
7. The confidence to ask for help, seek knowledge, and problem solve.
8. An excitement for engagement, participation, and cooperation.
9. A strong sense of empathy and compassion.
10. A basic foundation for the development of vocabulary, language, mathematics, creative art, science, and social studies.

“Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for children, play is serious learning.”

-Fred Rogers

Non-Discrimination Policy

Hazelwood Preschool does not discriminate based on race, cultural heritage, national origin, marital status, religion, political beliefs, disability or sexual orientation.

Diversity Pledge

- Promote diversity through celebrations of culture, tradition, and customs.
- Embrace and enroll families of all structures, backgrounds, and beliefs.
- Representing our community through our staff and knowing diversity and representation enriches us all.
- Continuously strive to learn more from others, admit when we have it wrong, and lead by example with respect and love for everyone.

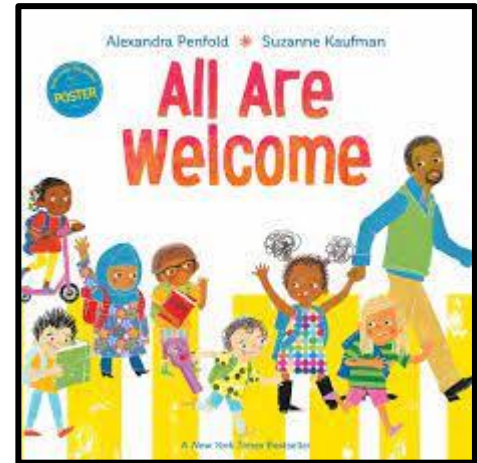
CURRICULUM

CIRCLE TIME

We love Circle Time because it's a great opportunity for learning and fun to go hand in hand!

Story Time:

All the books we read during story time reflect the world we live in and will usually tie in with the Group Concept we are exploring that week such as self-confidence, the people in our communities, feelings, etc. (see page 9). It is very important that diversity is front and center in these stories and that our children get opportunities to see themselves represented while learning about other races, traditions, cultures, beliefs, family units, languages, and abilities.



Music and Movement:

Each day we will move, dance, sing, and play in new and creative ways! There will be...

- Weekly songs that we will learn and practice.
- Guided practices in yoga, Pilates, and movement games.
- Dance parties with items like scarves, ribbons, or egg shakers.
- Several performance days throughout the year for families!
- Music classes with Mode Music Studios as well as yoga and movement classes with several visiting instructors!



Concept of Time:

Many researchers believe that preschools are missing the mark when it comes to Calendar Time and that learning with a calendar is not developmentally appropriate until 1st or 2nd grade. Identifying patterns and counting are important, but should be presented in a more age-appropriate way.

Instead of using a calendar, we will...

- Use terms like *later*, *before*, *after*, and *during* instead of *next Tuesday* or *in 3 hours*.
- Associate days of the week with specific activities like “Music Monday” and “Neighborhood Walk Wednesdays”.
- Create paper chains or visual timelines that count down to exciting events like holidays or field trips.
- Use the concept of cycles to talk about weeks, months, seasons, and years.

SNACK AND LUNCH TIME

Meal time is another opportunity for kids to develop their self-confidence, self-help, responsibility, social skills, and fine motor skills.

- We encourage taking “adventure bites” of new foods.
- We will practice mindful eating habits and share gratitude for those who grew, delivered, and prepared our food.
- Opportunity for the class to sit, chat, and have unstructured time together.



MINDFULNESS

What is Mindfulness?

When we think of Mindfulness, we think of being calm and peaceful. But the practice of Mindfulness, especially when it is implemented in a child's day to day, is so much more. When we say "Mindfulness" we are really saying "awareness". More specifically, the awareness and acknowledgment of what is happening inside and outside our bodies and the personal effects/affects we are having on each other.

How do we practice Mindfulness in class?

- Daily check-ins to access our current feelings.
- Using terms like "I feel ____ when he took my toy" vs "he took my toy".
- Exploring ourselves, others, and the world around us through hands-on observation/discussions, discussions, art, and creative play.
- Using tools such snow globes and Hoberman spheres to center our focus and help our breathing.
- Utilizing the Calm Corner/Breathing Bench when we need to take a break.
- Daily practices in breathing techniques.
- Responding to overwhelming feelings by guiding the student in identifying the feeling and cause and then giving them the tools, space, and time to explore and understand the feeling.



GROUP CONCEPT LEARNING

Group Concept Learning is really about exploration. Every week, we will center group discussions and activities around various ideas that create awareness of ourselves, others, and the world around us. These concepts can be explored through art and other creative mediums, mindfulness practice, group discussions, experiments, reading, hands on learning, investigation, etc. It is a time where our kids are guided in a direction, but are really coming up with their own ideas and opinions together. The three main areas are *Exploration of Me*, *Exploration of Others*, and *Exploration of Environment*.

Exploration of Me:

Discovery and understanding of their bodies, interest, moods/feelings, responsibility, safety, growth, changes, challenges, self-concept, self-confidence, abilities/talents, self-compassion, self-awareness/connection, and habits.



Example Activity: Self-Portraits

Children will begin by facing a mirror and looking closely at their hair, eyes, dimples, freckles, etc. Then, they create a self-portrait of themselves using craft supplies and paper plates. Afterwards, they get to take turns sharing their portraits with their class. Follow up questions: What did you notice about your face when you observed it closely? What is your favorite part of your face? In what ways do you think your face and hair will change over the years?

