



THE WEST HILL SCHOOL

Connect. Learn. Grow.

Curriculum Framework

Mission Statement

The West Hill School offers pre-school age children a safe and nurturing environment that encourages a life-long celebration of learning. Through our rich and varied curriculum, balanced with play and multisensory academic instruction, the children explore and satisfy their curiosities while developing their cognitive, social/emotional, and physical skills. Children experience and practice the self-regulation skills of careful listening and focus and attention that promote school readiness. Through activities that reinforce the development of empathy and emotion management, children learn to build friendships and successful interpersonal relationships. Children develop a sense of appreciation and respect for our natural world. It is our goal that each child progresses to kindergarten with the tools to achieve a balanced education that promotes self-confidence, joy of discovery, pride in accomplishment, and respect for differences in our school, our community, and our world.

Daily Experiences for Children that Support the West Hill School's Mission Statement

During a child's preschool years and beyond, experiencing a meaningful connection to oneself, to other, and to his/her learning creates a strong foundation for a fulfilled future that includes a healthy sense of identity, meaningful relationships, and a lifelong love of learning.

Keeping the importance of connections as a daily priority, each of the nurturing and skillfully trained West Hill School classroom teachers begins the day with a morning meeting to recognize and value each child, to build relationships among peers, and to create a safe, positive and care classroom community. Planned activities throughout the day focus on helping children to develop the interpersonal skills needed for building relationships with both peers and adults.

Child-Choice play in the Discovery Room lays a solid foundation for learning and academic success. Through daily Child-Choice play in experience centers (construction, dramatic play, math and manipulative, science, creative arts, music and movement, and literacy), the children learn to interact with others, develop language skills, and investigate, question, and ponder problems. Child-Choice play guides children in encouraging the skills of independence, initiative, and decision-making while strengthening the necessary social skills to lead them to powerful connections with others.

The children practice social and self-regulation skills taught to them from the research-based *Second Step* program from the Committee for Children. This preschool program addresses skills for learning, emotion management,

friendship building and empathy through the use of puppets, stories, music, movement, and role-playing. Caring, experienced teachers model, practice, coach, and reinforce the use of the skills in all aspects of the children's day. These interactions involve learning to form and to value relationships with others by emphasizing an appreciation of oneself and a respect for the differences of others, the confidence to take risks, and the empathy needed to care for others.

Recognizing that parents/guardians play a critical role in supporting the growth and development of the children, The West Hill School staff members view families as members of the school team. Input about their children, families, culture, and the school are exchanged through Brightwheel messages and pictures, parent/ guardian teacher conferences, school handbooks, orientations, surveys, and questionnaires, and in both informal and formal meetings. The West Hill School families volunteer their time, talents, and resources to further fosters a strong relationship and connection between home and school.

Throughout the day, in both indoor and outdoor large and small group settings, the children engage in joyful and enriching experiences that nurture the development of their cognitive, social/ emotional, creative, and physical growth.

Small group classroom settings provide the children with an extensive learning exploration founded on a researched-based program about how young children learn, *Learn Every Day*. This theme-based and customized curriculum is aligned with current research, linked to and guided by the *Pennsylvania Department of Education's Early Learning Standards*, and written by national experts. This innovative, interactive, and developmental curriculum was designed to foster curiosity and wonder, respect individual differences, honor every child's culture, and recognize that family members are partners in a child's education. The award-winning *Get Set For School* readiness curriculum uses lively music and multi-sensory activities to build a solid foundation for school success in literacy, mathematics, and writing. The *Foundations* Prekindergarten activity program supports students' emerging understanding of the alphabetic principles of letter-sound association and change order, and written language skill manuscript letter formation. Enriched experiences in Spanish language and culture, yoga, creative movement, music, and in-house science field trips taught by science specialists, promote an enhanced learning environment for the children.

The large Discovery Room is filled with engaging experience centers that offer opportunities for children to immerse themselves in the tools for inquiry in the areas of literacy, science, mathematics, movement, music, dramatic play, and creative arts. The Discovery Room includes well-designed spaces for active and self-directed play and learning, as well as, area for quiet activities. The intentional and fun multisensory experience centers are interest-based and focus on extending creative thinking and fostering language interactions while promoting play, exploration, and discovery.

