



Curriculum at Growing Years

Research theorists and educators agree that any relevant curriculum needs to be based on children's needs, learning styles, developmental levels, and appropriateness. Much of what is planned also needs to be child initiated so that children have a vested interest and natural curiosity for what they're learning. Then finally, assessment needs to be an ongoing part of curriculum, because planning what is best for children is driven by observations/assessments and knowing each child and their specific, individual needs. This is what leads to the most effective planning and success in learning.

At Growing Years we have a four-pronged approach to learning. Our curriculum includes:

1. Growing Years Academic Curriculum

Currently, we are writing the framework/design for our own curriculum, which should be completed by fall of 2011. This curriculum is based on our combined years of experience working with children ages 6 weeks to 5 years.

In addition, we also use materials from a company called High Reach for Children. If you would like more information, you may go to their website at www.highreach.com.

2. Peddlesfoots Character Education Curriculum

This evidence-based curriculum was developed by local teachers, including the owner of Growing Years, Anita Collins. The idea grew out of a need for helping children build a foundation of good character during the preschool years. The curriculum focuses on 9 character traits: trustworthiness, respect, perseverance, caring, courage, responsibility, self-discipline, fairness, and citizenship. Children learn about these traits throughout the school year, with a new trait being introduced each month using stories, songs, literacy activities, art, and more! Families may want to purchase these materials for home use from our on-line store.

The best way to learn more about this curriculum is to visit our website at: www.peddlesfoots.com.

3. *Building Christian Principles*

Growing Years Christian School and Child Care Center, first and foremost, was built on non-denominational Christian principles and values. Our primary hope is to glorify God in all that we do here at Growing Years, because we have been blessed with the opportunity to serve Him. Also, that as Christians and educators, we are responsible for every aspect of a child's growth, including building strong Christian character. So besides our academic curriculum and the *Peddlesfoots*, we also help children learn about Godly principles based on our weekly Bible lessons that we have developed for that purpose.

We use a non-denominational approach as lessons are taught from the Old and New Testament. Anita Collins meets with the children each week to present a new story, using flannel board figures, books, puppets, and singing. The classroom teachers reinforce these same stories in their classrooms using a children's Bible, art projects, and music.

Our goal is to keep it simple while making these timeless stories relevant for children in their day to day lives.

4. *Music for Munchkins*

We are fortunate to have a music teacher like Michele Spitz-Wietfeldt! Not only is she a professional singer in her own right, but she is also the vocalist on each of our *Peddlesfoots* music and read-a-long CDs.

Michele began the Music for Munchkins program in 1999 right here at Growing Years and has been teaching weekly music sessions ever since. This program brings the joy and excitement of music to all of our children—waddlers to kindergarten—as the children learn through music and music related activities. These activities benefit the following areas of growth and development for children: fine and gross motor skills, listening skills, self-expression, positive social behaviors and interactions, and specific educational goals.

If you would like more information, please visit Music for Munchkins Facebook or www.musicformunchkins.com.