

Curriculum Night Presentation Text

“Give the pupils something to do, not something to learn; and the doing is of such a nature as to demand thinking; learning naturally results.”

-John Dewey, *Experience and Education*

Introduction

Kindergartners are very active learners! Their physical and sensory exploration helps them create meaning and make greater sense of their world. Kindergarten at LREI provides a variety of rich opportunities for children to develop understanding and have moments to share what they know. Progressive educator and contemporary of our school's founder, Elisabeth Irwin, Lucy Sprague Mitchell, characterized this process of learning as the *Intake* and the *Outgo*. In our Kindergarten, learning experiences are of equal importance as the chances we provide children to share what they know—and how they know it!

Social Studies

Social Studies is at the core of the Kindergarten curriculum. At the beginning of the year, we are learning how to all become classroom friends. This focus on friendship establishes a foundation of inclusion, trust and community. Soon, Kindergartners will begin to more deeply learn about each other as we discuss similarities and differences. Valuing the commonalities (Each of us has a family.) and the differences (Each family is different.), our sensitive exploration about our own similarities and differences will spark discussion about the similarities and differences in the world around us. These ideas come about in classroom meetings, through books and games.

This fall, we will investigate our neighborhood for signs of the changing season. We will take trips to Washington Square Park and to the Union Square Greenmarket, observing and collecting evidence of autumn.

During the winter, the Kindergartners will do an investigative study of our school community. Through interviews, visits and observation, your children will gain an understanding of our greater community and their environment. This study is an opportunity to think about the necessity of organization, cooperation and communication—and about the significance of interdependence. We will start by investigating aspects of our own classroom, and then move on to a study of the school community.

In the spring, we will once again travel out to our neighborhood to see signs of spring. At the end of the year we will develop a study based on the children's interests that come out of working together. It will be a study that will connect the concept of interdependence developed through our school community to another aspect of the community around us.

Throughout all our social studies explorations, block building is one means for Kindergartners to both develop understanding and show what they know. Their work in block building will grow throughout the year, providing both a means to experiment with and construct examples of interdependence, cooperation and innovation.

Language Arts

In Kindergarten, children are developing a love of literature and beginning to see and create text that has meaning. Kindergartners are also developing a greater use and understanding of language.

Your children share books and reading many times each day. Every day, we read the morning message, schedule and work time choices together. Every day ends with a teacher or guest reading a book at Story Time. On Fridays, the Kindergartners visit the school library and listen to a book read by the Lower School Librarian, and on most Friday afternoons, share a book intimately with their Fourth Grade Reading Buddy. Big books, often with predictable language or rhymes, are regularly read aloud together to increase the Kindergartner's confidence in approaching books. Other occasions come up naturally as children read a recipe with a teacher or find information on a class chart. Kindergartners choose to look at books during rest and during other moments every day.

We include symbols and pictures with text in order to make important information accessible. This can be seen in our class schedule and work time choice charts. Kindergartners are beginning to associate meaning with recognizable pictures and words.

Kindergartners are working on letter/sound identification. Through active games and regular classroom activities your children are beginning to move toward phonemic awareness.

During Work Time the drawing and writing table provides the Kindergartners with a comfortable area to explore writing and drawing tools and develop motor coordination. This exploratory environment allows your children to create self-directed works in pictures and writing.

Kindergartners are using pictures and text in their writing. They are regularly writing in response to a story or to say something of their own. We have started to create class books, and soon your children will begin writing individual books. Kindergartners are expected to use invented spelling in their writing, and teachers work closely with children during Writing so that they are each supported and encouraged to do their best work.

Through our meeting discussions, play and work, Kindergartners are developing both their understanding of and use of language. Kindergartners are using real and imaginative dialogue in their play. Whether it is in dramatic play, blocks, play dough or paint, your children are speaking to share their ideas, tell a story and become another role. In play, their speech designates symbolic meaning to objects and also negotiates with

others to determine the use of materials. Snack and lunch time are also rich with social conversation.

Mathematics

Math is incorporated into the daily routines of the classroom. Kindergartners freely experiment with mathematical materials and manipulatives and also use the same materials constructively during our focused math investigations.

Every day, we create opportunities for Kindergartners to develop their mathematical understanding. We create a tally of how many days we have been in school. We use our attendance chart, question of the day and calendar to count, understand number, compare, discuss pattern, and make predictions. Kindergartners explore fundamental concepts such as symmetry, number, classification and geometry through block building and experimental use of other materials.

The TERC Investigations curriculum actively engages your children in mathematical concepts and questions. The Kindergarten scope focuses on the following strands of mathematics: patterns, developing number sense, exploring data, exploring geometry, and counting and the number system.

Science

In Kindergarten, your children observe and record natural objects, our classroom snails and the changing seasons. Through sensory experiences, children gain a greater sense of the natural world and their role in it. Their attention to the care and wellbeing of other living things contribute to their developing senses of independence and interdependence. Our class activities such as cooking and block building provide opportunities for prediction and experimentation, contributing to their understanding of the physical world.

Our Classroom Community

It is important that we guide the Kindergartners to develop a sense of community in the classroom. Our daily routines and thematic studies help Kindergartners develop friendship, kindness and togetherness. Playing together and working together are one in the same in Kindergarten. We are creating a foundation for the rhythms of school, a passion for learning, and love of life.

“Education is a social process. Education is growth. Education is, not a preparation for life; education is life itself.”

-John Dewey, *Democracy and Education*