

## **Skill Development Guide**

### **Environmental Science/Nature Awareness:**

Children will develop knowledge of weather patterns, how living things, including people, are connected and how to care for the physical environment, plants and living creatures. While species identification is not our main emphasis, we will eagerly pursue it when relevant.

- *Ex. Each day children observe the weather conditions outside through experiencing first-hand how the plants and animals change and adapt throughout the seasons.*

### **Play:**

Educators observe children's interests in activities, as well as their approach to play whether it's imitation-based or fantasy, independent, parallel or collaborative. Outdoor and indoor play involves creativity, sensory integration, object manipulation, risk-taking, physical coordination, cooperation, listening and physical motor skills (gross motor: body awareness, flexibility; fine motor: grip, hand dominance).

- *Ex. When children play by pretending to put on a concert with sticks and stumps, they are engaging various senses, along with physical coordination and social collaboration.*

### **Routines/Transitions/Self-Help:**

Daily routines and transitions offer opportunities for children to develop their interests, sense of humor, confidence, self-esteem and executive functions. They develop their independence, flexibility, listening, eye contact, perseverance and ability to transition and follow directions.

- *Ex. Transitions, particularly during indoor to outdoor environments are important times for children to dress themselves appropriately, requiring making choices and persistence in order to get dressed by him or herself.*

### **Social and Emotional:**

Preschool-age children are actively developing their social and moral knowledge. Through daily interactions with peers and educators, children will develop self-regulation, self-identity, self-discipline, awareness and articulation of feelings, impulse control, adaptability, resilience, feelings of competence, collaboration, conflict-resolution, problem-solving, understanding and respecting differences, and showing empathy.

- *Ex. Community Reflection Meetings and Sharing Circles encourage children to voice their opinions and feelings, while also listening to others. Puppets are also used to encourage open discussion of feelings.*

### **Cognitive:**

**Language-** Children will explore and develop language cognition using verbal and nonverbal, receptive and expressive language. They will learn to communicate respectfully, to reason, and to articulate feelings and plans with others.

- *Ex. Active storytelling occurs everyday in the program and engages children through asking questions about the plot, character and setting along with questions regarding children's predictions and thoughts.*

**Literacy-** Children will practice literacy cognition through letter recognition, letter sounds, print awareness, rhyme, writing and drawing habits, and understanding and relating to stories. Children have daily exposure to creative writing tools and both oral and written stories.

- *Ex. The Children's Sign-in sheet enables children to explore mark-making and the meaning of print everyday.*

**Numeracy-** Children will practice numeracy cognition through shape and color identification, sorting, counting, number recognition, one-to-one correspondence, sequencing, and patterning. These activities are done regularly by observing objects within indoor and outdoor environments.

- *Ex. Collecting acorns and fallen leaves for pretend food rations among children enables individuals and groups to have an authentic experience with sorting and counting.*

**Social-** Children will engage in social cognition by developing their ability to recognize social situations, interpret feelings and intentions, show and understand empathy, listen to others and express feelings safely and productively, especially when dealing with disappointment.

- *Ex. The Montessori concept of a Peace Flower is used regularly when children are experiencing peer conflicts. The Peace Flower allows children to own their feelings and feel empowered by their ability to share their thoughts with others, while understanding the importance of listening and respecting others. (See Behavioral Guidance below for more information on Peace Flowers)*