

# **Delaware Township School District Pre-School Curriculum Guide**

*Draft Revision, July 2008*

*BOE Curriculum Committee, October 2008*

*Released for Piloting, November 2008*

*Final Revisions and BOE Approval, May 2009*

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# *Delaware Township School*

## **Pre-School Curriculum**

### **Statement of Philosophy**

**July, 2008**

The Delaware Township School District has developed a preschool curriculum across all content areas that recognizes a child's holistic development. The domains of Social/Emotional, Cognitive, Physical and Language development are addressed in this curriculum guide. The individual skills in each domain are sequential and represent a continuum of learning. The curriculum facilitates meaning, understanding and connections of concepts using purposeful, authentic and integrated experiences. It employs a best practices approach that is teacher facilitated but individualized, based on student needs and skill levels. It strikes a balance between whole group, small group and one to one interactions. The goal of this curriculum is to maximize student potential, to develop a love of learning through successful experiences, and to learn to communicate effectively with others.

*- Drafted by the Pre-School Curriculum Committee, 2008*

## **A Balanced Literacy Program**

Delaware Township School has developed a preschool program for literacy and communication skills that incorporates research based best practices and which integrates into the kindergarten curriculum. By “balanced” the term refers to a program of instruction and a classroom environment which utilizes varied opportunities for an enriched experience. The following instructional strategies will be included in the preschool program at Delaware Township School:

**Read Alouds** – During Read Alouds, children listen to big books, short stories and poems while the teacher models fluent reading. Through this, they build an appreciation of the material being read while beginning to develop a concept for reading fluency. Children are also given a chance to respond to a story and share their ideas about it afterward. Reading aloud is a regular practice at all grade levels in Delaware Township School.

Children will also be encouraged to “read independently” in preschool as well. Reading independently involves the appropriate use of book handling skills (such as turning pages from right to left) and mimicking the approach to reading that fluent readers use. In preschool the opportunity to “read” a self-chosen story gives the children the chance to practice good reading habits while developing a love of the reading process.

**Shared Reading** – In shared reading specific skills are incorporated into the lesson. Shared reading activities foster pre-reading skills and eventually independent reading skills. Shared Reading is a time for direct or explicit instruction that includes phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary building and comprehension skills. Instructional activities may include:

- **Theme Studies** – One or more selections are used that focus on the same theme, for example “weather” or “worms.” With themed studies, the teacher incorporates various ways to respond to literature after the stories are read. For example, dancing to a song about the story or creating an art project based on the story are two ways a child may respond to the literature.
- **Big Book Sharing** – Using an enlarged text that everyone can see, the children follow a pointer and read selected portions of the text together. Often, the preschool teacher will read most of the story and limit choral reading to the repeated patterned portions of the text. Usually a specific skill is highlighted through the selection of a certain big book.
- **Learning Stations/Centers** – Children select or are guided to a specific learning station/center in the room. Activities in the stations are designed to differentiate instruction based on the unique skill levels of each child. Use of learning centers allows the curriculum and instruction to remain responsive to each child’s needs.

**Handwriting** – Instruction in manuscript handwriting assists students with eye hand coordination and fine motor control. Manuscript handwriting is also similar to the print style found in many early readers and it enhances the connection between handwriting practice, exposure to literary print and eventually the development of reading skills. Therefore the process of learning manuscript handwriting is critical to the development of reading skills and explicit instruction occurs in this area.

The preschool program utilizes the *Handwriting Without Tears* program to teach this skill set. *Handwriting Without Tears* utilizes a developmental teaching order so children learn the basic mechanics of handwriting first. Letters are taught in a developmental sequence in groups of similar formation. It utilizes hands-on experiences and multi-sensory play to inspire learning.

**Shared writing** - In shared writing, the teacher does most of the work. She “holds the pen” in this case. She helps the students to determine what they want to say and then writes it for them either on a whiteboard, chart, or book. During shared writing, the preschool teacher maximizes opportunities for teaching about the act of writing.

**Interactive writing** – Interactive writing is a cooperative event in which teacher and children share the writing experience. With interactive writing, the teacher serves as the facilitator of the writing process. The preschool teacher models good writing as she scribes and the children contribute based on an interactive dialogue with the teacher. Finally, the children will contribute to the writing itself by adding letters or inserting selected words.

The Delaware Township Preschool program is planned and structured so that all children develop to the best of their ability. The focus is on identifying unique needs and skill levels to link instruction to the curriculum while continuing to evaluate student progress. Early childhood experiences have a lasting impact on the future of a child. Therefore, the beginning years at Delaware Township School are designed to provide developmentally appropriate experiences that foster independence and encourage the uniqueness of each child.