Pre Kindergarten
Overview of Curriculum and Expectations

Our goal in the prekindergarten classroom is to create a classroom environment that is physically and emotionally safe and supports and extends the joy of early childhood across all the learning domains. The possibilities seem endless for making new discoveries, inventing, creating and learning. Our standards convey the importance of developing the whole child in all domains of learning—social, emotional, creative expression/aesthetic, physical and cognitive development. We facilitate learning experiences that are engaging, interactive and challenging while promoting a safe, nurturing learning environment for all children.

Social and Emotional Development:
The development of social and emotional competencies promotes a child's sense of well being, facilitating interactions with others and receptivity to learning. Rooted in relationships, social and emotional development are crucial to the success of the four-year-old during the preschool year. Creating a social and emotional environment for prekindergarten children requires child-centered, age-appropriate curriculum focused on active learning experiences; safe, secure, functional learning environments; and facilitation of family participation to promote the growth and development of children.

Physical Development:
Physical development incorporates gross motor, fine motor and spatial orientation ability. It involves the child's growth and skills that develop from expanded interaction with the environment.

Creative Expression/Aesthetic Development:
An environment that is both open-ended and multi-sensory encourages children to develop an appreciation for the arts. Creative expression/aesthetic development is focused on children's creative processes—the use and integration of music, movement, dramatic play and art.

Language and Listening Development:
A prekindergarten learning environment validates children's play and provides daily opportunities for oral language development. To match children's varying interests and abilities, a broad range of activities and open-ended materials are structurally interwoven throughout the work-play small group time. Highlighted within this environment of complex interactions are opportunities for talking, verbal exchanges, listening and small/whole group discussions.

Social Studies:
Children naturally work toward knowing and understanding themselves and their world. Through social studies, children learn about the cultural experiences of their own family as well as their community. They apply the skills of communicating, sharing and cooperating with others who have similar and different perspectives. They begin to understand time, change and continuity, and to relate past events to their present and future activities.

Literacy Development:
A literacy-rich environment provides opportunities for phonological awareness, experiences with the concepts of print, letter knowledge, story comprehension and writing experimentation. Activities such as read-alouds, storytelling, drawing, painting and writing are structurally interwoven throughout the work-play small group and whole group time. To facilitate children's later ability to learn to read and write, the instructional program promotes alphabetic knowledge; phonological awareness; book and print concepts; vocabulary knowledge; and discourse skills—meaningful conversations with their peers and with adults.

Mathematical Thinking:
Preschoolers make observations, learn about relationships and begin to draw conclusions in order to construct knowledge about mathematics. Appropriate mathematical experiences challenge children to use manipulatives to explore ideas and make connections. Mathematical thinking includes the representation of numbers and operations; patterns, quantitative and qualitative properties; shapes and spatial relations; measurement; and information gathering and probability.

Scientific Thinking:
Inquiry and investigation are the central processes of scientific thinking. Scientific thinking involves identifying problems; obtaining and using evidence to construct explanations; evaluating the outcomes of investigations; discussing different points of view; proposing solutions; and communicating information. The prekindergarten environment with its array of materials, activities and interactions is a stimulating place for the four-year-old scientist.

Kindergarten
Overview of Curriculum and Expectations

Social Studies:

The core curriculum for Kindergarten involves a study of our self and our community (the classroom, the school and the immediate neighborhood). For the first part of the school year we take a closer look at ourselves and our families. We conduct interviews, take surveys, record data in a variety of easy applications, missing words, read and create literature about ourselves and our families. By the end of our study, it is expected that the children will begin to develop a strong sense of self and will start to make connections between themselves and their classmates.

For the remainder of the school year we study our community. We take field trips in school and around the neighborhood, conduct interviews, record data in a variety of ways, read and create literature about communities and community workers. The expectation is that by the end of our study, through trips, interviews, class projects, block building experiences and group discussions, the children will begin to develop a strong sense of community and start to make connections between themselves and their community. They will begin to be able to explain, using vocabulary from our study, what a community is and will start to see that they are members of a society that only works if each person cooperates and makes a contribution.

Reading:

Through Reader's Workshop, which includes: independent, shared reading (whole group), guided reading (small group), word study, and phonics, the children work on honing the necessary skills to become a smart reader. The children increase their sight word vocabulary and begin to understand the different components (i.e. setting, character, story sequence) of reading. The expectation is by the end of the year, children will be able to read books that are just right for them and will be able to show their comprehension through stories orally and through writing.

Writing:

Through Writer's Workshop the children work on writing and writing mechanics and are exposed to a variety of genres of writing. This work will be done through independent, shared, and guided work. Children work on honing the necessary skills to become smart writers using the writing process, which begins with gathering seeds (gathering ideas), planting a seed (choosing an idea), growing the seed (developing the idea), revising, editing and finally publishing.

The children use a variety of resources when developing their stories. They are encouraged to begin using resources that are available in the classroom such as the word wall, charts, words lists, books, other children, etc. The expectation is that by the

end of the year, the children will begin to be able to publish in a variety of writing styles using the writing process ad start to understand the difference between the styles of writing.

Math:

Our math curriculum is based on TERC (Technical Education Research Centers) and the use of unit and tabletop blocks. This curriculum and the use of blocks, help give the children a well-rounded math experience. The expectation is that by the end of the year the children will begin to be able to accurately explain and record their mathematical thinking using math vocabulary. They will start to be able to solve problems in a number of ways using math manipulatives and other strategies. They also will begin to be able to use math to solve problems in everyday life.

Science:

Our science curriculum is based on our work in the Children's Garden, our study of the Union Square Farmer's Market, class experiments and the life cycles of plants and insects/bugs. The expectation is that by the end of the school year, the children will begin to be able to discuss what a Farmer's Market is and start to understand how it functions during each season. They will also begin to understand the life cycle of plants and insects/bugs. Children will also learn how to closely observe and record their findings and explain them using science vocabulary. For a more detailed explanation of our Science work, please look at our Science curriculum write up.

Choice Time:

Choice Time is a period in our day when the children have the opportunity to choose what they want to do from a list of activities that the teachers select. This time gives the children a chance to explore and manipulate materials in either of the two kindergarten classes from an artistic and scientific point of view. It gives them a chance to discover new ideas independently, while providing a variety of choices and interacting with friends in both kindergarten classes.