Welcome to Preschool 4!

The preschool 4 teachers nurture the natural curiosity of young children. Teachers watch closely to see what students are drawing, discussing and building. Their observations, combined with the developmental needs of four-year olds, allow the teachers to build a program that meets their needs and interests.

Walk into our preschool 4 classroom and you will see support for emergent literacy through play, expressive language and print. As teachers listen in on student play, they take notes and help students extend vocabulary and language. Interactive read-alouds promote a love of story and the written word, as well as help develop understanding about how print works. The Sounds in Motion program supports auditory processing and phonemic awareness skills through gross motor kinesthetic movements, and Handwriting Without Tears supports pre-writing readiness skills by introducing proper pencil grip and correct letter formation. This builds a solid foundation and good writing habits for the years to follow. These opportunities and many, many more, which teachers will explain in greater detail at Back-to-School Night and throughout the year, ensure students are exposed to the wonderful world of quality literature, awareness of print, features of books and reading and writing readiness while protecting the four-year old’s place in early childhood.

Mathematics is learned through hands-on, concrete experiences. 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, play and building in the block area, and as students gather objects outdoors to later be sorted, organized and charted into categories.

And of course, our preschool 4's learn a great deal through play. Our early childhood program is committed to maintaining the importance of play throughout each day. In the dramatic play area learning happens as peers interact with one another and generate and exchange 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 place where there is much to think and talk about. As teachers ask questions such as "What do you think will happen?" or "What made you put that block in that position?" the block area becomes a place for students to express themselves, as well as elaborate and exchange ideas using increasingly more complex language and vocabulary.

Art is a vital part of the classroom environment. The entire classroom is a studio environment that invites 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. They create highly-individualized pieces of art, towards which they feel a strong sense of ownership. We honor their work by discussing it and displaying it.

In preschool 4 children are introduced to Spanish in a cultural context meant to be inviting and fun, and they are exposed to Spanish in their classroom during lunch and choice times. Themes explored 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 do 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, touch, sight, smell, taste and hearing, to observe and learn about the world around them, they discover relationships of change and growth and cause and effect. This is scientific thinking, and it takes place once a week in the Lower School science room and throughout the day and the year in the classroom and outside in the preschool 4 play spaces.

Children in our preschool 4 class attend music class twice a week. They learn to identify changes in pitch, tempo, loudness and
musical duration. They sing songs of their own creation as well as memorized ones. They also have another opportunity to sing within a larger community context during a regularly scheduled early childhood singalong. Four-year olds love to move, and they learn to move rhythmically and smoothly. They share their music during “Grandparents’ and Special Friends’ Day” held in the spring.

Students visit the Lower School gym for physical activities once a week. 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. 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 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.