Brickton
MONTESSORI

Children's House Curriculum Narrative (3 year olds – Kindergarten)

The prepared environment in the Children's House attends to a full complement of social, emotional, physical and cognitive needs of the developing child. Comprised of discrete and well-appointed curricular areas, the classroom is specifically designed to call out to the child with an irresistible invitation to work and engage in productive meaningful activity. Dr. Montessori observed that during the early years of life, the child undergoes a series of sensitive periods that mark optimal receptivity for the acquisition of the skills needed to connect with the world. Invested with intrinsic motivation to do what needs to be done, the child naturally and spontaneously will seek out experiences to meet individual needs, providing those experiences are readily available and easily accessible.

In the Children's House, a large portion of the day is spent in individual work in response to the nature of development in the young child and the wide range of ever dramatically evolving needs. One distinct advantage of the Montessori environment is the degree of varied activity at varied levels. Opportunities for incidental learning abound. There is always someone performing a work at the next level; always a chance to check in on what's happening at the next work rug over. Something of interest is inevitably occurring.

Time is set aside for group activities, usually at the end of the morning activity period. This time of day is called Line Time or Community Time. On Line, students learn about ground rules; they receive presentations; they learn how to share with one another; they engage in gross motor activities and music.

The environment covers five curriculum areas: **Practical Life, Sensorial, Math, Language, and Culture**. The directress continually adds materials as appropriate to address the needs of the students, and sometimes works are available on a seasonal basis. For example, during the fall, with an abundance of Indian corn, a fine motor activity may involve tweezing the colorful corn.

Practical Life

Practical Life is the area of the curriculum that provides the Children's House student a means of becoming more independent in his environment. They may wash their hands, wash dishes or clothes, and prepare flowers in vases to decorate the room. They can spoon beans from one bowl to the other, pour water from one pitcher into a series of cups. They can tweeze corn from a cob or beads onto depressions on a suction soap holder. Practical Life activities foster order, concentration, gross motor coordination, fine motor coordination, eye-hand coordination, independence and responsibility, all prerequisites for achieving success in learning. These skills become the executive functioning skills we see emerging from our

elementary students, such as organizing their belongings and time, prioritizing assignments, and sequencing the steps of writing and math activities.

Young children have a need for harmony in their environment, in their lives, and within themselves. The physical classroom space is arranged in a distinct and logical sequence. Each of the exercises occupies its own place on a shelf. Each day as the child enters the room she will be greeted with the same materials in the same place on the shelf. The child not only finds happiness but also a sense of security in anticipating where the materials should be found and then finding them in their rightful place. The order that she encounters in the physical space of the classroom acts as an aid in ordering her mind. Her self-esteem grows as she carries out the process of removing the desired material from the shelf, working with it, and then returning it to its proper place. Through this work cycle she is developing her mathematical mind.

The Practical Life materials also help to develop the analytical mind. The activities of Practical Life require the child to think through a series of steps. Hand washing, for example, requires the child to first fill the pitcher with water, next pour the water into the basin, and finally wash his hands. The activity is logical and helps the child to refine her ability to think sequentially. Hand washing, along with other complex activities, requires the child to take several steps in preparation for the actual task, thus discouraging her from stopping midpoint and abandoning the project.

The Practical Life activities directly and indirectly foster motor development and hand eye coordination. The child can practice her gross motor skills carrying a bucket of water necessary for scrubbing a table across the classroom. She perfects her fine motor skills and hand eye coordination by using tweezers to transfer beans from one dish to another. The transfer activities require the use of a pincer grip, an indirect preparation for writing. Additional activities designed to strengthen the pincer grip include bead stringing, crayon peeling, polishing, and scrubbing small objects.

One of the goals of Practical Life is for the child to become master of herself and her environment, for her to no longer be dependent on someone else to do things for him. Independence is achieved by developing self-help skills like zipping a zipper on a jacket or preparing snack. The Practical Life activities are designed to be easily accessible to the children, and for many activities the child does not need an adult's help in order to be successful.

Sensorial

The Sensorial area contains materials that stimulate the refinement of the use of all of the senses for learning: visual, tactile, baric, stereoscopic, kinesthetic, auditory, olfactory and taste. Students learn the names of fundamental plane and solid figures. The visual dimension materials aid in development of perception and differences in dimension, develop motor control, and are a lesson in comparative and superlative vocabulary. The visual color and form materials are an opportunity to order, sort and classify by color and provide a vocabulary lesson on colors. The tactile and baric activities are an opportunity to classify and order; using the materials, the children explore weight and texture. Metal objects are cold; felt ones are warm.

