

## **Steele Creek Preschool Academy: Education through the Arts**

The Steele Creek Preschool Academy is an arts-integrated preschool program that provides a visual, exploratory, engaging environment where children learn through visual and performing arts and thematic concepts. The preschoolers have a unique opportunity to experience dance, drama, and music with field professionals. Arts education connects and integrates life skills, literacy and learning through creative experiences fit for all learners.

The developmentally appropriate lessons, activities and projects involve the variety of learning styles and help the students develop their whole self: creatively, emotionally, socially and physically. These include:

**DRAMA:** allows learners to discover through role-playing and creative interpretation, empowering children to be the storytellers of their own lives. Drama will be part of the daily curriculum through dramatic play, story drama, dress-up, puppetry, creative choice, and transforming text from storybooks to images, allowing for fun, dynamic and interactive creative learning.

**CREATIVE MOVEMENT & MUSIC:** Dance emphasizes self-expression as well as the development of gross motor skills. Children will practice storytelling through dancing, using motivational and imaginative tools such as theme related stories, props, free dance and dance games, singing and movement. Students explore musical concepts such as musicality, rhythm, pattern, tone, mood and tempo while learning music appreciation and introductory instrument education.

**VISUAL ARTS:** A vital aspect to any arts-integrated preschool is the early introduction of visual arts, which is incorporated daily by looking at art, talking about art and expressing ideas through art. Art concepts such as line, color, pattern and shape are taught through engaging lessons, which are followed by multi-sensory, hands-on art experiences based on monthly themes and incorporating the art concept being explored. A wide range of tactile materials are used and processes such as cutting, painting, printing, building, sculpting, gluing and drawing are employed to emphasize the creative process.

**SCIENCE AND DISCOVERY STATIONS:** Weekly stations and lessons encourage children to use, explore, question, predict, analyze, relate and document experiences in age-appropriate lessons.

**LEARNING LABS:** Daily learning labs focus on math and literacy skills to prepare children for success in kindergarten and beyond. Specially designed curriculum teaches math skills including counting, sorting, measuring, and classifying and teaches literacy skills including letter recognition, phonemics awareness, story sequencing and writing.

**SOCIAL SKILLS:** A safe and nurturing environment emphasizes personal creativity and expression for every student. Students are encouraged to grow in social and behavioral skills. Examples are exhibiting empathy towards others, learning to listen and cooperate, showing signs of independent thought and following directions.

**Preschool of the Arts Staff:** Each classroom includes a team of teachers dedicated to providing a safe, nurturing and engaging learning environment. The program is staffed with well qualified, educated and trained professional teaching artists, who possess expertise in their arts concentration and outstanding character and compassion. Chosen teachers must complete a minimum of 30 hours of training throughout the year in areas such as child development, re-directive discipline techniques, positive reinforcement, appropriate lesson planning, best practices, safety and emergency procedures, CPR/First Aid, and YMCA child protection procedures.