

Educating the Whole Child

The ultimate purpose of education is not only to enable individuals to assimilate successfully into their culture, but to empower individuals to transcend their culture in order to make a positive impact and help it to advance.

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THE INTERNATIONAL PEACE ACADEMY

Educating the Whole Child

Oneness-Family School



The Children's Peace Garden

ages 3-6

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Community Meeting

Friday mornings the entire school gathers together for songs, community games, class presentations, and seasonal celebrations. Parents are invited to join in the fun.

Spring Tea

Each spring, the children invite their parents to school for a special Community Meeting performance and a tea party. The children manifest their lessons of grace and courtesy and their appreciation for their parents as they serve tea and home-baked goodies and cookies. The morning culminates in a performance that integrates different cultural elements from the continent they have been studying.

Field Trips

Hikes in Rock Creek Park, boat rides on the Potomac, trips to the Smithsonian, Baltimore Aquarium, and the Kennedy Center as well as excursions to other cultural sites of the Washington, D.C. region complement and manifest the yearly studies.

Festivals

School-wide festivals such as United Nations Day and our Winter Solstice Festival of Lights honor the different cultures and religions. In the spring, the children bring forth their appreciation of the earth at Earth Day and their studies of the physical world at the Science Fair.

Manifestation

Manifestation is the crystallization of Academy and Self-Discovery where students bring together what they have learned about the world with the knowledge of their own talents, interests, and ideals. Performances, field projects, classroom displays, school fairs, and outreach programs are some of the many ways they use their skills, energy and insights. The students gain a sense of competence and achievement, and learn to see themselves as valuable contributors to the community.



The Day's Schedule

8:30-9:00 AM: Social Bonding

9:00-9:30 AM: Morning Circle Time. Each class gathers for a short ceremony, which may include the ringing of a Tibetan bowl, the lighting of a candle, singing a song, and honoring the silence within. This serves to set the tone of the day, and to help the children become aware of their personal power to control their voices and bodies. Circle time continues with the introduction of materials or a specific subject, singing, role playing, foreign or sign languages. During this time children may share their feelings and ideas and model peaceful ways of interacting with each other.

9:30-11:45 AM: Morning Work. Morning Work includes sensorial and academic Montessori materials, Practical Life skills (preparation of snack, care of themselves, care of environment...), Music, Art, and Movement.

11:30 AM-1:15 PM: Lunch and Recess. Lunch lasts an hour with recess either before or after lunch.

1:15-3:15 PM: Rest Time/Afternoon Work (Pre-School). A small ceremony of music and story telling helps to quiet the pre-school child. Rest time lasts about half an hour, or longer for the younger children who nap. For those pre-schoolers who do not nap, their afternoon work period begins around 2 PM and includes foreign languages, creative movement, arts & crafts, cooking, storytelling, creative play, gardening, nature walks. and other outdoor activities.

1:15-2:15 / 2:15-3:15 PM: Specialists /Afternoon Work (Kindergarten). Some of the specialist activities include Foreign Languages, P.E., and Movement. Afternoon work activities include lessons, creative time, and preparing for upcoming festivals.

3:15 PM: Clean up & Closing Circle. This end of the day get together may include sharing and good-bye songs.

Philosophy

In their early years, children's natural senses of wonder, curiosity and imagination are cultivated. For them, learning is a fun, natural process that fosters independence, concentration, and physical coordination. The best environment for very young children is one in which they have an opportunity to safely explore and learn about themselves and the world. They learn from their relationships with friends and the environment. This leads to a growing awareness of, and appreciation for, life and the world around them.

In the Peace Garden, we believe that education is an art. To truly educate a child, his or her heart and will must be touched, as well as his or her mind. By honoring the child's natural gifts, we believe we are being true to Maria Montessori's declaration, "Follow the Child," as well as fulfilling the complex needs of the modern student.

Our program offers a unique blend of Montessori and Waldorf philosophies as well as techniques gleaned from other educational approaches. Presenting materials and ideas in a variety of ways enables us to address the many different learning intelligences represented in the class. While a traditional Montessori approach offers a well-rounded preparation for academics, we feel it is balanced by acknowledging the child's needs for fantasy and imaginative creativity. Using aspects of various educational philosophies, we have developed a rich creative arts program to compliment the broad range of skills that Montessori education imparts.



