

### Curriculum Highlights

- **Developmentally Appropriate Activities**
- **Great Student/Teacher Ratio**
- **Large Motor Skills**
- **Language and Reading**
- **Fine Motor Skills, Manipulatives**
- **Dramatic Play, Blocks**
- **Creative Art**
- **Schedule**
- **Special Activities**
- **Kindergarten**

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### Preschool Centers

The Acorn offers developmentally appropriate activities that allow children to explore, discover, and learn in center based classrooms. Our preschool classes generally have twenty children with four teachers, while the kindergarten has a capacity for twenty youngsters and three teachers. Four preschool classes have mixed age groups of three and four year olds, that are carefully balanced by age and gender. Three other classes are age specific: kindergarten, a five year old class, and a two day class for three year olds. Each class of twenty has four rooms

divided up into different interest areas:

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One room is used for large motor activities. The development of large motor skills is of great importance in these early years, since motor development is so closely related to self confidence and is a precursor to fine motor development.



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Another room is a quiet area for books, science, nature, and manipulative toys and equipment. These areas help develop fine motor abilities, perceptual skills, love of nature and the

environment, and an appreciation for books and reading.



A third room houses our dramatic play and block area. The dramatic play area is totally changed most every week and is important because it provides our children with the opportunity to role play and possibly to work through situations in their lives. The block area allows a sizable space for the children to be creative with all sizes of building blocks, transportation toys, and other accessories. It's an important area for creativity, cooperative play, and exploring the concepts of size, shape, space, balance, etc.



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The fourth room is our art area and is used for all kinds of imaginative, often messy activities.

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We take a very creative approach to art and are definitely process oriented, avoiding product oriented, teacher directed art. Our goal is to open up the children's minds to the idea that there are lots of different, creative ways to use any given medium.



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Our daily schedule includes large group activities, free play time, and small group activities. Our outdoor play time is very important and is an integral part of our total program. Our large, well equipped playground provides an opportunity for large motor development and social interaction. We utilize the outdoors as an extension of the classroom.

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Our Three Day Afternoon Class also includes religious content, which adds Bible stories and the teaching of God's love and the life of Jesus as an element of the curriculum. Spanish and Music classes are offered in all classes except the Two Day Morning Class.

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### **The Acorn Kindergarten**

Kindergarten has all the creative, developmentally appropriate attributes of The Acorn preschool classes, with the addition of several unique features.

Reading, just like crawling, walking, toilet learning, etc., is developmental, with each child learning at their own pace. Our main goal is that each child LOVE reading and feel confident about it, no matter what timetable they are on. With our class size and teacher ratio, we are able to individualize to each child's developmental level. Each year a class may have a range of

“readers” from those just barely “breaking the code” who are reading very simple predictable stories, to those reading at a 2nd or 3rd grade level.

The Language Approach to Reading uses many meaningful ways to bring a print rich environment to the children. A message of the day starts from the very first day of school, and progresses throughout the year. Concepts such as capitalization, punctuation, sentence structure, and grammar rules are learned just by being presented each day in a real and useful way. These ideas become a part of the child’s knowledge without ever needing to learn the “rules” of grammar, but by using them in a real life situation. The children keep journals and make class books, and build a word wall as they learn to spell throughout the year. The children use invented spelling in creative writing, and as they develop an “ear” for phonics, their writing and spelling shows growth and improvement throughout the year. Reading and Writing is interwoven throughout the entire curriculum.

The Math program is based in a hands-on approach with Mathematics Their Way as the foundation. It takes a child through a concrete, free exploration level and introduces symbols, math sentences, and problem solving in the symbolic level. Those who are ready can grasp concepts leading into the abstract level.

As the class follows the adventures of The Tortoise and The Hare, the children learn all about the world around them. After reading The Race, an updated version of the story, we ask families to have friends, relatives, etc. who travel or live in other areas to mail postcards to the class. Geography becomes a meaningful subject as we read about different cities, states, and countries on the globe and see postcard pictures of geographical features, monuments, and cultural elements.

Science is another area of curriculum that allows for much experimentation, prediction, and documentation. The children develop an appreciation for nature and the environment as they garden, make observations and comparisons, and do “research”.

The children not only have daily opportunities for creative expression in the art element of the curriculum, but they are exposed to the Masters and Fine Art each week. A particular artist is introduced, and after hearing about their techniques and vision, the children can use similar media and explore their own ways of using these new techniques.