

St. Marks Nursery School – 2011/2012

We are aware that you and your neighbours may be considering options for the education of your preschool and/or kindergarten child in September and thought that it would be helpful to outline St. Marks' approach and curriculum for our classes. St. Marks is a not-for-profit Christian organization which has provided a warm and loving educational environment for children in the Port Credit community since 1958. Our staff's years of teaching experience has taught us that children learn effectively through play, combined with structured time in order to consolidate academic concepts and develop social and motor skills. The low teacher-student ratios allow us to foster a positive self-concept in each child and to help each develop spiritually, intellectually, physically, emotionally and socially. Our teaching staff and Pastor, Jeff Miskus, strive to ensure that your child knows that he/she is special and loved by God.

As a Christian preschool, children are able to participate in activities that lead to knowledge of Jesus' love, care and friendship through Bible stories, songs and prayers. The children learn that God is the creator of the world and that the Bible is God's word, which lead us in all that we do.

Ages 2 ½ to 3 Years

(Mrs. Concannon and the Red Squirrels)

The school experience is new to children of this age and in order for them to thrive in this new environment, St. Mark's focuses on the many aspects of social development. The school provides an environment where routine and trust enable the children to separate from parents or caregivers and to learn and demonstrate increasing independence and a sense of what is appropriate and comfortable behaviour for them. Free play time facilitates social interactions. These interactions help model behaviour, stimulate an interest in exploring, and practice the sharing of toys and materials. Confidence is built through the development of gross motor skills including riding tricycles, playing on equipment and interacting with their peers.

Structured classroom time allows the children to function in a more formal environment and learn to follow simple directions. Daily story time models reading and provides an opportunity to ask and respond to related questions. Various activities teach the children to recall words and coordinate actions and songs, identify objects, shapes and colours, and begin the understanding of numbers and counting. Puzzles and crafts are used to develop fine motor coordination and reinforce colours, shapes and counting.

In the 2 ½ to 3 year class, the overall goals at St. Marks are that the child enjoys the school experience and learns a love of learning and a strong sense of self and that he/she is special and loved by God.

Ages 3 to 4 Years

(Mrs. Borg and the Yellow Butterflies)

The school experience may or may not be new to children of this age group. St. Marks focuses on social development and the emerging academic concepts in the 3 to 4 year class. Students learn a sense of belonging and increased confidence in their growing abilities. The teacher facilitates peer interactions which help each child to respect the rights of others, share toys and materials and play and work cooperatively in games and to accomplish tasks. Children are encouraged to observe and make discoveries in a variety of situations.

Beginning mathematics is taught including number recognition, rote counting, number quantity, serialization, and sequencing. Children learn to visually discriminate between colours, shapes, and the alphabet letters in their name and other's names. Our daily story-time models reading, improves valuable listening skills and introduces reading comprehension through questions and explanations. Students are encouraged to use common words to express ideas and formulate questions and answers. Monthly show and share helps to build confidence in each child's ability to express multiple ideas in a group setting, and fosters beginning public speaking skills.

Our songs and finger plays provide the children with a fun platform to reinforce memory work, develop fine and gross motor coordination and follow simple directions. Classroom work helps the children increase their fine motor skills through cutting, brushwork, holding crayons and colouring, stringing, beading and using primary pencils to trace their name and complete exercises such as dot to dot.

In the 3 to 4 year class crafts are used to help bring the learning together through counting, colours, spatial awareness, sequencing, pattern recognition and fine motor practice, as well as providing opportunities to express themselves creatively

The preschool curriculum introduces children to Science, Music, Drama, French and Cooking activities. Our classroom computer allows preschoolers an introduction to computer skills through exploration of our developmentally appropriate software.

Gross motor skills are being developed by playing on playground equipment, riding tricycles, throwing & catching balls, bean bags, also balancing and dancing.

As in all classes at St. Marks, the overall goals are that the child learns a love of learning, a strong sense of self, and that he/she is special and loved by God.

