

ELIOT-PEARSON CHILDREN'S SCHOOL CURRICULUM GUIDELINES

While each class at the Children's School has its own distinction, there are at least five principles that are consistent from the youngest group of children to the oldest. These principles are most influenced by the theories of educational practice that are based on an understanding of child development.

CURRICULUM GUIDELINES

1. How Children Learn

Children learn best from self-initiated activity with concrete objects. They build on previous knowledge through repeated experiences. Through social interactions with peers, children learn to collaborate, cooperate and to understand another point of view. Children who are active in their own learning process make sense of the world for themselves and construct their own ideas. By having choices and making decisions, children learn to be in control of their own learning and to be independent thinkers. Children need to be presented with a variety of materials, strategies and approaches because not every child learns the same way.

2. How Curriculum Develops

Curriculum in our program develops through an interactive process between the child, teacher and the environment. In each group there is a balance between teacher-planned activities and those activities that emerge from the children's interests, abilities, and needs. There is a balance between individual, small group and large group experiences. Curriculum is based on inquiry, problem solving, and discovery and application of key issues and concepts. Curriculum points to connections within and across disciplines characterized by project-based learning, which allows for more in-depth study of topics. We strive to have all children's learning be integrated, active and meaningful.

Our teachers are facilitators of learning. They act as mentor-companions...observing, reflecting, collaborating, adapting, intervening, scaffolding and building upon each child's questions or ideas, as well as assessing the level and interest of each child in order to make informed decisions. Assessment of learning is both a process and a tool to improve instruction and document children's growth.

3. Creation Of Partnerships With Family

The family is an essential part of our community and crucial to our genuine understanding and appreciation of each child. We strive to build home-school partnerships that are collaborative, trusting, and respectful. Parents and staff regularly communicate through frequent interactions, phone conversations, open houses, parent conferences, parent workshops, written reports, school gatherings, home-visits, and parent participation. Getting to know the values and cultures within families helps nurture the home-school relationship and contributes to the child's self-esteem. Having parents participate in the goal-setting process is an important part of developing curriculum for the individual child.

4. Importance Of The Individual And The Community

Each child is unique. The curriculum focuses on supporting the growth of the whole child, including social-emotional, language, cognitive, and physical development. We believe that children go through stages of development, which are marked by general characteristics, but we also recognize the range of individual and cultural variation. Yet each individual child is also a member of a community that includes the family, the classroom, the school and the world at large. Building this sense of community takes conscious planning and ongoing effort. Our goal is to make each child feel a valued member of the community and to develop a sense of empathy and caring for others.

5. Respects and Appreciation of Differences

Our school perspective involves creating a classroom and school environment which respects and supports all dimensions of human differences, including cultural, linguistic, ability, learning style, ethnicity, family culture, gender, age, and socio-economic differences. In curriculum this perspective is attained by using materials that support diversity and integrate similarities and differences into the daily life of the classroom. We also adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of all learners, differentiating instruction for the members of the group. Activities have multiple entry points where children can be working on the same activity but with different materials, goals and objectives.

Group: Three-Year Old Groups

Area of Development	Goals: Concepts, Skills, and Strategies
Social Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Separation: Develop ability to be fully engaged in the program without parent’s presence (trusting adults, interacting with peers, engaging with curriculum) •Become a successful member of group (begin to play cooperatively, develop self-control, express needs and feelings, problem-solve social situations/conflicts and follow simple directions,)
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Use of language in social context (as a tool for play, to express needs and feelings, to express ideas and experiences) •Begin to develop pre-literacy skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin to learn concepts of print • Begin to develop narratives and a <u>personal</u> response to literature • Participate in language-based games, songs, and literacy experiences •Begin to develop conventions of conversation and social pragmatics (turn taking, attending to speaker)
Cognitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Develop concepts of quantity •Learn to classify (patterns, similarities and differences) •Develop physical knowledge (through use of art media, manipulatives sand, water play) •Engage in symbolic play •Master classroom routines and expectations •Develop spatial skills (through art media, blocks, manipulatives, movement) •Ask questions and develop theories/predictions about the physical world •Use senses to explore environment-observe, sort, describe, compare •Develop critical thinking skills, risk-taking, exploring and testing hypotheses
Physical Motor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Build gross motor skills (climbing, running, jumping, pumping, balancing, digging, pulling, pushing) •Develop body awareness, strength, and coordination • Develop fine motor skills, strength, dexterity, hand-eye and bilateral coordination: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning to use pre-writing tools, brushes, scissors, markers • Manipulating blocks, puzzles, pegs, beads
Self-Help	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Hand washing •Toileting, dressing •Developing independence in classroom routines such as snack, lunch, putting away belongings •Cleaning up after daily activities •Discussing healthy habits and growth
Creative Expression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Explore a wide range of sensory, musical, and art materials/media •Use art, music, manipulatives, and dramatic play materials to express own thoughts, emotions, and ideas. •Begin to explore and create 2 and 3 dimensional symbolic representations of the world (pre-writing skill)