The stereoscopic materials are an exercise in motor memory; the children test their ability to solve the mystery of what might be contained in a bag simply by feeling an object with their hands.

The Sensorial area is also the child's first introduction to geometrical concepts. They discover all about triangles and how they can be joined to create different shapes. The children learn the names of the geometric solids and plane forms and experiment with their properties. Through observation and experimentation, children learn to make sense of the world around them; thus preparing them for more complex, abstract concepts in future educational experiences.

Language

Language is an interdisciplinary subject in our environment due to the developmental stage of these students. Language acquisition and precision are fundamental areas of growth for 3 to 6 year olds. We use language to express our ideas and needs, to promote social exchange, to resolve conflicts, to express who we are (Please may I have more snack? Please may I work with you? I feel sad when you…). Language is an essential feature of the lessons in each area. In the Children's House, lessons about language begin the moment the child enters our classroom, and are part of virtually each experience. The adults' thoughtful use of language (precise choice of words, tone of voice,) provides an ongoing model for its acquisition and use.
In a very real way, language and its use mark human beings as unique on the earth. The experiences in the Children's House can offer each child abundant opportunities to explore the richness of this exquisite tool. Dr. Montessori developed only three language materials for the early childhood classroom: *Metal Insets*, which aid in the development of handwriting skills; *Sandpaper Letters*; and the *Moveable Alphabet*, which fosters reading, handwriting and composition skills. She advocated introducing objects and pictures as needed throughout the classroom, and they appear regularly in the language area.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary lessons occur throughout the environment and are essential to building new concepts and exploring the world, including the verbs of Practical Life (pour, scrub, paint) and the adjectives of Sensorial (blue, loud, rough, soft, tall), as well as the names of tools, materials and activities, e.g., cup, pencil, balance beam, triangle. Children continue to broaden their vocabulary as their experiences grow and they encounter such nomenclature as pentagon, minuend, Poland, vertebrate, igneous.

In the Language area, vocabulary activities begin with looking at objects and pictures, and naming them. Matching activities follow, including Montessori's three part cards which feature matching pictures and labels. Oral expression activities foster vocabulary growth, as students engage in sequencing story cards, retelling information from a story, and composing stories. Their social interactions help promote development as well with show and tell, practicing grace and courtesy, and appropriate conflict resolution skills.

Preparation for handwriting

The act of formal handwriting is preceded by many fine motor and orientation activities found in the Toddler and Children's House classrooms. Fundamental motor skills as well as left to right orientation are developed mostly in Practical Life and other pre-writing activities. In addition, specifics of pencil grip (3 fingers, open thumb, appropriate distance from pencil point to gripping fingers, lightness of touch) are presented by lessons with the *Metal Insets*. This Montessori material allows the student to create shapes with individual insets mimicking the lines necessary for letter formation. Formal letter and numeral formation are presented via tracing *Sandpaper Letters* and *Sandpaper Numerals* with the fingers. Chalkboard activities offer another presentation and strategy of drawing straight, slanted and curved lines. Formal handwriting presentations commence with pencil and paper presentations of lower case letters grouped by initial stroke, presentations of upper case letters in alphabetic order, and presentations of numerals. At first, the children write letters and numerals in isolation by means of practice sheets, then a notebook, followed by words and complex numerals. Generally by the mid-point of the third year, handwriting practice is accomplished by daily journaling. Proficient handwriting skills prepare the child to record ideas, work, and assignments readily, without the thought process getting hung up on the mechanics of writing them down.

Phonics, pre-reading, reading

Montessorians believe that phonics skills provide children essential keys for reading, unlocking meaning from written words. Pre-phonics activities include recognizing and creating patterns, listening to music and environmental sounds, and experiences that orient attention from left to right, top to bottom. Lessons with the *Sandpaper Letters* allow the child to absorb, kinesthetically, tactilely and aurally, the shape and sound of each letter. Lower case letters are presented, and while the letter may be named during the lesson, the primary focus is always on its sound. Activities progress from the sound in isolation to the initial sounds in words, then final and medial sounds. Objects and pictures are introduced to facilitate listening for sounds, as well as word-building with the moveable alphabet. The *Pink Series* is at the core of the Children's House experience: phonetic three-letter words. Later, the *Blue Series* will introduce consonant blends and some consonant digraphs, phonetic polysyllabic words. Additional activities include *I Spy*, blending sounds together, and the *Vowel Tree,* which creates real and nonsense words by changing the vowel sound in the middle. Phonemic awareness activities include *Now Say It*, when a teacher offers a word such as "raincoat", asks the child to repeat it and then say it without one of its parts, e.g., without the rain, or the coat, or the /c/. Sight word activities also acquaint the child with non-phonetic words, essential to reading, which cannot be sounded out. Finally, reading phrases and sentences lead to easy readers for some of the more advanced students. Literature experiences offer reading enrichment. As children hear chapter books read to them, they can be introduced to plot development, character development and motivation. Listening to stories from and about other cultures also enlarges vocabulary and promotes awareness of diversity.

