

Shambhala School

*Genuine Delight
in Learning*



Curriculum Guide

Grade Pre-Primary

The Shambhala School Pre Primary is a warm and nurturing environment that serves the developmental needs of three to five year old children. The curriculum is delivered through the classroom environment, materials and daily activities. All areas of child development are considered important.

The principle of basic goodness, from the Shambhala tradition, recognizes that all people naturally possess wisdom and vitality. Our goal is to create a classroom culture where children are able to experience their wisdom and vitality.

Rhythms and cycles are a constant part of nature and human life. The classroom routine works in harmony with daily, weekly and seasonal rhythms. Stories, songs, verses and other classroom activities enrich the experience of the seasons as well. Festivals and events provide an opportunity for parents, friends and the larger community to join in celebrating with students.

Social development is nurtured constantly. Children are treated with respect and learn to be respectful. We use descriptive, rather than judgmental, language when commenting on a child's work or behavior. We honour children's ideas and personalities. Children have choices within firm, but friendly, limits. We expect children to push boundaries and use guidance, redirection and natural consequences rather than punishment. Boundaries help children feel secure and when they feel safe, they are available for learning.

Children are encouraged to model the teachers' use of positive language. They learn to listen to each other and defend their own rights in an appropriate manner. They learn to take turns and to wait for a desired material or outcome. Children learn to identify feelings. They discover that it's normal and healthy to have negative feeling and begin to learn how to manage them properly. Throughout all the children's social interactions, they learn that they are an important part of our Pre Primary community and are supported daily to become good citizens of the world.

Cognitive development is stimulated through many activities. Morning circle is a time when children are encouraged to participate in a rich language experience. The learning and repetition of verses and songs, along with gestures and movement, enhances vocabulary, articulation, memory, visual imaging and sequencing. Every morning a story is told at the end of circle, offering children a forum to practice listening skills as well.

French is also introduced at circle through verse and song, providing children the opportunity to practice new words and French sounds along with gestures and movement. This lays the foundation for the elementary French program.

Opportunities for experiencing math concepts abound each day. Skills such as correspondence counting, shape recognition, spatial awareness and measurement are practiced during activities like unit block building, puzzles, stringing beads, sand and water play and art, to mention just a few. Science concepts of observation, questioning, experimenting and hypothesizing occur through the observation and manipulation of natural materials & through teacher directed activities.

Physical development is a continuous practice in the Pre Primary classroom. Circle is a wonderful opportunity for children to exercise and strengthen both large and small muscle groups and to develop a sense of rhythm and balance. The materials on our shelves are aesthetically pleasing and attract children to exercise and strengthen their fine and gross motor muscles, through their use.

Outdoor play is an essential part in a child's day. The core of outdoor play is expansive movement, challenging their gross motor skills. Outdoor play promotes learning through the senses as we move through the seasons and is a good foundation for understanding the world.

Once a week, children participate in an indoor physical education class which includes a variety of gross motor activities. They work with balls and beanbags, learning basic skills and also learn to work cooperatively with a parachute through music and games. Children exercise their bodies through different kinds of locomotion, dance and yoga to help stimulate and strengthen the physical senses.

Aesthetic development is valued and expressed through the environment and choice of natural materials used in the classroom. Wooden toys and nature blocks, beach stones and river stones, sand and water provide the basis for architectural marvels. Once a week, artist quality watercolour paint, paper and brushes are provided for children to explore colour through the process of wet on wet painting. A young child's interaction with this painting process can allow them to feel the effects and quality of colour within themselves. It nurtures the soul to be surrounded by things that appeal to the senses.