

**John Michael Kohler Arts Center**  
Preschool Yellow Class Program for Children Ages Four and Five

The John Michael Kohler Arts Center's Yellow Class, for ages four and five, is a four-day preschool program that focuses on learning through the visual arts, music, and movement with an emphasis on socialization and learning skills. Through an exploration of the arts we facilitate the *development of essential and critical thinking skills* in their early learning experiences. Our caring, nurturing environment is a perfect setting for children to discover, learn, and grow.

**The Arts**

Development of art concepts continues during the year through our arts-based curriculum. Line, shape, color, and texture are explored through a variety of open-ended, child-directed art projects. In addition to these planned art projects, children are encouraged to easel paint, work with clay, and experiment with the wide variety of art media that are made accessible in the classroom. The contemporary art in the galleries provides the inspiration to explore ideas, medium, or technique. The gallery walks offer an opportunity for children to express their own feelings and ideas about the art. Looking and learning, questioning and understanding, and creating and assembling, are all everyday components of our preschoolers' daily experiences.

**Reading and Writing**

The Reading Corner is a quiet area of the classroom where children can get cozy in a beanbag chair with a good book. Quality books that focus on a wide variety of interests promote emergent reading skills. We also take reading out of the corner and offer books in every area of the classroom for the children to discover. You may even find us reading in a tree in the garden! Writing happens at the Drawing and Writing Center. The alphabet is posted and a unique variety of drawing and writing tools are available to encourage writing and pre-writing skills.

**Letter of the week**

Each week the children focus on the letter of week working their way through the year through the arts and the alphabet. The letter box holds items from home and the classroom that begin with the letter, children paint the letter of the week at the easel and the alphabet "frieze" is displayed above the mirrors in the classroom. The letter of the week inspires art projects, music and dance, and many activities in the classroom. The last day of class the letter Z is celebrated as the children collaborate to decorate the large letter together.

**Sign Language**

Signing and singing go "hand-in-hand" in our program. We sign as we sing the Good Morning song every day. The children learn to sign the alphabet, the days of the week, colors, and more.

**Music and Movement**

Music and Movement are part of the daily curriculum and are often enhanced by a FOOTLIGHTS performance. Large motor skills are developed through creative movement and dance and include locomotor skills, balance, and body awareness. The children may choreograph their own dances. Many styles of music from around the world form the background for learning about rhythm, beat, tempo, and recognizing the sounds of instruments. Let's make our own instruments and strike up the band! Shall we sing the song *piano* (softly) or *forte* (loudly)? A *crescendo* or *decrescendo* makes the days of the week song more interesting!

## **Math**

The calendar makes counting fun. Counting together assists in number recognition. Children “predict” the date by looking at the calendar to see what yesterday’s number was. We often count the children in line for a gallery walk introducing other languages including German, Spanish, and Chinese. The math center offers a wide variety of math manipulatives including counting bears, unifix cubes, pattern blocks, lacing numbers, weighing and measuring tools, and more. Examples of art projects involving math: shape collages, clay numbers, and pattern stamping, just to name a few.

## **Science**

The Science Center is a place to discover and explore nature, animals, planets, color mixing, and many wonders of the world. Discoveries of color mixing, weighing, volume and more keep the children investigating science. Outdoor exploration and field trips to experience nature enhance the art of science. Many natural materials are used in our art projects and children learn about respecting and enjoying the trees, woods, beach, gardens, rivers, lakes, and more.

## **Cultural Studies**

The letter of the week may lead to a month-long unit on a country. For instance J is for Japan, which leads into K for Kimono, L for Landscape, and M for Mount Fuji. The entire classroom will showcase the culture through the children’s art, fabrics and textiles from Japan, chop sticks with rice in the sensory table, Japanese music and movement, and the unit culminates in a tea ceremony complete with ceramic tea bowls the children have made filled with real tea and “sushi” served on their ceramic sushi tray. Immersing the children in a culture develops their knowledge as well as skills for tolerance and acceptance of other cultures and beliefs.

## **Daily Life**

An important part of the day is Discovery Time when children have choices to discover in the classroom, socialize and interact with each other, and learn to negotiate and respect others as they play together. The kitchen and drama/dress-up area provides the props for creativity. The corner “G is for Grocery Store” is not only a place to play but to learn about healthy foods and waiting in line to check out. Coupons are cut and grocery lists are “written” in emerging writers’ style. A hospital, post office, travel agency, or restaurant are other examples of favorite dramatic play environments in the classroom.

## **The nurturing continues...**

Four- and five-year-olds need plenty of nurturing and encouragement, positive feedback, hugs, and high-fives! We provide an environment where children explore and discover, a place to feel comfortable, confident, and cared for as they become more independent and learn to love learning.