



Mission Statement

It is the mission of the South Kingstown Inclusionary Preschool to create a loving, nurturing and productive environment which respectfully embraces the value of each child, family, faculty member and community partner. We strive to build this environment through the celebration of diversity which exists not just in our school, but throughout the global community. We maintain high expectations for all children, with the fundamental understanding that each child can learn given instruction which is built upon his or her unique strengths and learning style. By committing to putting the needs of children first and to pooling our resources as needed, we strive to assist each child in reaching his or her full potential during these precious and important early years.

Philosophy Statement

We believe it is our responsibility as early childhood educators to “implement curriculum that is thoughtfully planned, challenging, engaging, developmentally appropriate, culturally and linguistically responsive, comprehensive, and likely to promote positive outcomes for all young children” (NAEYC & NAECS/SDE 2003, 1). We are committed to providing an inclusive education in which all children benefit from the interactions and insights of their peers within an environment rich in social and cultural diversity.

We believe that a quality curriculum is the first step in ensuring consistent high-quality teaching practices that lead to positive outcomes for our students. Our curriculum framework recognizes the importance of the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards (RIELS) in planning instruction. The RIELS serves as our guide to what children should know and be able to do upon entering kindergarten. Recognizing that children learn differently, we acknowledge that these standards, including the 8 domains and learning goals, will be met at different rates and in different ways. We recognize the importance and interrelatedness of each of the 8 domains: Approaches to Learning, Social & Emotional Development, Language Development & Communication, Literacy, Mathematics, Science, Creativity and Physical Health & Development.

Curricular decisions are determined by the integration of a number of theories of child development. We value the importance of the constructivist theory, advocated by Piaget, in which children construct their own knowledge, are highly engaged and intrinsically motivated to learn and make sense of the world. We therefore believe it is our responsibility to provide a rich and diverse environment for investigation, exploration, questioning and problem solving.

Other theorists who play an important role in the development of instruction include Maslow (basic needs and learning), Erikson (emotions and learning), Vygotsky (social & learning), as well as current research on learning and resiliency. We rely on the information from Gardner's Multiple Intelligence model in which he speaks to at least 8 types of intelligences. Because we recognize these individual differences in our students, we implement a wide range of teaching strategies in our classrooms.

We recognize that children learn through play and that these experiences promote numerous benefits including symbolic thinking, memory, language and self-regulation, all are critical to later learning, social competence and school success. Our carefully planned classroom environments allow the children to choose, interact, explore and make discoveries about themselves and their world. We know that children learn through interactions with adults, children and materials. We therefore provide our students with ample time to select and extend their play within rich and varied centers and activities, both indoors and out. Intentional teaching within center based activities is not only possible, but necessary to promote optimal learning. Well planned teacher-guided experiences are also vital to children's development and learning. Therefore, within our daily schedule, students will always have the opportunity to take part in small and large group activities.

We understand that growth is typically orderly and sequential. However, growth in individual domains will vary. We recognize that within each learning goal there is a continuum of development and that children learn differently. We believe that all children can progress given instruction that is designed to meet their individual needs, learning style and interests. We therefore set high expectations for each of our students and believe it our responsibility to offer each individual learner differentiated learning opportunities and challenging, yet achievable experiences that gently encourage growth.

We believe that children learn best within safe, nurturing and supportive environments that promote positive adult-child and child-child interactions. Children benefit from a consistent daily routine which offers predictability yet flexibility. When children feel comfortable with their teachers and within their classes they are free to take risks with their learning. Recent early childhood research indicates that teacher-student interactions are the most powerful determinant of learning outcomes and development.

We believe that child assessment is an integral part of a high-quality early childhood setting. Assessment allows for sound decisions regarding teaching and learning and identifies concerns which require intervention. We therefore implement a program-wide system of child assessment designed to determine a child's developmental levels, learning style and interests which is aligned with the RI Early Learning Standards. Child assessment information is gathered using an authentic process and is consistent with a child's culture, language and experiences. Multiple methods are used to gather information from within the program, from families, and from other service providers. In addition to gathering information about specific children,

aggregated child assessment information from across the program is used to evaluate program strengths and areas that need to be strengthened.

We believe that family involvement is critical to the success of our school. We acknowledge that children perform better, programs are higher in quality and families maintain greater expectations for their children when they are actively involved in their child's education. We welcome and respect the diversity of family structures and cultures in our community. As we recognize the multiple responsibilities and demands within the home and work environments, we offer a continuum of opportunities for family involvement and frequent two-way communication. We make every effort to effectively communicate with families who speak languages other than English. We believe that families play an important role and therefore value their voice in program-level decision-making.