Exploration of Others:

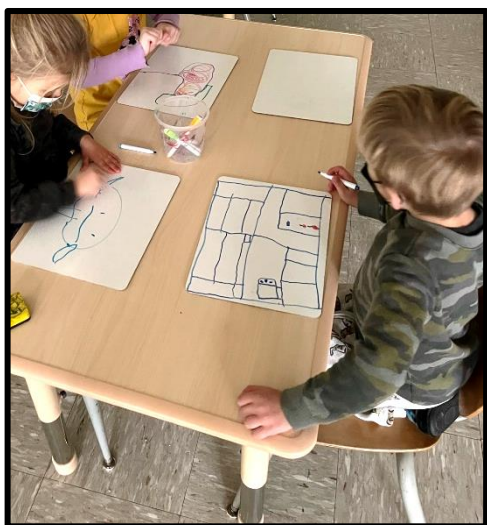
Discovery and understanding of family units, friends, classmates, neighbors, friendships/relationships, diversity, abilities, cultures, traditions/holidays, and animals.

Example Activity: Exploring Yalda (Persian Winter Solstice):

Introduce a community member who celebrates Yalda. They can show the class photos of Iran, share Yalda food and dishes, play traditional music, and read stories of customs and practices on the holiday. Encourage the class to ask questions and consider how this holiday is similar and different to their own holiday and traditions.



Exploration of Environment: Discovery and understanding of community (class, neighborhood, country, world), relationships, and our connections to each other. Our connection to nature and all that surrounds us (effect/affect). Impermanence and changes in seasons, life cycles, weather, etc. Awareness of the space we occupy.



Example Activity: Neighborhood Mapping

What is a community? As a class, have the students draw a map of our neighborhood in West Seattle. Ask: Who do we see around the neighborhood that we can add to our map? Grocery store workers, firefighters, mail carriers, neighbors, teachers, etc. Students can then draw their houses. Follow up questions: How do we all interact as a community? In what ways do we need each other? Who do we have gratitude for?

INDIVIDUAL CONCEPT TIME

A big part of our curriculum philosophy is acknowledging and embracing that kids learn at different speeds and have different learning styles. Our teachers observe each child and create individualized learning paths specific to their level and needs. Each student works with their teacher one-on-one in areas like shapes, numbers, letters, etc. while developing their fine motor skills with cutting, tracing, matching, writing, and so on.

Other ways we support cognitive learning...

Sense of Numbers:

- Throughout the day, numbers are used as adjectives. Instead of a teacher saying “the book is by the chairs”, they would say “the book is by the three chairs”.
- Counting is incorporated in our dance/movement, singing, and instrument time.
- We measure and compare the things around us such as rain fall, our heights/ages, leaf sizes, etc.

Sense of Patterns:

- We read books with repeating phrases (Ex: Brown Bear, Brown Bear...)
- Create patterns while playing music or with body movements.
- Create awareness and explore cycles such as the changing of seasons, life cycles of animals, water cycle, night/day, etc.



DISCOVERY TIME

Discovery time is a calm, independent time for the students to focus on activities and explore without interruption. These activities are presented in trays, boxes, and baskets and are designed for each child to seek and utilize on their own. The materials are designed to help our children see a task and complete it or explore an item to draw their own conclusions about it. These discoveries are specifically designed to encourage growths in questioning, fine motor skills, organization, planning, focus, classification, and sensory experience.

Observation and Sensory:

These are designed for hands-on learning, discovery, and sensory development and can include...

- Using a magnifying glass to observe natural items like seashells, crystals, bones, insects, or feathers.
- Feeling a real bird's nest and noticing all the materials the bird used.
- Sorting through acorns we found on our neighborhood walk.
- Observing the hatching of live mantises and recording their growth in a journal.

Puzzles & Constructing:

Puzzling, building, and creating to achieve a desired or imaginative result.

Sorting, Matching, Counting and Measuring:

- Measuring height, length, and weight with rulers and scales.
- Identify most and least in quantities and volume.
- Identify big, medium, and small, as well as the terms bigger and smaller.
- Use tongs or spoons to develop hand dexterity.

Letter & Shape Recognition:

- Instruction in letter naming.
- Activities to recognize letter shapes, letter creation, and formation.
- Shape identification or matching

OUTSIDE TIME

At the core of this school is the belief that we are the happiest and healthiest when we are connected to nature. And from that, we see exposing children to as much of the natural world as possible as an essential part of their development. And what better way to spark curiosity, creativity, and compassion than getting outside, getting dirty, and feeling free to explore and have fun! Our classes get to spend about half of their time outside (rain or shine!) on neighborhood walks, our playground, or in the beautiful Fauntleroy Park.



R.O.O.T.S Program:

Reconnection ♦ Observation ♦ Openness ♦ Thankfulness ♦ Stewardship

We are so lucky to have Fauntleroy Park in our backyard and it has become a beloved extension of our classrooms. Each class gets to spend one morning a week (3-4 hours) out of the classroom and in nature! We will have nature-based lessons and activities, mindfulness practices, games, and so much exploring! The program aims to promote a connection to the natural world, a love and appreciation for our parks and beaches, and inspire a sense of stewardship and responsibility for our environment. Our youngest classes participate in this program as well, but for only 2 hours at a time due to diapering needs.

Playground:

Our school also has a fully fenced playground complete with a sandbox, climbing structure, tire swing, and 2 slides!

COMING SOON!

We are expanding upstairs and adding two more rooms to our school! One room will be the new Otter/Nap room and the other will be our new art and movement studio! This addition will take place in January, and we will send more information about it closer to the date!

