

Elementary School Readiness

Developmental Domains

Using a developmental approach, we focus on five domains of early learning.

Personal Development

sense of self, relating to others, social and emotional development, resilience, independence, self motivation

Physical Development

using large and small muscles, physical confidence, using and processing senses, energy level, stamina

Language Development

listening, speaking, understanding, exploring stories, reading and writing

Logic Development

curiosity, critical thinking, problem-solving, number sense, investigation

Creative Development

artistic representation, dramatic play, sensory play, music and dance,

Looking Forward Without Pushing Forward

At Hilltop Children's Center we hold a broad definition of children's readiness for elementary school, which embraces the development of dispositions for lifelong learning. Our attention to academic development includes the strengthening of intellectual dispositions through a socially based, emotionally supportive environment. Resilience, self-motivation, creativity and independence are dispositions that support life long learning regardless of subject matter, interest or level of challenge. These dispositions cross traditional curriculum boundaries and act as motivators of learning.

Longitudinal studies indicate that children benefit academically, intellectually and socially from programs that provide opportunities to take initiative and be actively engaged in their own learning experiences. Our programs and policies are designed to provide an emergent, child centered, play-based curricula in which children are active constructors of knowledge and understanding. This curriculum provides children with opportunities to develop and pursue complex problems that can arise when children engage in enriched exploration and experimentation. This supports the development of early learning milestones and intellectual dispositions that serve as foundational skills for later academic acquisition.

Research studies show the most productive learning happens through play, rather than through rote learning of letters and numbers. Children who are resilient, self-motivated, creative, and independent are prepared for reading and mathematic comprehension in the primary grades. We regard school readiness as one of many important developmental milestones, and as an opportunity for looking forward while remaining firmly rooted in the joy and best practices of early childhood education.

Guiding the Development of Learning Dispositions

Hilltop's Core Values Relate to Elementary School Readiness

Learning in Relationship

We believe in reciprocal influence. Children can work and learn alongside and in partnership with others.

Emergent Curriculum

We believe learning is constructed through experiences. Children can question, wonder and reflect on their experiences.

Leadership in Community

We believe collective contributions lead to bold action. Children understand their role and responsibilities in the community.

Organizational Integrity

We believe that root tending creates stability and intentional growth. Children can self-regulate and self-advocate for optimal learning.

Educators Focus on How Individual Children Learn

Emergent Curriculum

Our curriculum is built from an active process of teachers observing, analyzing, and responding to children's play and exploration in the play based classroom. The philosophy of Reggio Emilia, which inspires our work, supports children as protagonists of their own learning.

Anti-Bias Education

Hilltop is committed to fostering Anti-Bias dispositions that enable children to respectfully engage with and learn from the range of people they encounter in their classrooms, and again in the wider world.

Learning Dispositions

Dispositions are frequent, voluntary patterns of behavior, thinking, and interaction. Resilience, self-motivation, creativity and independence are favorable dispositions that support life-long learning in both independent and social settings.

Developmental Guidelines

Hilltop looks to the Washington State Early Learning and Developmental Guidelines to guide our thinking around and support children's development. When children are successful in their development, learning is better supported.

References

Early Learning Developmental Guidelines. Washington State Department of Early Learning. 2010.

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Prepared for Kindergarten: What Does "Readiness" Mean? Debra Ackerman, et al. National Institute for Early Education Research. 2010.

Where We Stand on School Readiness. National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2009.