



## LITTLE SCHOLARS ACADEMY CURRICULUM

Little Scholars Academy (LSA) is a Christian preschool and we incorporate Christian ideology into our daily curriculum. Our curriculum includes a Christian-centered balance of creative activities, free play inside and out, individual and group activities, storytimes, music, math, and reading readiness skills. Christian principles are taught and shared. Learning takes place through play and age-appropriate hands-on experiences. Classroom activities invite curiosity, creativity, self-discovery, and the sharing of ideas.

During the 30 years that our preschool has been in existence, the teachers, director, and preschool board have designed a research-based curriculum that is uniquely ours. We continue to evaluate new research and educational materials to ensure that our curriculum meets the needs of our students.

From toddlers through pre-k, the scope of our program expands to provide age-appropriate activities for every child. Our integrated whole child curriculum includes all areas of a child's development: spiritual, cognitive, physical, social, and emotional.

- **Spiritual**--Bible stories, prayer, and chapel help the children to grow spiritually by voicing their thanks to God and learning that they belong and are loved. Our teachers model Christian behavior.
- **Cognitive**--Cognitive development refers to functions of the brain such as thinking, learning, judgment, and processing information. Our curriculum is designed to assist each child in these areas as he/she learns and grows.
- **Physical**--Healthy play is an active component of a child's physical development. We take pride in our spacious outside play areas and encourage children to run, climb, and jump. Our playground equipment encourages movement and motor skills. In addition to physical activity, playground time allows children to interact in small groups or individually as they choose and create their own games.
- **Social**--A variety of individual, small group, and large group activities is incorporated into the daily routine. Our program recognizes that play is an

important part of learning; therefore, our classrooms provide opportunities for children to learn through active exploration and interaction with adults, classmates, and materials. Each teacher assists children with their problem solving skills, as appropriate; thus, maximizing opportunities for positive social development in each child.

- **Emotional**--Teachers carefully observe children and when necessary step in to assist if conflicts arise. Each child is taught how to use words successfully and how to listen to others. When children learn to respond positively as problems and conflicts arise, their emotional development is encouraged.

## **Thematic Teaching**

We follow the thematic approach to teaching. This approach involves integrating all subjects areas together under one theme. This helps children relate basic academic skills to real-world ideas. We incorporate academics into themed units of study that we change each year. This enables the children to receive an integrated experience that enhances thinking skills and creativity. These themed units and centers incorporate reading, math, science, and social studies as well as fine arts for a well-balanced curriculum. Preschool children learn through interactive, hands-on activities; therefore, this approach is especially effective. The benefits to the thematic approach include:

- The content areas are integrated and are not stand alone, thus teaching thematically helps children make sense of what they are being taught.
- Students are able to retain more information when it is presented as part of a whole rather than isolated facts.
- Thematic units encourage the involvement of all students through topics that are relevant to them.
- Children are able to build on prior knowledge of a topic.
- Teaching through thematic units is effective with the different learning styles.

## **Curriculum Content**

Christian Theology. Christian theology is incorporated into our daily curriculum. We focus on familiar children's stories of the Bible and alternate between the Old and New Testament each year. The stories we cover include Creation, Noah, Moses, David, and Jesus. The Bible stories are taught in an age-appropriate way through songs, stories, and prayer--all coordinated to promote healthy spiritual development. Our Chapel Time is held at least twice per month in the church sanctuary. During this time we talk about the Bible story for the week, sing songs and pray. Our students learn several prayers that they say during morning Circle Time and before snack and lunch.

Language Arts. In our two-year-old class, the children are introduced to the alphabet through exposure. Students are introduced to nursery rhymes, fingerplays, and songs that encourage them to hear rhyming words and to increase vocabulary. Each year the exposure becomes more in-depth. In our three-year-old class, students are taught to recognize their names, their birthdate, and their parents' names. In the pre-k class, the students will add to this knowledge by learning and recognizing their address and phone number. Our goal is for each child to be able to recognize, write, and sound out every letter of the alphabet by the time he/she graduates from our pre-k class. The children will be exposed to many sight words throughout their pre-k year and many of our students are reading by the time they graduate.

