



WALDORF SCHOOL

of GARDEN CITY

EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM



The Essential Classroom

In order for children to develop academic skills in numeracy and literacy, they must be developmentally ready. Readiness includes complex neurological pathways and kinesthetic awareness. At The Waldorf School of Garden City, our educators are experts in understanding and connecting the relationship between the heart-filled traditions of early childhood and the cutting-edge research of cognitive, social-emotional and physical development. This connection is the foundation to Waldorf's success in creating extraordinary leaders and independent thinkers.

With reverence for the growing child, and through the neural development created by joyful and purposeful movement, music, art, stories and play, our teachers nurture the developing brain of our young students. On the journey through Nursery, Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten, activities that aid the child in achieving developmental milestones and educational objectives are the mainstay of our programs. These milestones lay the groundwork for the ability to focus for longer periods of time in school, to the ordering and sequencing required in math and the inward organizational skills to be a successful reader and life-long learner.

We invite you to learn more about our programs and why our students who take the journey and graduate from our high school enter prestigious colleges and universities, why they lead with confidence and why they engage with the world in a full and meaningful way.

Please see back cover for recent college acceptances from our graduates.



Parent & Child Classes

Once a week a small group of parents, grandparents and caregivers and their children come together to be supported and guided by our Waldorf-trained Parent & Child Teacher. The warm, homelike setting provides a comfortable place to share the struggles and triumphs of caring for our youngest children. The teacher guides the discussion and activities, bringing the wisdom of a rhythmical life, an understanding of this stage of human development and support for individual circumstances. This structured program includes self-initiated play, songs, poems, puppet play and healthy movement for the children.

Additionally, once a week the various small groups of parents, grandparents and caregivers may join for a second meeting per week with the teacher. This adult-only gathering is an opportunity for deepened support and discussion.





FIRST STEPS TOWARD INDEPENDENCE

Nursery

Students in the range of 3 - 4 years are working hard to discover the world around them, often for the first time without the parents by their side. Entry into our Nursery Program provides a safe place to explore. Through a balance of self-initiated play and teacher-led activities, the children build physical, social and cognitive capacities while learning to be in a community of peers.

MILESTONES OF THE NURSERY CHILD:

PHYSICAL: Runs with confidence
 Kicks a ball, climbs, walks up and down stairs
 Challenges self in new movement activities
 Growing accuracy with buttoning, zippers,
 drawing, and other fine motor skills
 Ability for self-care: toileting, washing,
 undressing, dressing

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL: Understands idea of “mine” and “theirs”
 Shows concern or affect for a friend with prompting
 Begins to use words to communicate needs
 Interest in playing with other children

COGNITIVE: Associative memory development
 Use of adjectives in expressive language
 Begins to develop sense of self
 Strong memory, love of order
 Begins to follow and repeat stories



Pre-Kindergarten

Students in the range of 4 - 5 years are the youngest children in our Kindergarten Program. While they may participate in the many of the same activities as their older classmates, the pre-kindergartener experiences the activities at their own level of consciousness and their milestones are different.

MILESTONES OF THE PRE-KINDERGARTEN CHILD:

PHYSICAL: Increased stamina
Greater control over self for motor control, balance, hand coordination
Maintains a good sitting posture
Growing independence with following tasks with multiple steps
Ability to use appropriate force
Begins to tie shoes

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL: Increased interest in playing with friends
Increased capacity for conflict resolution
More conscious of "inclusion"
Enjoys new things

COGNITIVE: Increased capacity to focus
Role play and make-believe play develops
Sensory based memory develops
Play is stimulated by external objects
Ready for more complex stories



Kindergarten

The older students in the Kindergarten program, (range of 5 - 6.5 years) have the opportunity to become leaders for our pre-kindergarteners while also working at their own milestones. Most of these students are one year away from the academic setting of our Lower School. The achievements experienced from Parent/Child, Nursery and Pre-Kindergarten bolster these students into the final stages of early childhood. Self-initiated play and teacher-led activities are punctuated by independent projects reserved only for these older students.

MILESTONES OF THE KINDERGARTEN CHILD:

PHYSICAL: Consolidated vestibular and proprioceptive systems
Maturation of infant reflexes
Crosses both horizontal and vertical midlines
Established dominance and directionality
Maturation of eye-tracking and eye-hand coordination
Dexterity & mature pencil grip
Mastered skills of using knife, scissors and pouring water into cups
Can tie shoe laces and manage buttons and zippers

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL: Able to verbalize feelings
Ability to manage conflicts during play time with greater independence
Able to distinguish behaviors and language acceptable and unacceptable
Identify and handle situations that may lead to conflict
Ask for assistance to resolve conflict after an independent attempt
Begin controlling impulsive behavior

COGNITIVE: Ability to follow three step sequence of oral directions
Ability to order experiences in time
Can use grammar and syntax and make rhymes
Makes and understands jokes
Comes to group with ideas for creative play
Child's play extends over a period of several days

First-Grade Readiness

The transition from Early Childhood to the Lower School constitutes a significant change in the life of the child. Now the child joins a group of 20+ children who follow the instruction of several different teachers who bring different subjects throughout a day.

Six-year-olds typically exhibit signs that they have integrated the goals of Early Childhood Program, and their neural development is now ready to join a classroom of peers for the purpose of learning of writing, reading and computing with numbers that occurs in first grade. Each child has a personal journey to this place, so our teachers take great care in assessing each individual.

Indications of this integration include:

PHYSICAL CHANGES in body proportions, emergence of the six-year molars and development of the arch in the foot.

MOVEMENT: Hop on one foot. Hop with two feet together. Gallop. Skip. Shuffle. Toss and catch a ball, emerging ability to jump rope.

REFLEXIVE MOVEMENT PATTERNS:

Vertical and horizontal midlines are released.

BASIC SENSORY SYSTEMS OF PROPRIOCEPTIVE AND VESTIBULAR:

Accurate self-perception and control of one's body in space and in relationship to gravity.

HAND DOMINANCE is established.

Dexterity is strong. One can use and move individual fingers for tasks.

HAND-EYE COORDINATION AND

VISION FUNCTION: Copying letters, numbers and shapes; copying from a chalkboard, drawing, knitting, creating main lesson books. All these activities require strength in this area.

LISTENING, SPEAKING & MEMORY: One

must accurately perceive and process what one hears. Repeating verses, rhyming words, clapping rhythms, and following a sequence of instructions are key to success in the first grade.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL

DEVELOPMENT: Begins to independently resolve social conflicts, willingness to learn a new task, show sustained attention.

RECENT COLLEGES ACCEPTANCES

Brown University
Barnard College
Boston University
Brandeis University
The Citadel
Cornell University
Dartmouth College
Dickenson College
Emerson College
George Washington University
Harvard University
Massachusetts Institute of
Technology (MIT)
New York University (NYU)
Northeastern University
Rhode Island School of Design (RISD)
Rochester Institute of Technology
School of Art Institute of Chicago
Skidmore College
Stanford University
Tufts University
University of Chicago
Yale University



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