Meta-language

Language can be used to discuss language itself. In the early childhood classroom examples include rhyme, grammar, and punctuation. Rhyme can be experienced using pictures as well as objects, poetry, and group games. Grammar activities introduce the children to "naming words" and "doing words". If a child is excited by these, there are additional lessons to represent the other seven parts of speech. These are presented to students who express a particular interest in this area. Usage instruction begins with employing a capital letter for the child's name. Other examples of capitalization that are presented include proper nouns, e.g. specific people and place names, dates, the beginning of sentences, and titles. Punctuation can begin when journaling, as the child becomes acquainted with the commas used when writing dates and the periods at the ends of sentences. Other language arts activities, such as work with go-togethers and opposites, involve classifying and using language for analysis.

Mathematics

Dr. Montessori discovered that children learn best by manipulating concrete objects rather than by rote memorization. She created didactic apparatus in order to link abstract mathematical ideas with the pre-operational minds of three to six year olds. The concepts of the materials are isolated and are taught using a three period lesson; introduce, practice, and check for understanding. In the Children's House math curriculum, students work with concrete materials first and then move onto abstraction. First they are introduced to a fixed quantity, the *Red and Blue Rods* physically represent 1-10, then a symbol for the numbers 1-10. Next, they are introduced to a loose quantity such as individual spindles for counting. Math begins with simple ideas then moves on to complex.

Numeration

The first formal math lessons in the Children's House are ones teaching numeration. The child is initially introduced to the idea of cardinal numbers by working with the *Red and Blue Rods.* Activities with the *Red and Blue Rods* help him to perceive the total amount achieved by a group or a set. The sections of the rods are alternately painted red or blue. Each of the odd numbers is red, while the evens are painted blue, giving the child an indirect exposure to odd and even.

Once the child demonstrates proficiency with the cardinal function of numerals, he is introduced to the numerical function. He uses the *Sandpaper Numerals* to recognize the written symbols for numbers. When the child shows readiness, he is presented the association between the quantity and the symbol. The child practices associating the two by labeling the quantity counted on the *Red and Blue Rods* with a card bearing the symbol of that number. The experiences with the materials transfer to real life situations when, for example, he is setting out plates and chairs for lunch.

Next, the child is presented the ordinal function of numbers. He recognizes sets in a sequence through his work with the *Spindle Boxes* which also introduce the concept of zero. He continues his work with numeration by working with *Table Top Rods, Colored Bead Bars,* and the *Memory Game*. These materials serve to give the child further practice in numeration. He

then revisits the idea of odd and even by working with *Cards and Counters,* to practice one to one association. Numeration is taken further by work with the *Teen Boards, Ten Boards,* the *100 Board* and the *Short and Long Chains;* materials, which give the child an opportunity to learn and practice place value and count in sequence.

Computation and Operations

The preschool child is introduced to the decimal system through work with the *Golden Beads* for a visual exploration of place value using concrete representations of units, tens, hundreds, and thousands. They are given lessons of the *Nine Layout* and *45 Layout*. Through these activities, the child begins to see the formation of patterns: each number becomes greater by one unit 1-9 or one unit often 10-100, and so on. He is given a concrete and sensorial experience in exchanging quantities such as 10 units for one 10 bar. Counting out the units, tens, hundreds, and thousands teaches the child the hierarchy of the decimal system. It also prepares him to compose numerals, which is the next lesson presented, followed by the task of performing operations with the golden beads.

The child is first exposed to the concept of mathematical operations by working with the *Banker's Game.* He first adds complex numerals by combining the *Golden Bead* materials. He learns the operation of addition by combining quantities to make a larger quantity. The Montessori math curriculum is presented in order from concrete to abstract and the easy to the difficult. Making larger quantities is a concept easier for children to grasp, therefore, multiplication is the next operation presented. The child is first shown how to multiply complex quantities by three because multiplication is in essence addition of equal sets. By handling the quantities and seeing how they become larger, the concept of multiplication becomes a part of his memory.

