

Integrated Preschool Curriculum Summary

These curriculum summaries have been developed by teachers and administrators to serve as another way of communicating with parents. They highlight the core curriculum and expectations for student learning at each grade level. They also reflect the goals of the various Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks.

[English Language Arts](#)

The foundations for learning in the English Language Arts are critical to all other curriculum areas as well as to the child's social and emotional development. Children develop the basis for verbal communication in early childhood, beginning with nonverbal social exchanges. They begin to appreciate literature and the joy of reading by being read to in family and early care/education settings. A solid foundation in language development in the years before a child enters school promotes success in reading and writing in the future. The preschool program encourages children to learn about the world around them. The key components include book orientation, asking and answering questions, sequencing, and relating personal experience to stories. Built into the preschool program are interactive writing and cross-curricular activities. Drop Everything and Write is the handwriting program which is emphasized using a manuscript alphabet made from five simple starting strokes.

[Mathematics](#)

Mathematics relates to ideas and concepts about quantity and addresses logical and spatial relationships. At the preschool level, the foundations of mathematical understanding are formed out of children's concrete experiences. Mathematical experiences are not limited to "math time." They are embedded in almost all daily classroom activities. Mathematical thinking is incorporated into block play, dramatic play, sand and water play, and outdoor play. Children also have the opportunity to make connections between mathematics and musical experiences or art by exploring rhythmic or visual patterns or symmetry. Preschool children learn to recite numbers in order, compare quantity, comprehend position, recognize and create simple patterns, identify simple shapes, and match objects in one-to-one correspondence. Number concepts become significant to children when they develop out of experiences that are functional in their world. Preschool activities can build their understanding of number concepts, and also build foundations for understanding characteristics and properties of 2- and 3-dimensional geometric shapes.

[Science and Technology/Engineering](#)

Young children are naturally curious. They wonder what things are called, how they work, and why things happen. The foundations of scientific learning lie in inquiry and exploration. The younger the children, the simpler and more concrete the activities need to be. Pre-K students focus on experiencing and making observations of the world around them. They are beginning to learn about their own environment as they observe plants and animals, the Moon and the Sun, and the daily weather. They experience their world through their senses and body parts and begin to recognize that animals also use their senses and body parts to meet their basic needs. In all activities, children are encouraged to use the precise language of science. The skills and processes of inquiry and exploration are fundamental to all the sciences. Specific objectives include predicting, observing, comparing, and classifying by attributes.

History and Social Studies

At the early childhood level, learning in history and social studies is built on children's experiences in their families, school, community, state, and country. Preschoolers can explore the beginning concepts of history and social studies with questions that are important to their lives, such as "Who are the members of my family?" "Where do we live?" and "Who are our neighbors?" Themes include "all about me," community helpers, and transportation. Meaningful

topics around social studies often emerge spontaneously out of children's play and conversations, and teachers provide materials and resources to help children further explore their interests or questions. A second purpose of the preschool curriculum is to begin the development of their civic identities. Children listen to stories about the people and events we celebrate in our national holidays and learn why we celebrate them.

Health

In the preschool years, brain and body development are critically linked. It is through physical activity and body movement that the brain internalizes the foundations of laterality (left, right), directionality (up, down, in, out), and position in space (over, under, behind). These concepts are critical to mathematical thinking as well as to beginning reading and writing. They lay the basis for the child to "see" how letters are formed and put together in patterns called words, and to translate this understanding into symbols on paper in the form of writing. Children are encouraged to engage routinely in block building, or other spatial and manipulative activities, as well as in music, art, dramatic play, and language activities, in order to stimulate both sides of the brain. At the preschool level, there is strong emphasis on both gross and fine motor development activities. Developing the large muscles will give support to the small muscles in the hands and fingers. Outdoor play is an integral part of the daily curriculum, all year and in all seasons, and should be viewed as an opportunity for learning. Activities that promote sound physical development help children develop both skills and confidence in using their bodies and the equipment they play with. Socially, preschool children are moving into a wider circle of relationships with peers and with adults other than family members. Many children need to learn how to play in a group setting. Three-year olds are egocentric and have a hard time waiting for a turn. Four-year olds who have had some experience in groups may be aware of group expectations but still need to be reminded of rules and routines. Preschool children need guidance to develop the ability to share, take turns, lead, follow, and be a friend. Emotionally, the young child's growing independence involves taking gradual steps away from the security of an adult's presence and protection and fulfilling the drive toward separateness and individuality. The foundations for children's confidence in themselves, their relationships with other children, as well as their trust in the adults who teach and care for them, are influenced, if not established, in early childhood. Children need to feel safe in order to feel free to explore, and they need meaningful feedback from significant adults who delight in their successes and reassure them in their failures. As they begin to exercise independence, it is important to allow children sufficient time to work on tasks until they are satisfied with the results.

The Arts

The goal of arts education for young children is to develop and sustain the natural curiosity, expressiveness, and creativity that very young children often display. Arts education begins with a foundation that emphasizes exploration, experimentation, and engagement of the senses, and discussion as paths to understanding. Young children use the arts to explore sensation and their understanding of real and imagined events. They try to find out all they can about the expressive qualities inherent in different forms of communication. Through what they choose to dramatize, sing, or paint, children let others know what is important, trivial, appealing, or frightening in their lives. Depictions of faces and forms develop fairly predictably in young

children. Although “realistic” products should not be the goal, preschool-age children can learn some basic techniques and begin to develop aesthetic preferences.

Additional Information

[Preschool Website](#)

Questions about grade level curriculum should be directed first to your child’s teacher. The principal or assistant principal may provide additional information.

[Preschool Contacts](#)

[East School](#)

Hingham Public Schools Superintendent’ Office

Comments about this document

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