Sample documentation and assessment used:

Observation and recording, photographs, work samples, checklists, charts, lists, anecdotal records, video/audio recording, portfolios, progress reports, child and parent interviews, class books.

Group: Preschool West (4 year olds)

Area of Development	Goals: Concepts, Skills, and Strategies
Social Emotional Self-concept Self-control Approach to learning Relationships with others (peers and adults) Conflict resolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Facilitating transition from home to school •Participate in group life of class •Develop self-control, responsibility and respect for self, others and materials •Develop friendship skills; empathy, respect for differences •Conflict resolution •Opportunities for displaying curiosity, flexibility, and inventiveness •Develop self-esteem
Language Listening Speaking Literature Writing Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Begin to understand various uses of language •Begin to play with words and rhyming •Create narratives through storytelling and dramatic play •Response to literature •Pre-literacy skills, concepts of verbal/nonverbal communication •Pre-writing (scribbles, marks-making adding name to lists) •Develop expressive and receptive language •Develop vocabulary
Cognitive Math Science Social Studies Critical Thinking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Active exploration, observing, investigating, predicting, comparing •Asking questions and seeking answers •Symbolic play •Focus on human similarities and differences •Anti-bias curriculum (discussions and experiences) <p>Skills and concepts integrated into curriculum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Geometry, number concepts, cause and effect, problem solving, sequencing, patterns, sorting, counting, pre-reading, time/space, making a plan
Physical Motor Gross motor Fine motor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Coordinating movements (pumping on swing, throwing ball, riding tricycles, scooters) •Developing strength and control (writing, cutting, hole punch, taping, painting, stickers, building with blocks, beading, pouring, eye-droppers) •Physical self-control •Running, climbing and balancing •Digging, using shovels, rakes
Self-Help	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Independently perform self-help tasks (bathroom skills, dressing, washing hands, opening containers, unpacking, repacking, chewing with mouth closed, manners) •Responsible for belongings
Creative Expression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Use a variety of art materials for tactile experience and exploration •Group music experiences •Creative movement and dance •Show interest in the work of others •Explore wide range of sensory materials

Sample documentation and assessment used:

Observation and recording, photographs, work samples, checklists, charts, lists, anecdotal records, video/audio recording, portfolios, progress reports, child and parent interviews, class books.

Group: Kindergarten

Area of Development	Goals: Concepts, Skills, and Strategies
Social Emotional Self-concept, self-control, approach to learning, relationships with others	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promoting identity as a learner• Building community• Building identity and confidence• Promoting autonomy• Facilitating transition from family to school• Negotiating friendship and peer interactions• Respect for and understanding of others; acceptance of similarities and differences• Conflict resolution
Language Expression, listening, reading, writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ability to recognize and create narratives• Expression and communication in different arenas• Letter and sound recognition• Emergent reading• Awareness of different languages
Cognitive Critical thinking, creativity, organization, and memory	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Symbolic play• Research skills• Long term group projects• Promote a meta-cognitive understanding of learning• Observing and focusing
Physical Motor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gross (run, jump, balance, strength, flexibility)• Fine (representational skills, manipulation of materials, pencil grasp, cutting)
Curriculum Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Math (graphing, patterns, classification, number recognition, one to one correspondence, estimation, posing questions, measurement, use of mathematics in every day life)• Science (cause and effect, prediction, observation, life cycles, natural environment)• Art (drawing, painting, clay and other materials for communication and expression)• Storytelling and dramatic play• Music

Sample documentation and assessment used:

Observation and recording, photographs, work samples, checklists, anecdotal records, video/audio recording, portfolios, progress reports, child and parent interviews.

