

Our Program Philosophy

At Hilltop, we know that children's earliest experiences have a tremendous impact on their development. We respect each child's family as the first and most important provider of care and nurturing. We believe that, together, we can partner in children's care and education to help them build on the wonders of childhood. Our program is designed to meet the developmental needs of young children, from birth to twelve years old. Our faculty members serve as positive role models and provide learning opportunities that are supportive, nurturing, warm, and responsive to each child's individual needs.

We envision that all children are honored and trusted, families are engaged in culturally responsive ways, and educators are inspired to contribute to the ongoing creation, development, and sustainment of a just and joyful world. We integrate our values in all that we do, especially when building, creating, and sustaining practices, policies, community culture, norms, and attitudes for our children and families, faculty, and anyone who collaborates with or supports our organization's efforts and investments. In addition to our values, we actively promote, integrate, and internalize culturally responsive and anti-racist concepts and practices, as well as multicultural education principles, into the fabric of our organizational practices and programming.

Our program has been heavily influenced by the following theories:



**Personality
Development
Theories**



**Growth and
Development
Theories**



**Cognitive
Development
Theories**



**Social and
Emotional
Development
Theories**



**Moral Reasoning
Theories**

Although these theories offer differing views, they are not mutually exclusive. Some common themes run through all of them:

- The importance of play in the developmental process
- The need for a child-centered environment
- Positive child-adult interactions
- The importance of "child choice"
- The importance of multiple avenues for gathering knowledge
- The importance of meeting basic needs before higher needs can be met

Each moment of play and exploration in a child's environment leads to valuable problem-solving skills. Play is essential, vital, critical, and fundamental to a child's social, emotional, physical, and intellectual development.