



SALEM EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY AND INFORMATION

How Young Children Learn

“Children learn on their feet, not on their seat!” – Margaret Puckett

Children Are Active Learners:

- They learn by being involved.
- They follow their own natural curiosity.
- They are explorers.
- They learn by doing.

Children Learn by Doing Things Over and Over:

- They need many opportunities to repeat activities.
- Materials and equipment need to be available for extended periods so that children can discover how things work.
- They also need time to move from exploring to using the same materials and equipment for a specific purpose.
- Young children enjoy practice; they can and will drill themselves.

Example: Learning to tie shoes.

Children Learn Through Their Senses:

- They gather knowledge by seeing, smelling, hearing, feeling, and tasting.

Example: Nature walk, outdoor play, water table exploration, scented playdough, etc . . .

Children Learn by Making Mistakes and Trying a Different Approach:

- Mistakes are an important part of learning.
- We want children to be willing to make mistakes.
- Through trial and error children learn how to learn and they establish learning patterns that will last a lifetime.
- With encouragement, children gain confidence that they can learn and they look to themselves for answers.
- They learn that they can problem solve, an important skill for lifelong learning.

Children Learn Through Modeling:

- Children model what they see and what they hear.
- They are constantly watching to see your reactions in various situations.
- Children need positive role models in their lives.

Children Learn Through Materials and People Relevant to Their Life Experiences:

- For a child to learn about something, it is important if it is a part of their “world” right now, a part of their daily life.
- Children will have a better understanding if they can learn it through a concrete experience.

Example: Farming and farm animals.

Children Learn Through Variety of Experiences:

- Children need a variety of activities and materials in their classrooms because they come to a group with different abilities and experience levels.

Example: (Developmental age) A five year old could be working at a 3 or 4 year old level, or at a 5 or 6 year old level.

- Because of the broad range of skills and the diverse abilities of children in any group, they need to be provided with activities on many levels.
- Materials should be available so that all children can be successful.
- Children have different interests and motivation, so variety is essential.

How Do We Make This Happen At Salem Early Childhood?

Philosophy Statement:

It is our goal to provide quality programs that ensure each child the opportunity to learn and grow at their own rate, and in their own way. We believe in a relaxed atmosphere with special interest centers in the room that invite the children to explore, experiment, discover and develop in a way unique to them. Emphasis of the program is planned, purposeful play that allows the children to learn from hands-on experiences; thus enhancing pre-reading, pre-language and pre-math skills. Experiences are provided to develop an awareness and understanding of many different cultures.

The Program:

Salem Early Childhood adheres to the codes and criteria of the following organizations.

- The National Lutheran Schools Association
- Texas Department of Family and Protective Services
- Harris County Fire Marshal
- Harris County Health Department

The Staff:

- The staff gathered here truly love what they do and want to be here with your child.
- Some have education degrees and some have early childhood degrees.

- All keep abreast of new developments in the early childhood field through annual training. Teachers are expected to receive a minimum of 25 hours of training each school year. They obtain these hours through local and state early childhood conferences.
- They are dedicated to giving each child the feeling of being loved and accepted in a Christian environment. Feeling loved promotes a positive self-image, and enables a child love others. With God’s help, we strive to provide you and your child with a positive early learning experience.

Class Ratios:

Class	Child to Teacher Ratio
Part-Time Toddlers	4:1
Part-Time Twos	6:1
Part-Time Preschool	8:1
Part-Time Pre-K	10:1
Fulltime Infants	3:1
Fulltime Toddlers	4:1
Fulltime Twos	6:1
Fulltime Preschool	9:1
Fulltime Pre-K	9:1

(Additional children may be added to the class depending on the ages of children in the group.)

The Curriculum:

- The curriculum is thematic based and themes are changed on a regular basis.
- Themes are relevant to the child’s world so that they have concrete experiences to learn from.
- Themes are consistent throughout the center. Activities and concepts are adjusted to meet the needs of the developmental age level of each group.
- When possible, “In-House” field trips are arranged with visitors to make the experience concrete.

Examples: Visitors – Doctor, Nurse, Dental Hygienist, Farmer with farm animals, Fire Fighters with the fire truck, Police Officers, etc . . .

- Daily bible stories, prayer, and teachable moments guide children as they learn about Jesus’ love for them and for one another.

- We believe that gross motor skills and music and movement are very important to your child's learning. Specialists are on staff in both of these areas and spend time each week with your child. A trained music teacher spends time with all classes each week. Developmental P.E. is available for Preschool and Pre-K classes with the P.E. teacher from our elementary school.
- "Saxon Math" and phonics are integrated on the preschool and pre-k levels in a developmentally appropriate way.
- Resource areas and library are available on campus for teachers to check out activities and books to enhance centers and themes.
- Supplies are stocked and available to teachers for classroom use.
- Curriculum is designed to educate the "whole" child. Spiritually, physically, emotionally, socially, and cognitively.
- Individual differences are celebrated among children.
- Children learn through their play. Play is your child's work.