We celebrate the love of learning each day and further enhance the experience of the children with and school events through Community Service Projects, Holiday Celebrations, Spirit Days, Festivals, Special Reader Days, the *Bucket-Filler Program*, Curriculum Based Assemblies, Holiday Festivals, and a Family Night where children showcase their learning.

Thematic Unit Objectives

In a nurturing and loving atmosphere that supports all learners, children grow into curious, independent learners while developing important self-identity and interpersonal skills. The relationship between teachers and children, the implementation of a comprehensive multisensory, hands-on curriculum, and the emphasis on the individual child, are designed to build enthusiasm for learning and an appreciation and respect for others. All learning domains are interrelated, and the developmentally appropriate skills and concepts addressed are aligned with the PA Early Learning Standards and contained in the thematic units that integrate all subject areas. The thematic units build upon the skills and concepts gained in the previous years at The West Hill School and include the following:

Yellow Group (Preschool) Themes

- All About Me and My Family
- School Community and Norms
- *Bucket-Fillers* and Kindness
- Recycling
- Our Green Earth
- Pumpkin Palooza
- Harvest
- Gratitude
- Migration/ Hibernation/ Adaptations
- Celebrations Around the World
- Dinosaurs
- Artists
- Habitats: Rain Forest, Oceans, Sky
- Life Cycles
- Space
- Authors
- Seasons
- Family Night Theme
- Emergent Themes
- Kindergarten Readiness

Yellow Group (Preschool) Objectives

Arts and Creativity – By the end of the school year, the child will ...

- Add words to songs
- Use rhythm instruments to accompany simple songs and movements;
- Understand that other cultures have different types and styles of music and art;
- Express himself/ herself by participating in music, dance, finger-plays and dramatic play;
- Use dramatic play to show events, using both language and props;
- Participate in creative and dramatic play with props and music;
- Use creative movements to express concepts and ideas;
- Build gross motor functions by participating in activities that include galloping, skipping hopping;
- Understand the roles science plays in art;
- Appreciate the natural world as a source of beauty and inspiration for creativity
- Learn that nature can foster creativity;
- Use various media to create art both individually and in a group.

Cognitive Skills – By the end of the school year, the child will....

- Recognize how other places around the world are different;
- Understand the concepts of the same and different;
- Use symbolic representation to represent people, places, and things through drawings; movement, and three- dimensional objects;
- Recognize the differences between pretend and real situations;
- Understand that the past relates to the present;
- Sequence the steps in the scientific process;
- Recognize cause-and-effect relationships, especially as they relate to the environment;
- Solve problems using previously acquired knowledge;
- Solve complex problems with multiple solutions;
- Answer questions that indicate his/her ability to analyze and synthesize what he/she hears and experiences;
- Classify, compare and contrast objects and experiences;
- Apply an analogy to real life.

Communication – By the end of the school year, the child will...

- Speak in complete sentences made up of three or more words;
- Use appropriate levels of volume, tone, and inflection;
- Use appropriate conversational techniques (taking turns, listening, contributing ideas);
- Use increasingly complex sentences to describe what he/she sees and experiences;
- Use increasingly complex vocabulary;
- Use comparative sentences to describe his/her experiences;
- Communicate about something using ordinal number words such as first, second, next, last, etc.;
- Ask questions to seek new information;
- Ask questions with increased use of appropriate vocabulary, descriptive words, and longer sentences;
- Communicate needs and wants clearly;
- Demonstrate an understanding of propositions and positional words;
- Communication using age-appropriate grammar;
- Tell steps for a simple activity;
- Listens and responds to directions and questions;
- Listen for a variety of purposes (for enjoyment, to gain and share information, to perform a task, to learn about the plot of a story, to converse with an adult or peer);
- Use names for colors, shapes, letters, and numbers in play and conversation;
- Use pictures and play writing to express words and ideas;
- Describe a recent experience in detail;
- Use scientific language when describing science- related experiences;
- Recognize tools associated with science;
- Use correct terms such as recycle, reuse, and renew;
- Be able to name some steps that can help the environment;
- Communication about the role of fruits and vegetables in daily life;
- Use vocabulary related to the weather;
- Use vocabulary related to farm animals and describe them in detail;
- Use rare content words appropriately, such as hibernation.

Literacy – By the end of the school year, the child will...