Reading comprehension strategies are taught by modeling thinking with the use of picture books and other literature. Students will deepen their understanding of text by making connections, visualizing, and asking questions. Our teachers read a minimum of three books a day to the students. This includes books about the changing seasons, the universe, gardening, American history, Bible history, transportation, inventions, careers, and many more informative subjects. The more knowledge children gain from the books that are read to them, the greater their comprehension skills are when they are reading for themselves.

Math. Students are introduced to mathematical concepts through hands-on learning centers. Centers are designed to develop an understanding of and insight related to the patterns in math through the use of concrete materials. Emphasis is given to shapes, object positions, and size. Computational math, as well as graphs, statistics, measurement, complex patterns, time, fractions and money are also integral parts of this program.

Science. Each classroom has its own science center that includes materials that relate to biology, astronomy, meteorology, and physical science. Meteorology is emphasized daily during morning Circle Time when the children observe the weather for the day and discuss weather patterns. The children also have a garden area in a section of the playground where they grow flowers and vegetables.

Social Studies. The social studies activities are designed to begin development of the child's civic identity. The children listen to stories about the people and events we celebrate in our national holidays and learn why we celebrate them. They also become familiar with our national emblems: the words of the pledge of allegiance and the colors and shapes of the American flag. The children learn to identify their street address, the city or town, Georgia as the state, and the United States of America as the country in

which they live. They learn the name of their school and the city in which it is located. They are also introduced to maps and listen to stories about children living in other countries.

Fine Arts (Art, Music, Drama). Visual art activities include acrylic painting, watercolor painting, and drawing. Through art children hone fine motor skills, creativity, critical thinking, and visual expression skills.

Singing, dancing, moving, and listening are all part of our music program. These activities cultivate attention span and creativity as well as coordination and gross motor skills. We sing songs throughout the day in the classroom and during Chapel Time.

Through role play, the children act out the Bible stories during Chapel Time. The children also enjoy dramatic play. Since this is an open-ended type of play, they can try on different roles and be anyone they choose. A bin of dress-up clothes, puppets, dolls, and flannel boards all fit into this dramatic play center. During dramatic play, several components of social-emotional development occur. The children use verbal and non-verbal communication as they play. Vocabulary and language skills are strengthened as they interact. The children learn to appreciate each other's feelings as they share space and work together to create play scenarios.

### **Pre-K Handwriting and Reading Readiness**

Handwriting. Our handwriting curriculum uses multisensory lessons to teach to all learning styles. Beginning with strengthening and toning finger muscles, the children move on to practicing eye-hand coordination and visual tracking as they learn correct positioning methods of handwriting.

Reading Readiness. Our pre-k program uses Animal House, a strong phonics based reading readiness curriculum. Animal House introduces the children to the upper and lower case letters of the alphabet. Through the adventures of various animals, the children eagerly move on to Letters and Sounds and Storybook Land. Predictable books and emerging readers bring pre-reading successes as children master decoding techniques and begin comprehensive skills. Common sight words are also introduced. We focus on the following Reading Readiness Concepts and Skills in our pre-k program where the child:

- Is read to daily
- Uses left-to-right progression
- Understands that print carries a message

- Looks at pictures and tells a story
- Knows what a letter is and is familiar with the alphabet
- Identifies own first name in manuscript
- Prints own first name

## **The School Day**

The LSA school day begins with Circle Time which includes The Lord's Prayer, the pledge to the American Flag, calendar time, and weather observations. Each class has a schedule to fit the specific needs of that particular class. Each staff member carefully designs the schedule to ensure that children receive a well-rounded learning experience every day.

Your child's day at LSA will be filled with learning experiences! Even carpool, snack time, and lining up to leave the classroom are part of the learning experiences. These activities foster self-sufficiency, independence, and the ability to follow directions.