

Essex Fells Preschool Curriculum



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INTRODUCTION

The curriculum of the Essex Fells Preschool Program is based on the principles specified in the The New Jersey Department of Education document, *Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards*. The Department of Education developed and published the *Preschool Teaching and Learning Expectations: Standards of Quality* (now called *Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards*) as guidance to teachers who work with young children. In 2014, the State Board of Education adopted the revised *Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards*. For districts, such as Essex Fells, that do not receive state aid for preschool provision, these Standards were designed to be guidelines for good practice.

The *Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards* sets a standard for preschool learning outcomes and serves as a benchmark for determining how effectively the classroom curriculum is being implemented. The Essex Fells Preschool Program also incorporates *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool*, *Wilson Foundations Curriculum* and *Everyday Math Curriculum*. In addition to implementing the state standards and different curriculums, the program has integrated Montessori philosophies and practices within their everyday routines. The Essex Fells Preschool utilizes Creative Curriculum's GOLD Formative Assessment to organically determine and document students' progress throughout the year and formally at each trimester.

PHILOSOPHY

The Essex Fells Preschool Program incorporates developmentally appropriate practices into an academically integrated program. As always, variations in educational growth occur, and program staff support individual variations in children's learning and development. This curriculum is defined as an educational philosophy for achieving desired educational outcomes through the presentation of an organized scope and sequence of activities utilizing a variety of appropriate instructional materials.

All children demonstrate a broad range of learning, cognitive, communication, physical, sensory, and social/emotional differences. Each preschool child manifests his or her learning abilities, learning style, and learning preferences in a unique manner. Therefore, at times, adaptations and/or accommodations are needed and programs in which they are to be implemented are determined individually through the special education process and the development of an Individual Educational Plan. These individualized plans provide children with disabilities the opportunity to develop needed skills while participating in developmentally appropriate practices and the *NJ Department of Education Standards of Quality*. Participation within the inclusive preschool class quite often results in children developing greater empathy, understanding of current skills and opportunity for peer modeling.

Childhood experiences in school have a significant impact upon both academic and social learning. These crucial early years of schooling set the stage for a positive transition to kindergarten. The Essex Fells Preschool Program recognizes and respects developmental differences and seeks to provide a strong base for both academic and social knowledge.

PROGRAM

The Essex Fells Preschool Program integrates children with and without disabilities in an academically based, developmentally appropriate, child-centered environment.

FAMILY SUPPORT

The Essex Fells Preschool Program recognizes that family members enhance and facilitate the social-emotional, physical, and cognitive development of their children. Family activities are planned at various points of the school year to encourage parent/guardian participation. These activities are scheduled at varying times of the day and week.

Parent/teacher conferences are held in the fall and spring to discuss student progress. Individual meetings are held if necessary or requested by the parent/guardian. Additionally, IEP meetings are scheduled annually for all students eligible for special education services.

Bi-monthly meetings involving specific school staff and parents/guardians will include (but not limited to) presentation/discussion of the following topics:

- Literacy Skills
- Developing Speech/Language Skills
- Behavioral Concerns
- Play/Social Skills
- Parent Open Discussion

ASSESSMENT

The primary purpose of assessment in the preschool program is to determine a child's current knowledge, development and awareness in pre subject based areas. Ongoing observations and as needed assessments are given to determine a child's developmental progress. Preschool uses *The GOLD Formative Assessment* for all students in order to determine their developmental readiness within their state aligned objectives. This is done through multiple modes as detailed below:

- Ongoing intentional observation
- Repeated various academic skills assessment
- Organic daily documentation of skills

[NJ-GOLD-Alignment-PS-2014.pdf](#) aligns the content in the New Jersey Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards with the objectives, dimensions, and indicators of the Teaching Strategies GOLD® assessment system.

THE CURRICULUM

The Essex Fells Preschool Curriculum meets the guidelines of the *Preschool Teaching and Learning Standards* through *The Creative Curriculum for Preschool*, a state approved curriculum. *The Wilson Foundations Program* and *Everyday Math Curriculum*s are also utilized to provide our students with academic exposure prior to entering the upper grades.

The program has integrated Montessori philosophies and practices within their everyday routines to aid in the promotion of independence and responsibility.

[NJ-CC-Alignment-Preschool-Teach-Learn-Standards_2](#) details the alignment of The Creative Curriculum for Preschool with New Jersey State Learning and Teaching Standards.