- Speak in complete sentences made up of three or more words;
- Continue to recognize meaning in visual symbols;
- Build phonemic and print awareness;
- Exhibit a variety of behaviors when interacting with books (holding a book correctly, where to find title and author, where to begin reading, how to turn pages correctly, and directionality);
- Recognize parts of a book (front cover, back cover, title, words);
- Be exposed to different genres;
- Continue to recognize print-sound connection;
- Be introduced to the concept of writing a letter;
- Understand the difference between fiction and non-fiction in a story or song;
- Develop environmental-print knowledge;
- Recognize words that rhyme in a song or poem;
- Become familiar with nursery rhyme and rhyming;
- Recognize word parts (syllables, onset rime);
- Continue to develop letter knowledge and recognition skills;
- Increase comprehension by participating in a K- W- L Chart;
- Retell a simple story in correct sequence;
- Enjoy listening to and discussing books; Select and enjoy a book of his/her choice; Predict what will happen next in a story;
- Retell a familiar story (beginning, middle, end);
- Demonstrate letter recognition with some corresponding sounds; Write recognizable letter, most of which are correctly formed.
- Demonstrate listening comprehension before, during, and after reading through strategies such as listening for a purpose, answering questions, retelling, and connecting to prior knowledge;
- Be exposed to onomatopoeia words;
- Be able to identify opposites;
- Recognize own name and/or names of friends and family in print
- Create letter forms;
- Print letters in name using conventional print;
- Attempt writing for various purposes, using features of different forms such as lists, stories, labeling, etc.

Mathematics – By the end of the school year, the child will...

- Build with blocks and construction toys that develop problem solving and spatial relationships;
- Complete shape puzzles;
- Recognize geometric shapes in the environment;
- Use time of day and sequence words;
- Use position words;
- Use terms to compare quantity, length, height, width, weight, and capacity using attributes;
- Use language related to time (earlier, later, morning, night, tomorrow, today);
- Use words to identify where things are in space (near, far, etc);
- Use positional words to describe the location of objects (under, inside, next to, etc);
- Order objects by size or length;
- Recognize, duplicate, and extend simple patterns;
- Estimate based on various criteria;

- Use standard and non-standard techniques to measure and compare;
- Expand knowledge of size and distance;
- Collect, organize, and describe data;
- Work with increasingly complex graphs;
- Make comparisons using weight and measurement;
- Sequence with increasing complexity;
- Match numerals and quantities of items based on similar attributes;
- Use one to one correspondence;
- Use complex oral cues to solve a problem involving numbers;
- Construct patterns
- Rote count to 20;
- Name numbers out of order;
- Write numbers from 1-10 that start at the top and face correctly,
- Measure temperature;
- Measure according to size and distance;
- Measure length using traditional forms of measurement;
- Measure using standard methods;
- Group numbers into sets;
- Place items into sets according to similar attributes and count them;
- Add simple sets together to make another set;
- Sequence up to five items following a pattern;
- Begin to understand coins and their value;
- Repeat complex pattern;
- Understand size as it relates to animals;
- Experience directions on a map.

Personal Health & Development – By the end of the school year, the child will...

- Demonstrate competence in coordinated movements using large muscles;
- Demonstrate spatial awareness (spatial orientation) in both fine and gross motor activities;
- Manipulate writing, art, and drawing tools;
- Hold paper with helping hand when coloring, drawing, and writing;
- Establish hand preference and use correct grip for coloring and writing;
- Trace and copy shapes, letters, and numbers using correct formation habits;
- Develop motor skills through practice with scissors, paste, zippers, buttons, beads, crayons, pencils, etc.;
- Write name with left-to right directionality;
- Draw generally recognizable picture using simple shapes and lines;
- Continue to develop fine motor skills through writing;
- Understand the role of science in keeping healthy;
- Recognize the role of the environment in personal safety and good health;
- Understand the role of the ocean in keeping us healthy;
- Participate in activities requiring complexity with fine motor skills;
- Use fine motor skills with increasing complexity (string beads, for example);
- Show increased skill in writing letters and words;
- Demonstrate the behaviors of a beginning writer;
- Discover how plants provide many healthy foods they eat;
- Learn to make healthy choices about food they eat;
- Recognize the relationship between good nutrition and physical health;

- Recognize how what they wear depends on the weather and how it can affect their health;
- Understand the role of the weather in personal health and well-being;
- Build gross motor functions by participating in activities that include galloping, skipping and hopping;
- Understand that some bugs and spiders are dangerous;
- Recognize that many healthy food choices come from farms and farm animals;
- Understand that plants, animals and people need water and food to survive;
- Recognize that some animals are not intended to be pets.

