

## **Spring Garden Academy**

Two Locations: 18<sup>th</sup> and Spring Garden Sts. / 17<sup>th</sup> and Tioga Sts.

Mailing Address: PO Box 15191, Philadelphia, PA 19130

Telephone: 215-563-9192 215-226-1000

Email: [info@SpringGardenAcademy.org](mailto:info@SpringGardenAcademy.org) Website: [www.SpringGardenAcademy.org](http://www.SpringGardenAcademy.org)

Telephone: (215) 563-9192 (215) 226-1000 Fax: (215) 563-8116

### **PRESCHOOL CURRICULUM STATEMENT 2014-2015**

The curriculum statement listed here is primarily for our preschool program although the overview and statement about learners applies to all of our programs. For Elementary school, please set up a meeting with the director to discuss our whole child emphasis, commitment to differentiation, themes and essential questions, and specific curriculum pieces.

#### Overview

Spring Garden Academy serves families who work or live in Philadelphia. Our families represent the economic and social diversity of our community and parent churches, Highway Tabernacle and Resurrection Life. While enrollment is open to all families, the school is committed to a Christian world view in practice and its curriculum and asks that parents support us in our direction.

Through our curriculum, Spring Garden Academy endeavors to teach character traits and equip children with the developmental skills necessary to build the total child – physically, emotionally, socially, intellectually, and spiritually – in order to become a productive and contributing member of society. We ask parents to partner with us in this process.

#### Children as Learners

We believe that young children best learn by guided exploration through play with some direct instruction. Therefore, our schedule reflects a balance of exploratory learning, small group work, and some large group sessions. Teachers also ask for the children's input in the selection of themes and activities and build off of their interests in planning and classroom activities.

Goals for individual children are defined throughout the year. The teachers begin by observing and assessing each child's development and then include targets and activities for the individuals in their lesson plans. This happens on a regular basis and is reported to parents at least three times a year.

#### Curriculum Resources and Content

Our main curriculum guide is *Creative Curriculum*, which is supplemented by a Bible-based curriculum that adheres to developmentally appropriate practices for preschool

children. A strong supplement to our curriculum is the *All about Preschoolers: An Environment Based Curriculum*. We are committed to a strong emphasis on phonological and phonemic awareness skills and use a variety of resources to build literacy into our program. Finally, we use *Conscious Discipline* as a framework for classroom management and the teaching of social-emotional skills. Other curricula resources are used to ensure that all learning standards have been met for the classroom.

### Teaching Strategies

Classes select a theme or study to explore together as each child works on specific skills. Teachers help the children learn by using discovery centers, defined in the curriculum and through best practices in the field, that are designed to allow children to learn while they play and explore. Each classroom has at least eight centers with enough materials for all children to actively engage in their environment. These materials are selected to meet quality standards for early childhood programs. Materials and some defined activities are added to centers on a regular basis. Teachers also prepare some small group instruction, particularly around language, math, and Bible. Large group activities primarily happen during a short morning circle time and weekly music and chapel.

While children explore, the teachers guide the learning through questions and extension activities. We invite parents to become part of this process by volunteering in our classrooms during exploratory play time.

Finally, learning takes place during classroom routines as children learn self-regulatory and social skills. This is an important part of our program that derives from *Conscious Discipline*.

### Learning Standards

We have aligned our curriculum to Pennsylvania's Early Learning Standards for Preschool. To ensure that the curriculum is properly used to reflect learning from across the standards, teachers are required to indicate the learning standards during the lesson plan process.

### Teachers' Role

The teacher is the primary person responsible for delivering curriculum that meets the needs of the individual children in her classroom. To ensure that each teacher is properly supported in this critical role, Spring Garden Academy is committed to providing ongoing professional development through college course work, workshops, teacher meetings, and ongoing coaching and mentoring.

### Parents' Role

We encourage parents to become part of the classroom, not just as volunteers, but as active participants in their children's learning. We invite parents to work alongside

teachers to learn new skills and contribute their own life learning. We ask for feedback on the learning that takes place at home and in the classroom. We also document the child and group learning so that parents have evidence of what happens in the classroom when they cannot be present.

### Assessment

Teachers assess and document children's learning by observing them during exploratory play and small group activities using a variety of methods (photographs, running records, work samples, and checklists). Teachers use the assessment information to plan learning activities and to share information with parents informally and at formal conferences.

We are adopting the *Teaching Strategies* tool for the assessment and documentation process. This tool helps us better plan our instruction and share our feedback. It is also aligned to the *Creative Curriculum* materials. We are also moving toward the implementation of a more formal portfolio process for each child. This portfolio will move with the child as he or she progresses through our programs and, in time, will be electronically stored.

Spring Garden Academy also assesses the curriculum and teacher implementation of the curriculum on a regular basis to ensure the best quality for our children.