



Curriculum

Momentum Early Learning's curriculum is based on several key ideas.

1. Children learn through play.
2. Developmentally appropriate practices used by staff match children to their level of play, regardless of age and classroom.
3. Children develop socially, emotionally, cognitively and physically every day.
4. Opportunities for growth and advancement encourage children to love learning.
5. Positive reinforcement and guidance is necessary for building relationships with children.
6. Parent partnerships are a key ingredient to child care/school success.

Much research exists in the field of childhood development, learning and academic growth. Momentum Early Learning utilizes this research in order to provide the best possible experience for the children.

We understand that children's basic needs need to be met before any learning can begin. Children need to trust their environment and their caregivers.

We understand that children (even infants) start child care with differences, including whether they were breast or bottle fed, have pets or siblings, moved, attended another child care or stayed home. We know that families are different in their composition and that cultures have different traditions and beliefs. We believe that children incorporate all of these differences as their norm. We value these differences. It makes each child unique.

Momentum Early Learning's curriculum is based on The Creative Curriculum (Learning concepts: social/emotional development, physical development, cognitive and language development) and High Scope (Philosophy: children explore, ask and answer questions, solve problems, and interact with other children and adults as they pursue their choices and plans.) curriculum, merging into a method used to provide the best possible experience for children and families.

Interactive experiences

Children will be encouraged to try new things and venture out of their normal patterns. New toys, art materials and learning resources will be utilized to provide many different experiences throughout the day. Children will have many opportunities to get dirty and have hands-on fun with manipulatives, counting and classification. Children will often “lead” our teachers in uncovering what they are interested in by following an emergent curriculum. This means that if the theme of the week is dinosaurs, but the children are more interested in the construction vehicles that they see outside, the teacher will be flexible and work with the children on the new topic.

Observations/Assessments

Children will be observed by the teachers daily in order to help you better understand their development. The teachers use anecdotal notes, conversations with single children and group time to actively listen to the children and help them be successful in a social environment. More formal assessments are done at the request of the parent, but because children vary so much in their development, referrals to physicians will be made if an issue is considered.

Portfolio/Conferences

Teachers will prepare portfolios for children of all ages. The portfolio will consist of:

- Pictures of the child accomplishing development milestones
- Artwork
- General childhood development information
- Specific information about your child’s progress based on the above mentioned observations and assessments.

Portfolios can be viewed at any time and will be reviewed officially at parent/teacher conferences. Conferences will occur twice a year or as requested by either staff or parent.

Parent Partnerships

We will work in partnership with parents to meet the needs of the child. Teachers and administrators of Momentum Early Learning may be experts in child care, but parents are the expert on their children. If you think there is an issue, we would like to hear how to improve our center.

We will develop the trust necessary for parents to feel comfortable with going back to work at whatever age their child is.

We will provide thorough intake meetings so that parents and teachers can compare techniques to use with their child for feeding, sleeping, playing and diapering.

We will provide ample communication consisting of e-mails, parent notes, phone calls, daily conversation, as well as bi-annually conferences.

We will offer opportunities for parents to get together with each other at special events held several times a year.

We will work through concerns rationally and with thought given to providing the best experience to the child and family.

Environments (Classroom Configurations)

Classrooms become the child's "home away from home" and provide a setting to feel safe and secure.

Classrooms will foster expectations for play by being organized and well equipped with developmentally appropriate materials.

Classrooms will be configured to provide the best learning environment. Traffic patterns will be monitored to allow children the freedom to move from one learning center to another, but not allow for inappropriate activity, such as running.

Classrooms will have daily schedules (infants are always on their own schedule) and develop routines that allow the children to anticipate the next activity.

Transitions will be handled expertly, reducing the need to wait in line. Songs, fingerplays and games will be utilized to create a fun atmosphere while children move from activity to activity.

Learning Centers

- Blocks-children create, design and build, learn cooperation and problem solving
- Dramatic play-children learn to be social, imitate gender roles and develop their own worlds
- Games-children learn about rules, cooperation by taking turns and good sportsmanship.
- Art-children learn to explore and use different materials, making choices and self confidence
- Quiet- children read books either alone or together, gaining literacy skills even before they can read and learn to appreciate literature
- Discovery/Science-children can create with materials or study sea life, bugs and dinosaurs
- Small Manipulatives/Math-children learn to sort, classify, measure and work with magnets to develop hand-eye coordination and manual dexterity
- Gross Motor-children play outside and in the large motor room to improve their physical skills, to work as a team, to expend energy and to help to promote a healthy lifestyle

Character Development

We understand the need in today's world to provide such development skills as respect, empathy, responsibility and kindness:

Respect

- Towards the environment (by recycling and reducing our carbon footprint)
- Towards our classroom materials (treating our supplies well so they last)
- Towards each other (understanding we are all different)
- Towards adults (their knowledge and experience is worthwhile)

Empathy

- Towards each other
- Towards animals and nature

Responsibility

- To be true to ourselves
- To be truthful
- To pick up after ourselves
- For our own happiness

Kindness

- To all
- To animals and nature

The staff will role model these traits, in order for children to see the benefits of these behaviors.

