

THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Philosophy

The ages from two to five are filled with wonder, and it is our privilege to share with your preschool child the newness and excitement of discovery. For preschoolers, the world *is*, in the words of the poet, “full of a number of things,” familiar to adults, but miraculous to these developing individuals. Seeds become plants; caterpillars eat and grow and spin and butterflies emerge in vivid colors; random marks on paper are suddenly understood to have meaning as letters and words; “one, two, three, four, five” one day translates into actual counting of objects; language grows from simple nouns and verbs into complex constructions, capable of expressing a wealth of thought.

As has been often noted by early childhood specialists, “Play is a child’s work.” Children are naturally curious and learn through their exploration of the world. When they explore their environment and are encouraged to creatively combine and synthesize their growing awareness, their “work” advances. A loving, small group setting encouraging exploration and gently guides the developing preschooler is, we believe, the best environment to enhance a child’s development.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Spiritual Objectives

- Lead your child to appreciate the wonders of God’s creation
- God-centered: using Christ as our model for the respect and love shown to all people
- Teach your child to speak to God in prayer.

Social Development Objectives

- Help your child make a smooth transition from home to school
- Help your child to develop desirable social habits such as self-control, fair play and courtesy towards others
- Family-friendly: welcoming to Families, the first and primary educators of their children

Intellectual Development Objectives

- Developmentally based: appropriate for the age and ability level of each child
- Help extend your child's world by exploring a variety of concepts
- Environmentally stimulating: rich in sensory experiences and materials which provide opportunities for exploration, discovery, creation, and manipulation
- Instructionally appropriate: flexible in approach, realizing that abilities, interests, knowledge, and learning styles are unique to each child
- Help your child grow in language development

Emotional Development Objectives

- Set an example of fairness, honesty and integrity for your child to emulate.
- Help your child create a positive self-concept.
- Provide opportunities for your child to succeed

Physical Development Objectives:

- Help develop your child's fine and gross motor skills.
- Encourage correct habits for healthful living.

CURRICULUM- THE IMPORTANCE OF PLAY

Here at MMSG, we use standards established by the state of North Carolina to guide our play-based learning environment. Sometimes parents of preschoolers question why all children seem to do it play. Play is the most important work of children – learning how to play is essential. Through play, children learn important social skills while reducing tension and pressure. Children play for play's sake and focus on discovery. Using open-ended questions is one technique to guide a child's play without interrupting him or her. Play is a process, not a product.

Being a private preschool setting we are able to incorporate several philosophies to meet our students needs including the use of the environment as a teacher, child directed activities, as well as direct teacher led instruction. Small group, whole group, and individual instruction happens on a daily basis for each student. For more information regarding standards please visit: <https://ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov/Foundations-for-Early-Learning-and-Development>

We have several environments where the skills of the whole child are addressed through play including an outdoor play space, a large indoor playroom/structure, an outdoor reading area, and individual classrooms. We are also fortunate to be close to many outdoor play spaces including Trinity Park and Duke's East Campus. Being located in the city allows for short walks to these areas.

We use open-ended play materials to encourage creativity and expanded thinking. The use of "loose parts" play also encourages creative thinking and planning allowing children to generate amazing tools, landscapes, and works of art. Weekly themes are introduced to children and can be expanded upon as the group engages and demonstrates interest.

The Voyages Curriculum (from Concordia Publishing) guides daily Bible time and biblical centers in the classroom allow for expanded exploration of these lessons. The teachers, children, families, and congregation work together on a monthly themed community service activity to address the needs, both tangible and emotional, in our community. Sharing in community service projects with young children encourages the sense of being a part of something larger and demonstrates the importance of small gestures having a large impact.

- **Field trips:** Three school-wide field trips are scheduled throughout the year to take advantage of local resources.

These explorations outside the school setting provide reinforcement to classroom activities and opportunities for parents, students, and teachers to share experiences.

- **Fun Fridays:** Children wear their Miss Mollie's shirts each Friday, and gather for special "Fun Friday" activities.
- **Parents as resources:** Parents are welcomed to share interests and skills with children throughout the year.
- **Worship:** Each day begins with a prayer service where children share in stories, song, and prayer. Parents are invited to join us at these times.

Lettering

It is our policy to use manuscript lettering when writing your child's name (e.g. – not all capitals). Parents can help their child to identify is/her name by following the same procedure at home.

Teacher Guidelines

The teachers at Miss Mollie's are Christians and are experienced in working with children. The role of teachers at Miss Mollie's School of Grace is threefold: instructor, nurturer, and facilitator. Our role is to assist in the "unfolding" of each child. In providing support, encouragement, and direction, we enable children to explore their own abilities and take delight in their growing competence and awareness.

Family and school represent the primary environments in which young children grow and develop. Here at Miss Mollie's, we realize that you are the most important person in your child's life. We also know that you are your child's first and most important teacher. We feel that the foundation for a good parent-teacher relationship is frequent and respectful open communication and a clear understanding of what is best for each individual child.