If and when the child is successful with the *Banker's Game*, he is introduced to materials which reinforce the concepts that he is learning, and gradually become more abstract. He continues to practice addition by using *Colored Bead Bars*, the *Snake Game, Table Top Rods*, the *Addition Strip Board*, and finally practices memorizing addition facts with the *Addition Charts*. All of these materials allow the student to see the patterns of addition, recognizing how different sets of numbers can equal the same quantity. Children who continue to show interest in the math materials are introduced to various materials which reinforce multiplication such as the *Bead Bars*, the *Multiplication Board*, and *Multiplication Charts.* At times, the child's interest and ability leads him to more advanced concepts of subtraction and division. For these concepts, the student again uses the *Banker's Game* to learn foundational skills. He then practices subtraction facts by using the *Subtraction Strip Board* and the *Subtraction Chart,* and division facts by working with the *Division Board* and the *Division Charts.*

Geometry and Measurement

The math curriculum begins with lessons in dimension and geometry. The *Pink Cubes* along with the *Brown Prisms* and *Cylinders* are a concrete introduction to dimension. These materials also support visual problem solving by allowing the children to make adjustments when the materials won't fit or line up precisely. The *Geometric Cabinet* is also presented. This consists

of six drawers filled with plaques and insets of geometric shapes, including circles of varying diameter, differently angled triangles, polygons, rectangles, and quadrilaterals. The very young child is introduced to the nomenclature of the plane geometric shapes with these drawers, while the older children begin to explore angles and sides. The *Triangle Boxes* are another tangible experience of plane geometry as it relates to isosceles, equilateral, and scalene triangles. Finally, three-dimensional geometry is taught through the use of *Geometric Solids*. These include the cube, prism, pyramid, cylinder, ovoid, and sphere.

Measurement is introduced by using nonstandard measures such as the *Red and Blue Rods* and *Tabletop Rods*. The children measure each other and objects in the classroom using these materials. Upon reaching consistency and care in detail, the students use standard measures to complete measurement surveys within the classroom and school. Practical measurement activities are also a part of the Children's House curriculum with standard measurements being used in cooking projects and estimated measurements used for serving snack.

Culture

Our approach to the cultural curriculum is to give children a sense of the world they live in and a means of organizing the knowledge they acquire. The cultural curriculum is organized into three main categories: Science, Geography, and History. In sharing these lessons with the children, we always start with what is known and familiar and work outward; this gives the children a point of reference. During these presentations, we begin with a big picture concept and work down to the details.

Science

The 3-6 classroom offers many opportunities to develop the children's scientific mind. This happens first through exploration, as the child is encouraged to look, listen, feel, smell, and sometimes even taste. This sensorial exploration leads to recognizing, ordering, and then classifying of information. The child begins to make observations and give voice to them, using scientific terminology like, "the magnetic force of this magnet is so strong it can pass through the table!" He makes discoveries on his own, identifying for instance, that a cylinder rolls really fast down an incline. The child learns to classify things using scientific criteria such as the states of matter being solids, liquids, or gasses. He formulates questions about observations, "Why does the turtle sleep so much in the winter?" And the child utilizes principles of scientific inquiry to answer questions about observations, such as figuring out why some objects sink and some float.

In biology, we give children a framework for classifying things: living and non-living, plant and animal, vertebrate and invertebrate. These concepts are introduced with real things first. For the living and non-living introductory lesson, a child is asked to find something in the room that is living and bring it to the rug. Characteristics of living things are explained: needs food and water, reproduces, grows, etc. Often the child will bring a plant, a classroom pet, or a classmate to the rug. Further extensions may include a sorting work of picture cards and finding pictures of living and non-living things in a magazine to create a chart. To introduce

botany and zoology, the children begin by observing real plants or animals, and then learning about the parts of a plant or individual vertebrate groups.

For the earth sciences, we cover topics like climate, recycling and conservation. We have bins in our classrooms for recycling paper and plastic. We celebrate Earth Day, with a nature walk or special art project such as making paper from recycled paper. Weather reports are given by the children, observing the outdoor environment from the classroom window and then checking the temperature gauge in the hallway. Some children offer predictions based on their observations. We might do a unit of study on weather, focusing on extreme conditions like tornados or floods, as these are things that the children might encounter in the Midwest. We also read about weather in books and conduct experiments like creating rain gauges or wind catchers.

