

Family Guide: Learning in 4K



About 4K:

Four-Year-Old Kindergarten (4K) offers students the opportunity to engage in developmentally appropriate and interactive play-based learning. Students are exposed to a literacy and language rich environment, which fosters vocabulary and communication abilities. Students learn important social skills through positive interactions with peers and adults. The learning environment supports students as they make decisions and initiate play, while becoming confident, independent, joyful and motivated learners.

Early learning happens through igniting and nurturing students' curiosity through inquiry, questioning and exploration. Instruction is designed to give all students access to rich learning experiences to develop a love of learning. Time in the 4K classroom is spent engaged in purposeful play; early literacy and early numeracy are embedded experiences throughout the school day. Providing students with interactive opportunities for playful engagement supports early learners in their social-emotional, academic, physical, and cognitive development.

THIS GUIDE INCLUDES:

- **Learning Experiences in 4K**
- **Activities to Support Learning**
- **Education Words**
- **Questions to Ask your Child's Teacher**

LITERACY

Early learners' language, literacy and communication skills are developed by expressing their own ideas and feelings and by listening to others while engaging in meaningful experiences. Consistent and active interaction with books, print and language are essential in the development of reading, writing, speaking and listening skills.

In literacy, teachers use short stories, rhymes, read aloud texts, wordless picture books and storytelling to nurture, engage and activate children's minds and emotions. Students experience interactive read alouds and story acting to support the development of meaning making and language skills. Students use drawing and pictures to share stories about important people, places and things in their world. Children are unique individuals who develop at various rates and are celebrated for their own learning and growth in language, literacy and communication skills.

Speaking and Listening

Students in 4K are provided experiences to:

- Listen and respond to communication (comments and questions)
- Understand and follow directions of increasing complexity (one and two-step directions)
- Respond to and extend conversations
- Ask questions to learn more and explore new ideas
- Initiate conversations, respond to conversations, and stay on topic through multiple exchanges
- Use language to express feelings and thoughts
- Use language to interact with others in play situations and group activities and discussions

Reading/Phonics

Students in 4K are provided experiences to:

- Enjoy books independently
- Explore story elements (characters, details of the story)
- Tell the difference between letters, words, and pictures
- Make letter/sound connections and identify some beginning sounds
- Recognize sounds specific to students' names
- Recognize spoken words that rhyme

Writing

Students in 4K are provided experiences to:

- Use writing tools to make marks
- Label pictures using scribbles or letter-like forms to represent words or ideas
- Write lists, names, and label objects in play
- Write recognizable letters
- Write first name



MATHEMATICS

Students learn early numeracy concepts through investigations and using a variety of manipulatives related to quantities and spatial relationships. Through play and exploration, students will demonstrate an understanding of numbers and will practice counting with various objects.

Experiences will be provided for students to explore, recognize, and describe a variety of shapes and patterns. Opportunities will be provided to expose students to the concept of measurement; students will be able to use these early mathematical concepts to support and extend their learning and make sense of their world.

Students in 4K are provided experiences to:

- Count objects with one to one correspondence (count one object as you say one number)
- Verbal (rote) counting
- Name and write some numerals
- Compare concrete quantities to determine which has more, less, or the same
- Identify “1 more” and “1 less”
- Recognize basic shapes
- Sort and/or describe objects by one or more attribute or characteristic
- Recognize, duplicate, and extend simple patterns (focus on AB patterns)
- Describe and record information through a variety of means, including discussion, drawings, maps, graphs, and charts



ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT LEARNING

Literacy

- Read with your child
- Ask your child questions about the story
- Build your child's vocabulary by talking about interesting words and objects in books
- Ask your child to read to a stuffed animal
- Look through a photo album and orally tell stories
- Take an alphabet walk to find letters



Mathematics

- Play board, card or dice games with your child (such as Candyland, Chutes and Ladders, Uno)
- Count objects in your home
- Gather small items to create a counting collection
- Draw or build shapes with objects around the house
- Take a scavenger hunt around your house or neighborhood looking for numbers or shapes
- Measure and count as you cook and bake together

EDUCATION WORDS

Big Body Play: Sometimes referred to as rough and tumble play. This type of play involves running, climbing, jumping, throwing, and even wrestling. The whole body is engaged in the play.

Developmentally Appropriate: Teaching to the age and needs of each specific child. In 4k some children are 4 while others turn 5 early in the year. This means that there can be an age difference of about 9 months. Teachers will take into account the age of children and the individual needs of children when planning activities. What is developmentally appropriate for one may not be developmentally appropriate for another.

Fine Motor Skills: Using the small muscles in your body (fingers, hands, wrists). Children use their fine motor skills when writing, holding small items, buttoning clothing, turning pages, eating, cutting, etc...

Gross Motor Skills: Movements that involve the big muscles of your body (arms, legs, and mid-section). These movements allow you to walk, stand, run, skip, etc....

Inquiry: Child-led investigations where students are questioning, investigating, researching, and exploring a topic in a hands-on manner.

Loose Parts: A collection of objects and materials that children can move, put together, take apart, stack and manipulate, count, and or sort while engaged in play (ie - rocks, buttons, paperclips, mini erasers, cotton balls, Q-Tips, etc).

Play-Based Learning (Purposeful Play): Child-led, open-ended play. The adult's responsibility is to provide materials that are engaging and can be manipulated and explored in more than one way. This type of play focuses on the process that children engage in and not the final product.

Social and Emotional Learning: Learning to effectively manage emotions, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships and make responsible decisions.

Self Regulation: The ability to manage your behavior and emotions as well as take steps to calm yourself.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER

- Which center and/or materials does my child seem to choose the most during play?
- Which classroom activities does my child seem to enjoy most?
- How is my child's independence level progressing?
- Which self-help skills can I support my child with at home?
- What growth have you noticed in terms of social skills?
- How has my child grown in regards to managing his/her emotions?
- How does my child respond to the math experiences that are offered?
- How does my child engage in the literacy experiences that are offered?
- How are my child's fine and gross motor skills progressing?
- What are my child's overall strengths at this time?
- What are my child's overall challenges at this time?
- What specifically can I do at home to support my child's overall development?

