

Welcome to Preschool 4!

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The Preschool 4 experience nurtures the natural curiosity of young children.

Preschool 4 teachers watch closely to see what students draw, write, discuss, and build. Their observations, combined with the developmental needs of four-year olds, allow the teachers to build a program that meets the needs and interests of the students in front of them.

Walk into our Preschool 4 classroom on any given day and you will see emergent literacy through play, expressive language and print. As teachers listen in on student play, they observe and help students expand vocabulary and language. Interactive read-alouds promote a love of story and the written word, as well as helping to develop understanding about how print works.

The Sounds in Motion program supports auditory processing and phonemic awareness skills through gross motor kinesthetic movements. Handwriting Without Tears supports pre-writing readiness skills by introducing proper pencil grip and correct letter formation. Beginning mathematicians organize and sort shapes, build and extend patterns, practice one-to-one correspondence, and develop spatial awareness. Mathematical thinking is infused throughout the day in the form of daily calendar work and play.

These opportunities and many more - which teachers will explain in greater detail at Back-to-School Night and throughout the year - ensure that students are exposed to the wonderful world of quality literature, awareness of print, features of books and reading and writing readiness, and foundational mathematical skills while protecting the four-year old's place in early childhood.

We are committed to maintaining play throughout each day. In the dramatic play area, classmates interact with one another while generating and exchanging ideas. They explore and experiment with real-life situations through their dramatizations and take opportunities to lead and follow. They negotiate, listen, pay attention to nonverbal cues and of course, exercise their imaginations.

The block area is a space with much to do, think and talk about. Teachers ask "What do you think will happen?" or "What made you put that block in that position?" so that the block area becomes a place where students express themselves, as well as ultimately learning how to exchange ideas using increasingly more complex language and vocabulary.

The arts are a vital part of the classroom environment. The classroom itself is a studio environment inviting students to create, explore, and express themselves with a variety of materials such as tempera paint, watercolors, crayons, colored pencils, different kinds of paper and cardboard, tape, glue, scissors, fabric, wood, clay, and materials from nature. Students create highly individualized pieces of art, towards which they feel a strong sense of ownership. We honor their work by discussing and displaying it proudly in our halls.

In Preschool 4, children are introduced to Spanish in a cultural context meant to be inviting and fun. Themes explored and led by a Lower School Spanish teacher include greetings, friendship and family; colors, numbers and shapes; games, music and dance, books and videos.

Young children are natural scientists. They are curious, full of wonder and eager to investigate. Our preschool children carry out the work of scientists as part of their everyday lives when they observe their surroundings, test things out and make discoveries. Using all their senses to observe and learn about the world around them, they discover relationships of change and growth and



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cause and effect. This is scientific thinking, and it takes place throughout the day and the year in the classroom with the Lower School science teacher, as well as outside in the Preschool 4 play spaces.

Preschool 4 class has music class twice each week. They learn to identify changes in pitch, tempo, loudness and musical duration. They memorize songs to sing and write their own. They also have another opportunity to sing within a larger community during a regularly scheduled early childhood singalong. Four-year olds love to move, and they learn to move rhythmically and smoothly.

Students visit the Lower School gym for physical activities. This experience, along with ample time outside, gives students time and space to climb, run, walk, bike, roll, slide, jump and play! Directly outside the classroom is their own space which includes tricycles, balls, Imagination Playground Blocks and other equipment specifically designed for children of this age.

Four is a magical time of life. Four-year olds can do things for themselves - and they want to! In the course of the day, they can go from being a reader to an astronaut to a dinosaur hunter to a storyteller to an engineer. Opportunities to be all of these things inside a preschool classroom give children the range of experiences and structure to become secure in their relationships and their environment and, most of all, to be themselves.