

# Cottage Curriculum



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## Our Mission and Values

The St. Andrew's Cottage, a year-round early learning program of St. Andrew's Episcopal School, exists to offer a quality learning experience to young children from families in the greater New Orleans area without regard to race, religion, gender, or ethnic origin for admission.

The mission of our larger school community is as follows: *St. Andrew's Episcopal School strives to educate the mind, body and spirit of children by promoting academic excellence and social responsibility in a small, nurturing environment that values faith, reason, and diversity.*

To that end, St. Andrew's Cottage is designed to nurture the development of all children in attendance. The curriculum is child-driven and reflects scholarly literature regarding early childhood enrichment and mental health. Our goal for each participating child is two-fold: to fulfill his/her potential for intellectual, social, and emotional functioning; and to be prepared to succeed in school and in life.

## Program Description

Our 12 month early childhood program serves children 12 months to 3 years of age. The program is open Monday – Friday, 7:30 am to 6:00 pm. Nutritious meals and snacks are included in the cost of tuition. Our program is designed to support the total development of young children through high-quality interactions. Through intentionally planned activities and learning center experiences, teachers facilitate the development of cognitive, expressive and receptive communication skills, as well as fine and large motor skills.

In full realization that children learn as much from their interactions with each other, social interaction, indoor and outdoor play, and small group experiences are a valued part of our curriculum.

Several components work together to create an inspiring and appropriately challenging setting:

- Guiding questions identified by teachers for areas of study each week;

- Carefully selected and intentionally presented materials presented in learning centers with which children can explore, manipulate, and create;

- Books, stories and songs that build depth in relevant topics, areas of interest, and areas of study;

- Whole group experiences that build a shared vocabulary for understanding new concepts;

- Facilitated play experiences that shape pro-social behaviors, including self-regulation techniques, conflict resolution strategies, richer schemas of play, and rich contextual knowledge;

- Language modeling practices that support a growing expressive language in young children;

- A collegial setting among teachers in the program that supports the value of supporting curiosity, exploring concepts deeply, and the continuous growth and learning of adults and children

Parents will receive regular feedback on their child's interests, friendships, growth and progress and are asked to share information that supports our knowledge of and service to the children in our care.

The faculty of the Cottage view ourselves as partners and collaborators with parents in creating a dynamic and responsive program for children.

## Academic Program

Our teachers develop lesson plans that support children's growth in all domains. Teachers observe and document children's interests, and then plan ways to expand children's knowledge and vocabulary in both small and large group experiences. The Reggio Emilia and Project approaches influence our curriculum. In our 3's program, the children participate in enrichment classes that include Srt, Chapel, Music, PE, and Spanish.

## Communication

Parents receive regular feedback on their child's interests, friendships, growth, and progress and are asked to share information that supports our knowledge of and service to the children in our care. Teachers and parents have an opportunity to communicate at drop off and pick up and through weekly newsletters. Twice a year, teachers meet with parents to discuss the child's development in communication, gross and fine motor skills, personal-social skills, and problem solving. Together, parents teachers, and leadership set age-appropriate goals that support the child's learning with love, compassion, and patience.