The Environment:

- Children learn best through their play and the teachers are the facilitators of your child's play.
- Children are encouraged to make choices and discover the world around them through hands-on activities.
- Low ratios and small group sizes give more opportunity for interaction on an individual basis.
- Classrooms are set-up as centers to enhance learning opportunities.
- Each center provides a variety of activities to choose from, with varying levels of difficulty to meet and challenge the developmental age levels of the children in the group.

In the Manipulative Center children learn to:

- Match objects in a one-to-one correspondence
- Orally identify the number of objects in a group
- Recognize the empty set
- Know terms related to direction and location
- Use vocabulary to compare sets
- Demonstrate concepts of part and whole
- Compare objects
- Form groups by sorting and matching
- Combine and separate groups of object to form new groups
- Sort objects by one or more characteristics
- Repeat a simple pattern using objects
- Order two or three objects by size
- Develop fine motor skills
- Practice self-help skills
- Develop pincher control
- Develop perceptual awareness skills
- Experience counting objects
- Experience identifying patterns
- Experience at the readiness level physical representations of addition and subtraction

- Discover similarities and differences
- Know the letters of the alphabet
- Distinguish between upper and lower case letters
- Sequence events correctly
- Make predictions and explain why
- Discover color, shape, line and texture
- Explore money
- Explore time units
- Classify objects
- Acquire eye-hand coordination
- Make choices
- Make decisions

In the Dramatic Play Center children learn to:

- Use a variety of words to express feelings and ideas
- Use oral language in a variety of situations
- Match objects in a one-to-one correspondence
- Learn social skills appropriate to group behavior
- Identify basic economic wants of people
- Explore different celebrations and customs
- Know and observe rules of the classroom
- Explore sequences of actions in social relationships
- Practice self-help skills
- Participate in leadership/fellowship roles
- Develop concept of family by practicing roles
- Work cooperatively
- Practice simple home chores
- Engage in creative dramatic activities
- Engage in nonverbal communication
- Speak clearly and at an appropriate rate
- Engage in one on one communication
- Discover ways people help each other
- Discover socially acceptable and unacceptable behavior
- Discover cause and effect, interaction of materials and change
- Match pairs, sort and classify objects
- Share materials and take turns
- Make choices
- Make decisions

In the Art Center children learn to:

- Discover line, color, shape and texture by seeing and feeling objects
- Experiment informally with a variety of simple media
- Express individual thoughts and feelings through picture making, modeling, constructing and printing
- Look at and talk about artworks including primary sources
- Engage in conversation by sharing ideas with others

- Use the senses to gain information about the environment
- Develop problem solving skills
- Develop independence
- Develop organizational skills
- Experiment with art materials to understand properties
- Experiment with art materials to understand cause and effect
- Explore artwork
- Develop manipulative skills
- Develop eye-hand coordination
- Respond to story telling by drawing or painting
- Observe color, texture, size and shape of objects
- Make choices
- Make decisions

In the Block Center children learn to:

- Use oral language in a variety of situations
- Match objects in a one-to-one correspondence
- Learn social skills appropriate to group behavior
- Use vocabulary to designate quantities
- Demonstrate concepts of part/whole
- Use vocabulary to compare objects (same/different)
- Form groups by sorting and matching objects according to their attributes
- Know and discuss the consequences of actions in social relationships
- Acquire nonlocomotor movement skills
- Create, repeat and/or extend patterns
- Develop eye-hand coordination
- Observe and follow safety rules
- Learn ordering
- Learn mapping skills
- Learn physical representations of addition and subtraction
- Develop classification skills
- Learn size and shape differentiation, relations and recognition
- Discuss ways people help each other
- Express relative sizes
- Understand gravity, stability, weight and balance
- Think, create and implement plans
- Discover properties of matter
- Discover the names of buildings and the functions of buildings
- Develop respect for the work of others
- Make choices
- Make decisions

In the Science Center children learn to:

- Use senses to gain information about the environment
- Describe phenomena in the environment
- Use vocabulary to compare objects

- Compare similarities and differences among objects
- Sort objects from the environment according to one or more characteristics
- Sequence events in order of their occurrence
- Know and practice safety
- Talk about what is seen, heard, touched, tasted or smelled as objects, people and events are experienced
- Use comparators
- Observe color, texture, size and shape of objects
- Observe change in the environment and objects in it
- Observe cause and effect of materials
- Observe systems, cycles, interactions and diversity in the environment
- Classify objects from the environment as living or nonliving
- Describe external features or organisms
- Make predications
- Use the scientific method
- Develop curiosity about the natural world
- Observe relationships between objects
- Use weighting and other measurement skills to gain information
- Observe forces, such as gravity and magnetism
- Respect and use tools appropriately and safely
- Match, sort and classify objects
- Group objects
- Make choices
- Make decisions

