

Curriculum Options (*EC 8261; 5CCR 18273*)

The Early Education Department embraces essential principles of child development aligned with the California Preschool Learning Foundations and the 12 Principles of Child Development of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Our preschool programs use one of the following four district-approved educational approaches (outlined below) that are recognized by NAEYC and California Department of Education as valid, high quality and sustainable approaches to the education of young children. We selected these approaches because the four are well suited for preschool students, developmentally appropriate, attuned to individual uniqueness, and responsive to the social and cultural needs and context of our students.

The Creative Curriculum for Preschool is an environmentally based approach to facilitating children's learning and development. It is grounded in the research and theories of Piaget, Vygotsky, Gardner, Smilansky, Maslow, and Erikson. Its foundation is a commitment to a concept of open-endedness, which establishes that the process is more important than the product. Essential to children becoming successful learners is learning to use process skills to gain knowledge and apply it to new situations. Some of the core process skills focused on is: observing and exploring, problem solving, organizing information, communicating and representing facts and knowledge, and connecting ideas, thoughts and images.

The Montessori Philosophy is a brain-based, developmental approach that uses multi-sensory, hands-on learning techniques that allow children to explore their world to develop their own innate strengths and abilities as joyous learners. It is an educational philosophy that believes that nature has designed children to be ready, eager and exceedingly able to learn. The Montessori Philosophy emphasizes the growth of social-emotional skills through purposeful community activities, self-expression, and collaborative work.

The Project Approach involves long-term investigation of topics that are of interest to our young learners. Project work complements and enhances young children's learning from spontaneous, constructive play as well as from intentional instruction. Projects support and develop children's knowledge, skills, dispositions, and feelings through long-term investigations and reporting in a community setting.

The Reggio Emilia-Inspired Approach respects and supports children's capabilities to construct their own knowledge. Reggio educators' collaboration with children and adults is evident in the following aspects of their educational philosophy: participation; on-going professional and staff development; collegiality; school environment; family and community involvement; documentation; research; study and experimentation; and social constructivism.