Group: 1st/2nd Grade

Area of Development	Goals: Concepts, Skills, and Strategies	Sample Documentation & Assessment
Social Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build strong friendships and develop close relationships with teachers and peers • Learn to share ideas and materials & take turns with peers • Develop an appreciation of the whole group's needs and the ways in which they interact with their personal desires • Learn to find own voice and make needs known within a whole class • Respect and accept the differences among their peer group and understand that each of us has our own strengths and areas of need • Work together to benefit the whole group and become a responsible member of the classroom community • Conflict resolution • Work collaboratively on various projects with small or large group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation and anecdotal notes • Classroom organized around using shared materials • Work completed represents both people's ideas • Observation of cooperative activities, acceptance of different learning styles through positive responses when they encounter them • Put-ups
Language	<p>Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an enjoyment and love of literature • Become familiar with different genres and authors • Understand differences between fiction and non-fiction • Use various reading strategies to figure out unfamiliar words • Develop phonemic and phonological awareness • Develop fluency • Build comprehension skills • Participate in book clubs: read orally, share opinions and knowledge with group <p>Writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoy creating and writing stories • Learn to write upper and lower case letters • Add punctuation to writing • Learn how to spell many common irregular words and develop their abilities to phonetically sound out words • Write in a variety of genres • Plan, write, and edit <p>Oral language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocabulary development • Storytelling • Expression of fact and opinion • Articulation of thoughts to the group • Verbal explanation of reasoning and thinking processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation and anecdotal recording • Running records and tapes • Buddy reading, taping, portfolios • Book Clubs focused on specific skills • Word Study • Home Reading Journals • Ability to self-select appropriate texts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Published books, portfolio • Daily writing activities • Author's Tea • Editing checklist, personal spelling dictionaries • Spelling assessments, written work

Group: 1st/2nd Grade

Area of Development	Goals: Concepts, Skills, and Strategies	Sample Documentation & Assessment
Math	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop problem solving skills and strategies • Learn to estimate, graph and interpret the results • Understand the underlying concepts of addition, subtraction, multiplication, probability, monetary units, and fractions • Internalize addition and subtraction facts to 20 • Learn to add and subtract with regrouping • Learn to tell time to the half hour • Apply knowledge of patterning to understand place values and the patterns within numbers • Understand basic geometrical concepts, such as symmetry and congruence • Represent their mathematical knowledge with pictures, numbers, and words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation and written work • Problem solving in our everyday life • Creating own graphs, being able to extrapolate information from a graph • Checklist for basic facts and addition/subtraction concepts • Written documentation of problem solving strategies • Math journal
Science and Social Studies	<p>Science</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an inquiry approach to learning • Develop experiments to test their own ideas • Use current knowledge to make solid predictions • Learn how to make a hypothesis, record and interpret results of an experiment <p>Social Studies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness and appreciation of other cultures: music, language, traditions, history, current events • Basic geography • In depth study of a habitat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portfolios • Photographs, observations, and anecdotal notes • Science journal • Written documentation of experiment design, interpretation and application • Lists of generated questions • Graphs of results • Group discussions and activities • Making map books • 100 year timeline • Reports
Art/Music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a variety of materials • Try many art forms • Learn the elements of art • Learn a variety of songs • Develop an appreciation of music and art 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portfolio • Checklist of mediums
Physical Motor	<p>Gross Motor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can skip • Can throw a ball • Can pump a swing • Can kick a ball • Can use the structures on the playground appropriately <p>Fine Motor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Print upper and lower case letters • Draw using variety of materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation • Choices at recess that involve these skills • Games at recess that teach these skills