

The following information we hope will give you an understanding of the philosophy and organization here at Hilton Presbyterian Preschool. Deciding on the right preschool for your child is an important step in his/her life. Please call us (596-1939) or stop in to observe if you have any questions.

The purpose of the Preschool is to offer a program based on sound child-development theory. Through both child initiated and teacher directed activities in a nurturing environment, we provide the firm foundations for academic learning. This environment allows students the opportunity to develop personal identity, positive-self-concepts, confidence, independence, problem solving skills, creative thinking, and social interaction skills. Through play and by experiencing the use of various materials, children move at their own rate toward a readiness for literacy with eagerness to learn and the independence and self-confidence to do so.

The day that children come to school is a very important step in their young lives. We want the change from home to school to be a happy one; children need to feel safe and secure in their new environment.

The beginnings for a child are the base on which later development hinges. In the preschool, a world planned for successful endeavor, the children may search out their own modes of expression. The Preschool is a large enough space for each child to find his/her own fulfillment. No one needs to be coerced into the pattern of another. Each child finds in the Preschool the following:

- mature expression of child love and unconditional self-acceptance;
- a climate which promotes psychological and physical security, with little personal threat;
- a group with which he/she can develop a sense of identification;
- an atmosphere of approval for his/her efforts, with personal recognition;
- numerous opportunities to feel important and significant;
- a chance to function independently, assume responsibility, make choices, and participate in making decisions;
- a community which values the child as a child and provides real time and space for the essential work of early childhood, which is play.

Our Preschool facilities exist for the purpose of providing a rich living-learning environment with a balanced, yet flexible and spontaneous program. This program includes:

Self-Selected, Self-Directed Activities

To encourage children to use their natural curiosity, explain their knowledge, and refine their skills, the classrooms are arranged in centers of interest, with furniture, equipment, and material available to the children on their own terms. These centers suggest activities in:

- block building and other forms of construction;
- fantasy translated into dramatic play;
- book browsing, pictures;
- creative experience through art media (clay, glue, scissors, paint, etc.);
- experiences with puzzles, matching activities, small muscle motor development, counting, visual discrimination;
- opportunities that lead to learning about people, their occupations and their contributions to the community;

- opportunities to write, exploration of the world of letters and words;
- science centers for seeing, touching, and experimenting with our world.

Outdoor experiences are a vital and integral part of the living-learning activities. Outdoor equipment permits a child freedom of movement, the challenge to explore, and the chance to be boisterous and joyfully active. Each Preschool group will have some time outdoors each day, weather permitting. In case of inclement weather, activities for running, jumping, ball play, tumbling, and other gross motor skills are provided in the Fellowship Hall.

Teacher Directed/Group Experiences

For part of the morning, children are based in small groups according to age and differing abilities. At other times, the total group can be together and still provide an individualized experience for each child. These occasions involve:

- music and movement: including singing, bodily rhythms, circle games, listening to recordings, working with instruments;
- language experiences: such as storytelling, books, discussion, poetry, dramatization, show-and-tell, letter introduction;
- eating together: a time for shared pleasures and spontaneous talk;
- opportunities to play simple games, learning to take turns;
- short lessons in science, math, and social studies, which are relevant to a preschooler's life.

Because we are a Church Preschool, one of our objectives is to help the children grow in their understanding and appreciation of God's love for them and all people, and to help them grow in their willingness and ability to respond to this love. Young children learn to have respect for their own worth as children of God through being loved and respected by the adults in their group, who are seeking to love them as they are.