Science Constructs – By the end of the school year, the child will...

- Obtain and use evidence to promote explanations;
- Generate explanations and communicate conclusions regarding their experiences and explorations;
- Observe, describe, and discuss properties of materials;
- Recognize the steps in the scientific process;
- Use the scientific method to explore and draw conclusions;
- Observe and record what he/she sees with increasing accuracy;
- Acquire knowledge about physical properties of the Earth;
- Be able to articulate how wind can be used as energy;
- Describe characteristics of living things;
- Understand the physical nature of the ocean and what lives there;
- Draw conclusions based on experiences;
- Continue to learn about the physical characteristics of the world;
- Describe the natural world;
- Understand the life cycle of a plant;
- Understand the role of plants and vegetables in their lives;
- Describe nature and understand the effects of each season of the natural world;
- Observe the characteristics of Earth and Space;
- Use science tools appropriately for discovery;
- Observe and describe the characteristics of living things;
- Sequence the life cycle of a butterfly.

Social and Emotional Skills – By the end of the school year, the child will...

- Demonstrate confidence and positive self-image;
- Identify one's own and others' feelings;
- Demonstrate self-care skills and desire for independence;
- Recognize that in the past people had more trouble fulfilling their basic needs;
- Play cooperatively using words to resolve conflicts;
- Follow directions for class routines and transitions;
- Build positive self-image by realizing that he/she can help keep the environment healthy;
- Enjoy social interactions with peers;
- Collaborate with others to complete an activity or project;
- Engage with peers in a social situation;
- Make decisions based on personal preferences;
- Understand the relationship between eating healthy foods, exercising, and feeling good physically;
- Take others' perspectives;
- Show care and concern for others;
- Understand strong feelings;

- Identify one's own strong feelings;
- Use calming down strategies when experiencing strong feelings;
- Use problem-solving steps after calming down;
- Use fair ways to play (play together, trade, take turns);
- Recognize and honor the choices made by others;
- Feel positive about the choices he/she makes;
- Learn more about the importance of getting along with others;
- Work in a group and understand that we all have strengths and weaknesses;
- Follow simple rules, routines, and directions by listening, focusing, and utilizing self-talk;
- Complete a task once it is started.

Social Studies – By the end of the school year, the child will...

- Develop a growing understanding of position in space, geographical location, and direction;
- Recognize the cultures and contributions of people around the world;
- Acknowledge differences between individuals, communities, and cultures;
- Understand the relationships between people and the environments in which they live;
- Recognize events that happened in the past;
- Understand how people lived in the past and how their lives changed over time;
- Recognize a job (scientist) and the work associated with it;
- Understand that people can take care of the environment through activities and actions;
- Recognize the role of the ocean in their daily lives and how certain products from the ocean help sustain life on Earth;
- Understand the important role that plants play in daily life;
- Increase understanding of how people in the world depend on fruits and vegetables for food;
- Understand the role of farmers and farming in society;
- Understand the role that food plays in people's daily lives;
- Recognize the natural passage of time and the role different seasons play in their lives;
- Recognize that people share the environment;
- Differentiate among past, present, and future;
- Understand the role of people who help animals;
- Appreciate listening to stories from other cultures and places;
- Apply folktales to everyday situations;
- Understand the role bugs and spiders play in the environment;
- Recognize that bugs and spiders serve a purpose and can actually help people;
- Understand the valuable role of farming and farmers in the world;
- Understand that wild animals live in various habitats around the world.

Yellow Group (Preschool) Assessment of Students

Teachers monitor and record children's progress over time. Assessment is linked to instruction, enabling teachers to respond to children's needs and to identify children who might need additional reinforcement for a learning objective. Assessment also enables teachers to keep parents/ guardians informed and involved. Ongoing assessment practices include observation, questioning of students, note-taking, formal assessment of developmental skills, portfolios of children's work, and checklists that are completed twice a year and discussed with parents/ guardians at conferences.