The sensorial and practical life materials in the Children's House classrooms lend themselves to demonstrating physics and chemistry concepts. Materials like the sound cylinders and the Montessori bells give children experiences with sound, determining similarity and gradation. Thermic tablets are another sensorial activity that demonstrates how materials can retain heat or coolness. Concepts such as magnetic and non-magnetic, sink and float, and displacement are presented to the class and then placed on the shelf for daily use. These are hands on experiments that can be repeated again and again by the children. In our Extended Day Program, we introduce more advanced science concepts that can be built on over time. When introducing magnetism, for example, the children are first given the opportunity to work with a single magnet and are introduced to the idea of "magnetic force." The next lesson demonstrates the strength of magnetic force, highlighting what sort of materials it could pass through. A later experiment demonstrates how magnetic force could be used to move something, such as a plastic boat containing a magnet, through water. For chemistry concepts, an experiment such as the states of matter would be demonstrated in a formal presentation, and the concept might also be covered during a cooking project when the kids mix together *liquid* fruit juices, which are later frozen to create *solid* popsicles. In the practical life area, a lesson on penny polishing using lemon juice leads to a conversation about chemical reactions. Finally, a scientific guide created for the older students allows them to create their own experiments using the scientific method as well.

Geography

Through the Children's House geography curriculum, we work to develop the child's awareness of his place in the world. Similar to all of our cultural lessons, we begin with the big picture and work down to the details. Areas that are generally covered in the Children's House include physical, cultural, political, and economic geography. Using concrete materials, children are taught geographic terminology such as island, lake, and peninsula. Children then begin to use new terminology correctly in conversations, such as when talking about a place they've visited. Teachers develop the students' observation skills by taking nature walks and having photographs and maps on the walls of the classroom. They begin to recognize and find familiar land and water forms, identifying them by name. The children also practice classifying things using geographic criteria, such as using cardinal directions on a compass and finding these

directions within the classroom, such as the east and west walls. Concrete experiences of these geographic concepts provide children with a framework for later abstraction.

Children's House teachers initially introduce the physical world with a lesson on the Earth called Air, Land, and Water. The children are told that the Earth is made of these three elements. Students help gather samples from the classroom or outside and place the samples in containers. Word labels are read and later pictures depicting the elements are sorted. Next we introduce the Land and Water globe, in which the land is made with rough sandpaper and the water is smooth and blue. Lessons on the continents may follow using a globe and puzzle maps. Teachers may also cover land forms at this point, using fillable land and water forms. Later in the year, units of study on biomes may be introduced through books, models of animals, three part pictures and informational cards, photographs, etc.

Cultural lessons are woven into our school year. At times, these correspond to calendar events like Chinese New Year or holidays that are significant to a classmate; other times these aretied into a unit of study about a continent. As a school community, we celebrate Halloween and Valentine's Day, with celebratory parties and lessons happening in our classrooms. Other cultural lessons throughout the year are presented based on the cultures represented within each classroom. The Children's House celebrated Persian New Year this year, with help from an Iranian student and his family. The family brought in examples of a traditional table setting and helped the students to decorate eggs. We learn and celebrate the differences between people in our *World of Difference* curriculum, which involves lessons on skin colors, physical abilities, family structures, etc. Additionally, we display cultural artifacts in each classroom, such as prints of famous paintings, wall hangings or decorative fabrics from a variety of cultures.

The Children's House begins developing an awareness of political geography in the children using political maps and flags, American symbols and current events. When learning about a continent's countries, the children are introduced to the names of the countries as well as the flag representing each. They enjoy recreating the flags, sometimes doing research on why certain colors are used or what the symbols mean. The children also learn and practice the Pledge of Allegiance for our In-School Celebrations. We talk about what these words mean and how they represent us as a community. Finally, presidential, gubernatorial and mayoral election years provide us with a great opportunity to talk about voting and how the process works. The children practice this skill by holding their own elections when we vote on events in our classrooms, such as the naming of new classroom pets.

Economic lessons in the Children's House are covered when we learn about money and coin values. We have books available in the classroom about coins and use basic three part cards to teach vocabulary. In a more advanced activity, a child may be given an assortment of coins and asked to tally up the value. When learning about other countries, the children also enjoy seeing money from those countries and practice sorting it by value or design. Photographs of people and places in the world often act as prompts for discussion about people's needs and how money plays a role in whether people get their needs met.

