



RUACH ALEF רוח



early
childhood
center

Developmental Milestones

Ruach means spirit! Our Ruach program serves children 4-5 years old, who will be going to Kindergarten the following school year. PreK children are of the perfect age to blend spirit or positive energy into everything they do. This could be through the enthusiasm they have regarding learning, an excitement for exploration, or a positive attitude when it's time to clean up. In addition, children at this age are full of wonder as they develop a sense of trust in their teachers, a sense of competence in themselves, and the ability to initiate activities alone or in a group. Throughout the week the PreK children have the opportunity to: engage in teacher initiated curriculum in the morning and afternoon that meet the Minnesota Early Learning Standards; participate in swimming lessons, have music and art with a specialist; and develop and use their large muscles during various motor times. Children in the Ruach classrooms have time throughout the day to explore and play with materials in the classroom during free choice time. This could range from developing fine motor skills with the computer, puzzles, scissors, or different writing tools, building elaborate towers and roads with blocks on the carpet, looking at books or retelling a story to a friend, pretending with dramatic play materials, or experimenting with materials in the sensory table. In addition to this, naptime is shortened to a half hour rest followed by quiet activities; children are expected to clean up after themselves after meals and play; and children demonstrate independence with meal times, toileting, hand washing, and dressing, all to ensure the practices that are used meet what is developmentally appropriate for PreK age children and ensuring kindergarten readiness. Daily notes are not used in the classroom to document a child's individual day, however checklists are used to denote children's sleeping and eating patterns and an overview of the day is posted on the classroom door. We are confident that children participating in our PreK program will be cognitively prepared for Kindergarten. Throughout the day the interactions we specifically work with PreK children to develop embrace these cognitive needs, while also emphasizing the social and emotional needs of the children.

The Ruach daily schedule and weekly curriculum is designed for children to develop the following skills during the year:

- Trust and emotional security through recognizing and describing their own emotions, using their words instead of actions to express their emotions, exploring a wide range of emotions, beginning to understand and respond to others' emotions, and responding to praise, limits, and correction.
- A positive self concept by beginning to experiment with own potential and showing confidence in own abilities; and recognizing an awareness of self as having certain abilities, characteristics, preferences, and identities.
- Ability to easily interact with a group of children, familiar adults, sustain interactions by cooperating, helping, sharing, and expressing interest and seek adult help when needed for emotional support, physical assistance, social interaction or approval.
- Problem solving skills using their words and other constructive strategies.
- Curiosity by showing an eagerness and interest in discovering and learning new things and feeling comfortable taking risks and showing persistence.
- Imagination and invention as they try out various roles in play or with make-believe objects; discover various ways to use materials, and approach tasks and experiences with flexibility.
- Listening by understanding non-verbal and verbal cues, listening with understanding to stories, directions, and conversations, following three step directions, and listening to and recognizing different sounds in rhymes or familiar words.

- Communicating needs, wants, and thoughts through non-verbal gestures, actions, expressions, or words, using language for a variety of purposes, including: initiating, asking questions, and responding in conversations with others, and using an increasingly complex and varied vocabulary.
- Emergent reading skills by responding to stories being read or told, guessing what will happen next in the story, retelling information from a story, recognizing and naming some letters of the alphabet, and beginning to associate sounds with words or letters.
- Emergent writing skills by understanding that writing is a means of communication, using scribbles, shapes, pictures, or dictation to represent thoughts or ideas and begin to copy or write own name.
- Ability to use a variety of large motor equipment, increasing body strength, balance, control, coordination, flexibility, and stamina, and moving body through a space with a purpose.
- Utilizing small muscles with control, coordination, and using hand-eye coordination to perform a variety of tasks, and explore with tools such as spoons, forks, knives during mealtimes, and crayons, puzzles, paintbrushes, and scissors.