Positive Guidance and Discipline: The role of a teacher is to help children grow in a positive way and learn what is acceptable behavior in the classroom specifically and in society, in general. Patience must be constant. If a child acts out, oftentimes, there is an underlying reason. Staff will look beyond the behavior and try to understand the child. Younger children may need extra attention. This seems contradictory to bad behavior. Teachers may think they are reinforcing bad behavior, but in truth, it is showing them that you like them regardless of what they do. Time-outs are illegal under the age of three and teachers will do their best to avoid them for older children. Younger children should be redirected, their attention taken elsewhere, but their behavior explained in simple terms. Older children may be taken away from their activity, but allowed another choice (after talking about the behavior). In extreme cases, children may “visit” the office. The Director/Assistant Director will remove the child from the classroom and call the parent, if necessary.

We will not allow any disrespectful behavior, bullying or physical harm to come to or from any of the children.

Respect: Children will be treated with respect at all times. No matter how poor behavior may get, staff will treat the children as anyone would want to be treated.

Product vs. Process Art

Product vs. project art is a way to describe the way an art project is made from beginning to end. In product art, the teacher may cut out pieces for the child to glue. In process art, the child cuts the pieces and glues them. We understand that children learn best when they are guided through the whole project and that the work is all theirs. Although perfectly made projects may be nice to look at, art work that the children make with their own hands is more precious. Parents may not see the most flawless art project, but instead will see hard work and something the child has made completely on his/her own.

Artwork posted on the wall will include an explanation as to what the child learned during the project. For example, if a group project is displayed, there will be a sign to detail the cooperation, the manual dexterity it took to glue objects and the problem solving that was mastered when one child wanted to add something else.

Infants (Six Weeks-One Year)

Infants are on their own schedules. This allows for their own temperament and patterns to guide their day. They choose when to eat and sleep. We will partner with parents on how to keep the “schedules” consistent from home to child care.

We will optimize our interactions with kids by using their daily care and routine as the ideal time to communicate. Diapering, eating (or drinking) and playing are prime times to model the back and forth of conversation.

Experiences and activities will be used to give infants a variety of opportunities for growth. Swings, high chairs, boppies, rocking chairs with teachers, exersaucers and bouncy chairs and the floor offer infants different experiences throughout the day. Walks in the stroller offer infants the opportunity to experience the outdoors in a safe way. Different settings stimulate curiosity, communication, self esteem, belonging and cognitive and motor growth.

Art work is added for older babies who provide experiences with tactile discovery, sensory explorations as well as fine motor growth.

Music and singing are important aspects at this age and will be included on a daily basis.

Stories and reading are key to providing exposure to new vocabulary, language development and communication.

Toddlers (One to Two Years)

Social skill development is important in the 1-2 year old age range. They are learning about themselves, others and how to relate to others. Environments are nurturing, offering many materials (to reduce the need to share) and stimulating.

The teachers will build confidence in the toddlers by celebrating each accomplishment and assisting them should they need help. We also build confidence and independence by providing an environment that works for them, including youth size table and chairs.

Schedules and routine help children work through fears by allowing them to predict the next activity.

Children at this age are increasingly mobile and are exploring new environments with enthusiasm. They are discovering how things work, how things make them feel and how to express themselves.

Art projects, music and physical activities are favorites of this age and will be prominent in the classroom throughout the day.

Twos

Independence is critical in the year from 2-3 years old. Children want to attempt and complete as many tasks as they can, from running and jumping to drawing a circle and pretending to cook a meal. Children learn so many skills by doing this. They learn how to play together, work through problems and are beginning to share.

Empathy is common at this age as children work through how they affect others and can make choices (although they still adult help).

Small group time is attempted in small increments to prepare them for the preschool classrooms.

Communication is typically growing by leaps and bounds. Book reading stimulates vocabulary and word usage. This is also the age, however, when children may become frustrated by their inability to express themselves. Teachers will encourage and acknowledge children's emotions and allow them the opportunity to feel comfortable in being angry, frustrated or overwhelmed.

Toilet training is a great time to teach body basics and assist them in gaining control of their body and become more autonomous.

Children are eager to explore different materials, get dirty and make their own creations.

Preschool

Children ages 3-5 years old are developing socially and emotionally by recognizing their feelings and how their actions affect other's feelings. They demonstrate independence and take responsibility for their own well being.

They can follow routines and rules and understand consequences.

Preschool aged children show persistence, explore and apply what they have learned to new scenarios. They work together in groups toward a common goal.

In preparing children for elementary school, teachers will work with children on increasing their attention time; on writing their names, learning pre-reading skills and following direction. Older children will also participate in groups and complete projects together. We will teach children basic information such as address and phone number.

Teachers will encourage children to work through problems and expand their knowledge by trying new things and moving away from their comfort zone. (For example, if children believe they are “good” at math, teachers will encourage them to write a story.)

School Age

Children aged 5-12 will make new friends, away from their school or neighborhood. They will develop camaraderie in playing games and attending field trips (summer).

Children will have time after school to expend energy, enjoy a snack and other activities before doing homework.

Experiments with science, building and other unique experiences enhance the fun and the learning environment. Creativity will be encouraged through use of materials, teacher guidance and individual knowledge to complete group projects.

Children will learn responsibility by assisting the teacher in planning activities and implementing them together.

Teachers will promote health and wellness by promoting exercise and proper nutrition.

Conclusion

The purpose of our curriculum is to assist teachers in guiding the children in their own development.

- Children learn in different ways (visual learners, auditory learners, hands-on learners and those that learn by memorization).
- Children develop at different rates.
- Children learn at his/her own pace.

Teachers and administrators will look at each child as an individual and plan according to their needs and likes. We will work with parents to identify problems and collaborate to develop a strategy to assist the child.

We are excited by the opportunity to participate in the education of our future generation.