

Curriculum Statement

At Blumenort Christian Preschool, we believe that learning begins the moment a child walks through our door. We also believe that the best learning tool for a child no matter what age or stage of life, the experiences they bring with them or the different abilities they have is PLAY. In that regard, everything we do, prepare and set up is with a purpose in mind. We have a predictable, yet flexible schedule that offers large blocks of free play time throughout our day with as few transitions as possible. If we observe children fully engaged in play experiences we may choose to extend the free play time and either shorten or forgo the other activities planned for that day. This allows us to make the most of learning opportunities.

As we are a Christian Preschool, we feel it is important to implement Christian values in all areas of our program. We choose weekly and monthly themes to provide many different learning opportunities, but are not tied to those themes. Themes are based on the time of year, seasons and interests of the individual children in our program. Although we may have planned winter based themes during the winter months, we may observe a group of children showing interest in airplanes, oceans and beaches as a result of their parents planning a winter vacation. This would be a great opportunity to change our theme to having a beach day in the middle of winter rather than in June. We could also set up an airplane center and read books and talk about airplanes. We are intentional and flexible by observing for and extending unplanned learning moments. For example, when we observed a group of boys using the chairs in story corner to build forts we provided tables, blankets, cardboard and large tubes to build forts and make tunnels in the gym rather than having the regular gym time we had planned. This resulted in a full week of play and learning. These moments can so often go unnoticed which is why we have set up goals for our staff to recognize them and use these opportunities. Many times more learning happens during these child directed moments than during pre-planned activities.

Our planning and preparations are intentional in providing the best learning environment for the specific children in our care at the time. This may look very different from one class to the next. We may have children who love to draw, paint and create. This allows children to learn many concepts including self confidence, self expression, and decision making as well as skills such as color recognition and fine motor skills. For them, we will provide many mediums of art in which they can extend their experiences and their learning. This also fosters a sense of growth and accomplishment. We may have other children whose interest is in cars, trucks and trains. For them we can provide many materials, such as blocks and tubes allowing them to build roads and construction sites to further extend their ideas and to foster growth and learning. It is experiences like these where children learn many concepts and skills which include problem solving skills, communication, spatial relations and balance. It also fosters competence and self esteem. We are continually looking at how we can create new opportunities for play as well as extend current interests and themes. This would include field trips and outdoor play where we can experience first hand some of the things we have been learning about at preschool. Some examples of our field trips include visiting the Pumpkin Farm in fall when we were learning

about pumpkins and a Christmas Tree Farm in December where they can see first hand where the trees are grown and how they cut them down and get them ready for you to take them home.

We feel that it is important for all children to feel loved and accepted for who they are. It is our goal to provide a variety of play materials to include the diversity of different cultures, races, abilities and genders. We provide dolls of different races and genders as well as books depicting the many differences among us. We are continually looking for other play materials to add to our program to foster these beliefs. We feel it is important for children to be exposed to the diversity of all people and to be modelled love and acceptance for all.

Another key component to a child's learning are the relationships that are built. They are a vital part of a child's ability to learn and grow. We believe that every child needs to feel safe and to feel loved. Many relationships are happening throughout the day with the most important being between the staff and the children. This happens as we play with them and show interest in them by asking them questions and getting to know them.

We feel that having a good relationship with the family as a whole is important. The Director and staff are always available to parents and make every effort to share aspects of the child's experiences both outside of and at preschool. The children are also building relationships with each other. We encourage and foster those relationships as a lot of learning happens as they play together, take turns, share and begin to learn and use tools to solve conflicts. These are lifelong skills and are especially important as the children head to kindergarten.

We understand that each child has different life experiences, needs and abilities and getting to know each individual will help us to foster those needs and provide quality learning. Children come to us with a diversity of needs. We accept each child as an individual and develop specific goals for children with additional support needs. We work together with medical professionals striving towards common goals depending on the individual needs of the child. Regardless of the individual needs, each child is included as part of our class and encouraged to participate in daily activities and relationships.

Our goals are for each staff member to spend time each class interacting and playing with every child in our care. We are intentional in seeking those who may not require or seek out our attention and spend time engaging in play and conversation with them. Because we feel that a great amount of learning happens through peer interactions, we organize small play spaces and centers to allow children to interact with each other. Staff are intentional in observing the play interactions and seeking opportunities to participate and foster those learning experiences. We feel it is important to maintain higher staff to child ratios than required by the government. This allows us to spend more quality time with the children engaging in play, conversation and relationship building. All of these things reflect in a child's potential for learning.

Although we are licensed for 50, we split our classes into two smaller groups for several different activities. The smaller group sizes allow for us to foster the developing

relationships and provide a better learning experience for each child. These smaller groups would include Gym, Music For Young Children as well as other planned activities. Physical activity is also a very important part of our program. We encourage the children to live healthy and active lifestyles. We implement these beliefs by encouraging and modelling healthy eating and providing many gross motor activities which includes gym classes at least once per week. We are very excited to have a qualified Music For Young Children teacher come to our program every other week. Each group participates in a 30 minute class. The class is a great interactive introduction to music and we have found it to be very therapeutic for some of our children with additional support needs.

We encourage parents to be an active part of our program by volunteering in our classroom. We understand that this may not be possible for all families and feel it is important to capture their child's learning experience through pictures and journals. Each child has a journal where we record the many different experiences throughout the year as well as keep track of their growth and development. It also includes some developmental tools to indicate where their children are in regards to kindergarten readiness. We take many pictures of the children as we attempt to capture the many different learning experiences that happen throughout the day. At the end of the year, we put together a memory DVD for each family.

At Blumenort Christian Preschool, we feel it is a great privilege to have the opportunity to foster the growth and development of each child in our care and to be a part of their first school experience. It is a priority to educate our staff in all areas of growth and development on an ongoing basis to ensure that our program continues to provide quality care and learning.