

Kindergarten Program Details

Gold River Discovery Center

Back to School Night

Reading and Language Arts

Our reading and language arts program is designed to promote the children's continued learning of all the language processes: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. A balanced reading and writing approach is a natural way to learn.

Reading Instruction:

Kindergarten is the first year that your child will be exposed to formal reading instruction. Our program focuses on the concepts of print, oral language development, phonemic awareness and sight word instruction.

Concepts of Print:

Have you ever looked at a foreign language and wondered what in the world it was saying? Well, that's what our written text looks like to an inexperienced young reader. As experienced readers, we take for granted that we read left to right, top to bottom, with a return sweep. We know that these little units of letters are words and we know to leave spaces between the words. These skills were taught to us, they were not automatic. We spend a lot of time in Kindergarten modeling with big print (poetry, big books, etc.) as we guide our young readers to understanding the format of print. We model directionality, count the number of words on the page and point out the spaces between words. We count the letters in a word and we touch the words as we read them. With this type of practice young readers start to make sense of the written page.

Developing Oral Vocabulary:

A very important goal of ours is to develop your child's oral

vocabulary. Words are the hooks on which to hang new information. The more words your child knows, the more words he/she will learn. We read high quality literature daily as we hope you do also. Children participate in story telling and retelling to increase their communication skills. We sing songs, read poetry and narrative and expository literature because of the rich language and learning opportunities they provide.

Phonemic Awareness:

Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear and consciously manipulate sounds in words. It is the understanding of the written structure of spoken language. In order for children to learn to read and spell words they must have an understanding of how spoken language maps onto written language.

Phonemic awareness is the most important skill your child needs in order to become a successful reader. To gain phonemic awareness, your child must become conscious of the basic speech sounds. We use word play, songs, rhyme, and oral activities that blend phonemes into words and segment words into phonemes.

We systematically teach letter sounds and identify syllables and word families. As the children's phonemic awareness increases so does the difficulty of the activities. One phonemic activity that your child will do is use inventive spelling to write his/her thoughts.

Sight Words:

Your child will be introduced to some sight words in Kindergarten. Sight words are words found frequently in print (i.e. and, the, is, was, etc...). Sight words should **not** be sounded out; they should be memorized. A knowledge of sight words will increase your child's reading fluency.

Reading Program:

The following programs are used to facilitate teaching reading.

- Open Court Phonics is a systematic approach to teaching phonics.

Through Open Court students will develop the following: print awareness, phonemic awareness and vocabulary.

- Systematic Instruction in Phoneme Awareness, Phonics and Sight Words (SIPPS) is a beginning reading program that develops reading fluency through phonics, sight word and spelling instruction.
- The Houghton Mifflin Reading series uses high quality literature, rich in language, to develop vocabulary, reading concepts/skills and oral language skills.
- Bookshop Reading series uses high quality literature, rich in language, to develop vocabulary, reading concepts/skills and oral language skills.

Writing: We will use the Writer's Workshop method of developing writing. Children are presented with "mentor texts", children's books that demonstrate a style of writing that we would like to learn. They are then encouraged to try to write in that fashion. Usually, topics are suggested until their confidence increases to the point that they are comfortable choosing their own. **Correct spelling is neither required or expected, nor is it developmentally appropriate!**

Math

The Houghton Mifflin California Mathematics program will be used to teach math. This program is designed to teach children a wide range of concepts, as well as to ensure knowledge of basic arithmetic skills. The children will be involved in hands-on activities carefully sequenced to promote the development of concepts in each of the math standards: Number Sense, Measurement and Geometry, Algebra and Functions, Statistics, Data Analysis and Probability and Mathematical Reasoning.

Science

We use FOSS kits for our science program. Basic principles within the disciplines of life, physical, and earth science are explored through hands-on discovery based learning activities. The basic science process

skills of observing, comparing, and communicating will be included in all science lessons. We hope to include some of the following areas of study in our science curriculum this year: trees, land forms, seasons, wood and paper, animals, and Garden of Learning.

Social Studies

Scott Foresman Social Studies Learn and Work focuses on self, home, family, and community. The goal of the program is to contribute to the development of literate, productive citizens. Another successful social studies program used in the Kindergarten program is Quest (Skills for Growing). Quest focuses on life/social skills and health education.

Health

Our Kindergarten health component is part of the school wide science matrix. Nutrition, dental health, personal hygiene and safety are examples of areas we cover throughout the kindergarten year.

Technology

Thanks to our generous PTO, each kindergarten class has Leap Frog Leap pads for the children to use. They include educational games in the following areas: reading, math, geography, visual discrimination/problem solving and fine motor development.

Physical Education/Music/Art

Music, art and physical education are integrated throughout our program on a daily basis. Music allows the child to experience rhythm, rhyme, beat, movement, cooperation, and appreciation of music. In art, we hope to expose the children to a variety of mediums through process and product oriented projects. Music and art provide opportunities for creative expression. Physical education develops skills which enhance abilities to move well. We will work on developing gross and fine motor skills. In addition to what your kindergarten classroom teacher provides, the students will receive PE and Music education from our PE and Music prep teachers.

Project Based Learning Time (Choice Time)

During this time, the children are given the opportunity to choose from a variety of learning activities in the Kindergarten room. The activities include a writing center, block building area, dramatic play area, math/reading skills area, creative art area, reading listening area, and computers area. Children have the opportunity to work at their own developmental level and pace.

Although we have described the program components individually, it is important to note that our Kindergarten program is a holistic approach focusing on developing the whole child. It involves integrating all the curricula in order to enrich and stimulate your child through learning activities relevant to everyday life. We look forward to sharing this important journey with you and your child.

If you have any questions or comments throughout the year we encourage you to:

1. E-mail us at the following:

Michelle Lavery	mlavery@sanjuan.edu
Nikki Maurer	nmaurer@sanjuan.edu
Susan Elder	selder@sanjuan.edu

2. Write us a note.

We're looking forward to a great year!

The Kindergarten Team