In the Library Center children learn to:

- Respond to simple directions, commands and questions
- Recognize and compare familiar and unfamiliar sounds
- Acquire the meaning of vocabulary words
- Listen to literary selections for personal enjoyment
- Use a variety of words to express feelings and ideas
- Dictate ideas and feelings as they are recorded
- Retell a familiar story
- Use oral language in a variety of situations
- Read own stories to others
- Create stories using invented spelling
- Develop fine motor skills
- Identify author and illustrator as being creators of stories
- Focus attention on a teacher
- Listen to appreciate sound devices of rhythm, rhyme, alliteration and onomatopoeia
- Relate events from personal experiences
- Communicate effectively in one-on-one small group situations
- Tell what a story is about
- Recall important facts from a story
- Arrange the events of a story in sequential order
- Distinguish between real and make-believe

- Retell an unfamiliar story
- Respond to various forms of literature
- Become acquainted with a variety of selections, characters and theme of our literary heritage
- Select books for individual needs and interests
- Follow simple story lines in stories read aloud
- Recognize that everyone has experiences to write about
- Recognize that writing can entertain and inform

In the Playdough Center children learn to:

- Use their senses to gain information about the environment
- Compare and contrast textures
- Use vocabulary to designate quantities such as: more than; less than; equal to; and, as many as
- Demonstrate concepts of part and whole with manipulative materials
- Acquire fundamental movement skills
- Develop fine motor skills like pincher control
- Develop perceptual awareness skills such as coordination
- Discover properties of matter
- Express self creatively
- Discover cause and effect, model, interaction of materials, and change
- Use tools to help
- Combine objects
- Compare similarities and differences
- Use vocabulary such as hard/soft, fat/thin, long/short, and in/out
- Work cooperatively
- Share materials
- Make choices
- Make decisions

In the Computer Center children learn computer skills. They learn to:

- Watch the screen
- Move the arrow to a specified place using the track ball or mouse
- Match letters using the track ball or mouse
- Use the keyboard to access the screen
- Match letters using the keyboard
- Draw with the mouse or track ball
- Fill in spaces with the track ball or mouse
- Erase with the track ball or mouse
- Choose activities using the program menu
- Use a menu to access a different program of choice
- Use the keyboard to write letters, words or numbers
- Print out a page

In the Computer Center children learn skills and concepts depending on the software.

They learn to:

- Match objects in one-to-one correspondence
- Match letters
- Compare objects
- Recognize similarities and differences
- Count objects
- Match pairs, sort and classify objects
- Discover color, line, size and shape of objects
- Combine sets
- Identify or repeat a simple pattern
- Extend or create a simple pattern
- Demonstrate the concept of part/whole relationship
- Develop perceptual awareness skills
- Know terms related to direction
- Recognize the printout is the same as the screen

In Physical Education class children learn to:

- Develop muscular strength and endurance
- Develop flexibility and cardiorespiratory endurance
- Develop locomotor skills
- Develop nonlocomotor skills
- Manipulate bean bags, large balls, long ropes, and hoops
- Perform body mechanics
- Develop body awareness
- Develop spatial and directional awareness
- Develop coordination and balance
- Participate in cooperative games
- Develop and practice behavior that reflects an understanding of safety
- Develop primary gymnastic skills (crawling, rolling, creeping, scooting, sliding and balancing)
- Respect equipment and materials
- Make choices
- Make decisions

In Music & Movement class children learn to:

- Hear music for quiet listening
- Hear music that tells a story
- Create vocal sounds by imitating sing songs
- Move and dance
- Play simple rhythm using musical instruments
- Repeat simple patterns with voice, movement and/or musical instruments
- Participate in rhythmic activities
- Develop coordination
- Acquire fundamental movement skills
- Develop spatial and directional awareness

- Recognize and compare sounds
- Formulate patterns
- Explore vocal sounds
- Explore imitation/recognition of environmental sounds
- Explore difference between speaking and singing voices
- Explore tone matching
- Explore rote singing of melodic patterns
- Sing action songs
- Recognize high/low, loud/soft, fast/slow, up/down, long/short and smooth/jerky
- Hear short selections for expressive movement
- Listen and identify simple music forms
- Perform gross motor movement to records and singing
- Move to express mood/meaning of music
- Explore sounds
- Explore singing games
- Explore complicated rhythm patterns
- Make choices
- Make decisions

(Parts of this document have been derived from The Portfolio And Its Use-A Roadmap For Assessment by Sharon McDonald; Southern Early Childhood Association, 1996.)

*Salem Early Childhood ...
when it matters who educates and nurtures your children.*

Salem Early Childhood is part of the educational programs of Salem Lutheran Ministries.

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