History

Understanding history involves understanding time and putting things in sequence. At the Children's House level this all happens in relation to the child himself, starting with what is most familiar, which is his own life, and branching out from there. In our history curriculum we work towards developing the child's ability to make proper time references, understand these references, and develop an internal clock with relative accuracy. The child observes the passage of time, noticing how different a friend might look in school pictures from years past. He begins to identify things using historical terminology saying things like, "dinosaurs lived millions of years ago." The child also begins to classify things using historical terminology. Sorting artists' prints, for example, allows the child to categorize pictures with people dressed in old fashioned clothes versus clothes that look more modern. The child begins to formulate questions about things they observe, wondering, "Why do people get wrinkly when they get older?" Finally, children begin to utilize principles of historical inquiry to answer questions. Students may discover, that the Hawaiian Islands were formed when a volcano erupted, realizing that new islands can still be forming today when volcanoes erupt.

Time is introduced through experiences and conversations first. The child learns that he comes to school in the morning and gets picked up in the afternoon. The line time bell is rung at 11:00 a.m. and signals the end of the morning work time. Lunch happens after outside time and is followed by nap or rest. The concept of sequencing has been introduced to the child in other areas of the classroom such as the pre-reading materials. It is once again presented as part of the history curriculum through time of day picture cards. These might be photographs of current students at various times of the day or manufactured cards, which the child looks at and puts in order.

Days of the week and months of the year are introduced to children in a variety of ways. Activities, such as updating the classroom calendar, are jobs shared by all of the students and may be referenced as part of line time each day. Songs about the days of the week and months of the year are learned and practiced regularly. Materials which involve reading and sorting the days of the week and the months of the year are available on the shelves as well. The children begin to get a sense of the passing of time, as they remember that gym class is on Mondays, Spanish class is on Tuesdays, Wednesdays we have creative movement class in the afternoon, etc. All of the children see and eventually participate in birthday celebrations, putting together a personal time line which is displayed in the hallway.

Once children have a sense of their own place in time, they can begin to appreciate the experiences of other people and things. It is always exciting for the students to see the life cycle of a moth play out in our classrooms. Every spring each classroom receives a cocoon and, with time and care, a Cecropia moth emerges. While we patiently wait for this day to come, the children enjoy exploring classroom materials like the life cycle of a butterfly cards, as well as objects and books which show the metamorphosis. Other classroom materials and lessons lend themselves to conversations and units of study that develop the children's understanding of history. For example, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day provides us with the opportunity to learn about civil rights and how things have changed in our country since the end of segregation.

Fine Arts

Spanish

Spanish instruction is part of our classroom experience each week. The children join the Spanish teacher at her rug for an individual or small group lesson, during which the Spanish teacher engages everyone in songs and games in Spanish. She often brings interesting teaching materials or artifacts, which further captures the children's interest. We have developed a Spanish curriculum which introduces the children to basic vocabulary and includes lessons on color names, foods, greetings, etc. Our Spanish teacher approaches Spanish lessons in the same way that we, as Montessori teachers, approach lessons, beginning with something that is familiar before introducing something that is new. She is sensitive to the needs of the students and adapts lessons as needed.

Music

As a school, we believe that music plays a critical role in the development of a child. Music is incorporated into our classrooms and is often used as a method for teaching concepts such as the names of the continents or how to say "hello" in different languages. Naturally and spontaneously, children often break into song, repeating familiar tunes or creating their own. Throughout our history, we have sustained a commitment to provide a formal musical experience for our students. Once a week, our music teacher travels to each classroom to conduct a class for all of the children on Line. Musical concepts such as rhythm, melody, harmony, form, and expressive quality are taught through the Orff Schulwerk method. This method involves singing, playing instruments, moving to music, and creating music. Materials used include poems, rhymes, songs, games, dances, and instrumental pieces. The third year (kindergarten) students receive an additional thirty minute class once a week in the afternoon.

Physical Education

In the Children's House environment, Physical Education is addressed with gross motor activities within the classroom, on the playground and during formal gym classes. In the classroom environment, children participate in activities with a balance beam, scrubbing, heavy lifting and yoga cards. During community line time, the children practice walking heel-to-toe and engage in movement games. On the playground, they practice jumping rope, riding tricycles, as well as engaging in free play on a variety of gym structures. Once a week, each class has a designated half hour gym time in our Great Room. Our Physical Education teacher leads them through a structured gym class beginning with a warm-up and ending with a cool down. She follows a curriculum developed by the school and supplements it with additional activities. Gym lessons include team building, sports skills, and dance. The children in our Extended Day and Explorers programs attend additional gym classes for thirty minutes, one day a week.