Kindergarten

(Mrs. Gallant and the Blue Birds)

The Kindergarten years provide an important opportunity to further enhance the academic and social foundations which are vital to the child's experience in the primary years ahead. Kindergarten children focus on a more structured program with *Jolly phonics* and math-based activities appropriate for the revised curriculum. Students are taught the sound language (JK), reading (SK), pattern recognition, sequencing and addition and subtraction. Crafts are used as a basis to stimulate creativity while practicing math skills including patterns, numbers and honing fine motor skills. Music, French, Drama, Science and Cooking are part of the weekly program. Gross motor play in our age appropriate playground channels the children's' energy while providing a safe environment for physical skill development.

Parents are provided with a report card for their child. We also provide ongoing written and verbal communication on the child's progress.

Language and Reading

St. Marks Nursery School employs *Jolly Phonics* which provides a thorough foundation for reading and writing. It teaches the letter sounds in an enjoyable, multisensory way, and enables children to use them to read and write words. Reading stories with the children and leading a group discussion stimulates each student's reading comprehension and oral response. In addition, children learn a sight vocabulary through classroom labels including colours, days, months and common objects. Our enhanced language and reading program also includes the learning reading series from *Ladybird* which focuses on reading fluidity and on building confidence for early readers.

Read with me program: each child receives his/her own book bag, containing a book to be read and a journal with follow up activities to help promote comprehension, word recognition and printing skills. Books/activities are changed regularly.

The classroom computer with age appropriate programs provides children with fun activities which stimulate reading and listening skills.

Monthly show and share for each student develops early public speaking skills and confidence and allows the children to learn a little more about each other.

Dramatic play

The Dramatic area gives children an opportunity to engage in role play. As children act out roles they develop many new skills. They are able to draw on previous experiences to enact play episodes. They learn to ask and answer questions while working together to solve problems. The Drama area promotes literacy for children as they increase their oral and language skills through self-expression and vocabulary building. Children use a variety of ways to communicate ideas and engage in reading and writing skills through print rich labels and props that are provided.

Mathematics

Kindergarten children are taught mathematical concepts including number sequencing, event sequencing, classification and sorting, spatial orientation, pattern recognition and completion, serializing objects based on size, object comparison, weight scale, graphing, shapes and comparisons. Addition and subtraction are introduced as individual children display an understanding of quantity and order.

Social Interactions and Sense of Self

Opportunities are facilitated to develop a strong sense of self esteem in order to participate in group discussions and activities, to stand up for one's rights, and to understand and respect differences. We encourage: sharing toys and materials, constructive conflict resolution and responsibility for one's actions and one's environment. Children are encouraged to plan and persist in tasks, use creativity and imagination to develop multiple solutions to problems and apply information and experience to new contexts. Through play and structured activities in small and large groups the children develop team skills.

Motor Skills

Kindergarten students at St. Marks are given the opportunity to participate in numerous gross motor activities including playground activities, riding bicycles and tricycles, catching and throwing balls and bean bags, balancing, and dancing. Fine motor skills are honed through printing, drawing, cutting, pasting, painting and play.

Putting It All Together

At St. Marks, we believe that the love of learning provides the basis for successful education and experiences. To that end, we provide our students with opportunities to grow and learn in a fun secure environment where play and crafts reinforce our academics and socialization. In addition, our low teacher-student ratios allow us to meet the children's individual developmental needs. We foster a positive self-concept in each child and help each to develop spiritually, intellectually, physically, emotionally and socially. The teaching staff and Pastor Jeff share a common goal to ensure that your child knows that he/she is special and loved by God.

School Age Program

Our school-age program will endeavour to provide children 6-12 years an opportunity to experience increasing levels of responsibility and independence through activities and opportunities that will include planning their own activities, participate in group decision making and project development. There will be an increased emphasis on gross motor activities. There will be unstructured time that allows time for reading homework and small social groups. Recreation and skills development will be emphasized.