



KINDERGARTEN PREP

HELEN R. WALTON CHILDREN'S ENRICHMENT CENTER



WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CHILD CARE AND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT?

“Child care” focuses on the basic needs of young children. “Early Childhood Development” focuses on basic needs and the child’s overall development. This consists of:

- Physical development
- Social/emotional development
- Cognitive development
- Language development

DOES HWCEC USE A CURRICULUM TO PREPARE MY CHILD FOR KINDERGARTEN?

YES! We use a curriculum program called Creative Curriculum that focuses on age appropriate experiences with infants through pre-k.
<http://teachingstrategies.com/curriculum>

WHAT DOES “DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE PRACTICE” MEAN?

What this means is simply that educators think first about what young children are like and then create an environment and experiences in tune with those characteristics.

Early childhood is a time of life that is quite different from adulthood, and even from later school years. Children 3 - 6 learn far better through direct interactive experiences than through just listening to someone talk. They learn extraordinary amounts through play and exploration.

WHY DOES MY CHILD "PLAY" ALL DAY? IS HE LEARNING?

You probably have noticed that our classrooms have a lot of bustle and noise. Children are talking, playing, and exploring. Such a classroom environment differs from the old grade-school image of a teacher doing a lot of talking at a black-board while children sit and listen quietly at their desks.

Children actually learn best by being active. Your child probably asks lots of questions: How does it work? What makes plants grow? How do worms move if they don't have legs?

Preschoolers are very curious about their world. We encourage children to develop their natural curiosity by observation, exploration, taking items apart, building, creating, drawing, and seeing what they can find out.

As they interact directly with the environment, children not only gather sensory information, they also refine their senses and motor skills. For example, it takes very refined movement of the hands and fingers to produce the penmanship required for writing. Squeezing clay and lacing threads through beads are ways for young children to practice using their hands and fingers.



WHY DOESN'T HWCEC USE WORKSHEETS IN PRESCHOOL?

Young children do not learn by regurgitating information. At this age, worksheets provide little value. As adults, we are concerned with the outcome or the product of our efforts. We want the report to look nice, the cookies to taste great, or the hedges to be perfectly straight. We participate in few activities just for the fun of doing them.

In part this is because we are not learning how to do these activities. But do you remember when you first learned how to play golf? Or use a new computer program? In the beginning you needed to do a certain amount of “messing around” – exploring what would happen if you did this or that. This is the way it is for your child. Children are learning new things all the time, and they need the freedom to try things out without worrying about the product (the worksheet).

Your child is learning coordination or beginning writing skills or making discoveries about triangles or gravity. He/she is certainly finding out that doing for one's self is very satisfying – and that builds confidence.

Be patient. Allow your child the time to grow and learn through the various processes that are part of the task. Enjoy watching his or her involvement. Later, we all can be proud of the product.

HOW DO I KNOW IF MY CHILD IS LEARNING? DO YOU TEST MY CHILD?

Tests are not reliable for this age group. Instead, we utilize the GOLD system linked to our curriculum. We benchmark children's skills against 47 developmental domains. We provide a summary of their accomplishments and possible activities to support continued growth during three parent-teacher conferences each year.



WILL MY CHILD BE PREPARED FOR KINDERGARTEN?

Yes! We want to ensure your child has a successful academic career; therefore we focus on your child's physical, emotional, social and cognitive development – the “whole child approach”.

We will shorten naps as the year progresses, practice opening ketchup packets and milk cartons, help them learn to keep their hands to themselves through self-regulation, and stretch their ability to focus on one activity for longer stretches of time.

At HWCEC, we survey all of our families after 9 weeks in the school system. We ask the parents to benchmark their child against Arkansas' Kindergarten Readiness Indicators. Parents and kindergarten teachers believe our graduates are well-prepared and ready for the kindergarten experience.