

AQUIN PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM

Research has shown that preschool children learn best through play. At Aquin Preschool we understand this. Our job as teachers of the preschool child is to encourage children to ask questions, explore, and discover through play and rich experiences with engaging materials. We provide children with hands-on experiences that allow them to see how things work and help them construct knowledge about concepts.

Children learn science concepts as they play at the water table, or watch caterpillars turn into butterflies.

They learn math as they build with blocks of various sizes, or by sorting and classifying toys.

Literacy blossoms as children listen to stories and then retell the stories with puppets or the flannel board. It continues to grow as they play words games and learn poems and songs.

Social skills develop as they play in the Dramatic Play area, trying out adult roles, preparing pretend meals for each other, and learning to share material. Dress up teaches them about jobs and community helpers.

Motor skills develop as they run and play outside on the playground, string beads, play with toys, and create with play dough.

At Aquin Preschool we also nurture the spiritual side of the young child. We tell Bible Stories and sing Bible songs to learn about the wonderful story of God's love. We talk about praying and use prayer in our everyday language. The children learn the basic Catholic prayers.

In our daily schedule we have plenty of opportunity for large and small group activities in Math and manipulatives, Literacy with writing, reading and listening, and Science exploration. We use a

comprehensive preschool program called Opening the World of Learning (OWLS) that contains activities for all content areas.

Because it is hard to actually “test” little ones, we observe and collect information for each child. Then we use the Illinois Early Learning Standards to assess this data. These standards give us examples and a framework to work with to help us discover what each child knows. It also helps us plan what to teach next.

With the 3 and 5 day children we stress letter and number recognition. We work on developing pre-reading skills such as rhyming and letter sounds, listening and retelling stories; math skills such as sorting, patterning and positional words. Part of our curriculum is learning their full name, age, address, phone number, and birthday, also, counting to at least 30, recognizing the letters of the alphabet and writing their own name.

Some of the areas we stress with the 2 day children are: sitting still for longer periods of time, following a few directions, and playing with other children. We concentrate on colors, numbers, shapes and several different themes throughout the year. The main “work” for these children is to get ready for the learning that will take place in the years to come. Again, through their “play” they will be ready to do this.

During the year the 3 and 5 day children are exposed to Field Trips. This year we took the children to Oakdale for a Preschool Nature walk and program. We also took the children to the Children’s Theater at Highland Community College. Every year we visit Parkview Nursing Center at Halloween to entertain and play bingo with some of the residents. Another Field Trip at the end of our year is a visit to the “big school.” At the Aquin Elementary Building we experience a day at kindergarten.

Every month the parents of all the classes are invited to visit our classroom and discover some of the things we have accomplished during the month.

We also hold classroom parties for Halloween, and Valentine's Day. We celebrate Jesus' birth with a Birthday Party for Jesus and a program for out families and friends. We have an annual Pajama Day.

At the end of the year we hold a graduation ceremony for the children going on to Kindergarten. Then finally we have a fun day at Bidwell Park on our last day of school to celebrate with all of our preschoolers, their siblings and parents.