Physical Education & Creative Movement

Formal classes in creative movement, yoga, Chi gong, physical education, and cooperative games in the Peace Garden help build physical coordination and stimulate the growth of the brain. Fundamental skills are taught, such as learning how to throw and catch a ball. Through activities such as parachute play, students develop cooperation, teamwork, and sportsmanship. As they progress, students experience a wonderful sense of balance and positive feelings about themselves.

Visual Arts

(Fine Arts, Crafts, Handicrafts)

Young children need plenty of opportunities to express and explore through the arts. They are developing their academic mastery. Their creativity is already flourishing. The arts help students with fine motor control, focus, and concentration.

Watercolor painting helps express subtle feelings. The children usually work with primary colors. This allows them to discover how colors are made with different color combinations. When sculpting with beeswax, the children delight in the sweet smell and smoothness of the medium. Many children sit for long periods of time stretching and molding the wax. This activity helps to center them.

Drawing lessons are based on color, shapes and inner feelings. Colors are introduced as unique personalities such as “red is a fiery friend” and “yellow is a cheerful character”. The children are encouraged to fill the entire page with color, following nature’s example. Block crayons, made of beeswax, are used to create natural, simple designs. Form drawing is another artistic activity. Through the repetition of a design, the children develop greater control of their hands and fingers. These exercises foster inner poise and balance, strengthen the imaginative faculties and unfold an appreciation for order and symmetry.

Handicraft activities center the child. Through the learning of these skills, they strengthen their hands and create beautiful, useful items.

Our goal at Oneness Family School is to educate and nurture the whole child. Academic pursuits are balanced with experiences in self-discovery; children are encouraged to develop their emotional intelligence and communication skills, and to gain appreciation for nature and for universal values such as kindness and generosity. Students also participate in many events, which are manifestations of all they have learned in the academic or self-discovery areas. In these ways, children in the Peace Garden grow as healthy, well-balanced, whole students, ready to reach out and explore their world with open arms.



3 Parts of the Curriculum: Academy, Self-Discovery & Manifestation

Academy

A journey of exploration of the world around us.

LANGUAGE

Stories, poems, readings, creative poetry, writing, telling stories, vocabulary, handwriting, communication skills

MATH

Processing, practical skills, problem solving, computation

SENSORIAL

Developing the senses, learning to discriminate sizes, shapes, colors, textures and order in preparation for later academics

CULTURAL / SCIENCE

History, Geography, Biology, the Sciences:

The integration of them all, originating from the great lessons about the history of our world

PRACTICAL LIFE

Developing practical skills, improving fine and gross motor control, promoting self-awareness, self esteem, order, independence, concentration and coordination

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French, Spanish– foreign languages as a gateway to communicating and understanding people of other cultures

OUTDOOR EDUCATION

Appreciating the core essence of nature, identification of plants and animals in the natural world

HEALTH

Body awareness and knowledge

FIELD TRIPS

Leaving the classroom environment, exploring places connected to the curriculum

Self-Discovery

A journey of exploration of the world inside of us.

SELF-REFLECTION

Guided meditations at circle time, time for individual reflection, peace corner, sacred items, morning circle, silent moment, activities for inner peace

TEACHING VALUES AND VIRTUES

Peace studies, discussions – using stories, plays, role plays, songs

INTERPERSONAL SKILLS

Conflict resolution, peer mediation, cooperation, communication and relationship skills

DRAMA

Acting, singing, choreographed dancing, skits in the classroom, performances at community meeting, story extensions, role play

Performing Arts

(Drama, Music, Dance)

Children in the Peace Garden experience the performing arts daily through singing, finger plays, games and dances, storytelling, and dress-up. In specialist classes, they explore different instruments, dances, and theatrical roles using their imagination and creativity. They learn basic rhythm and melody using simple instruments, and create songs that express their souls. Throughout all these activities, they learn how to create and cooperate with one another. The flavor of the activities emerges from our curriculum themes and seasonal activities, and often culminates as a performance for parents in the classroom or at a school festival.



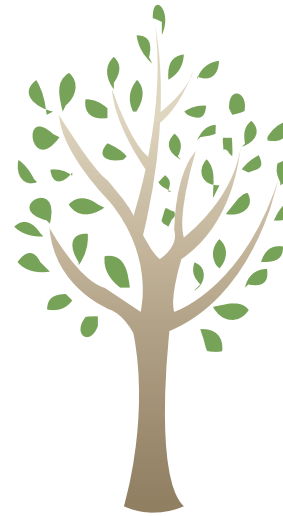
Virtues & Values and Interpersonal Skills

Values education is integrated into all aspects of the Peace Garden day in an experiential way, as students at this age learn about virtues from the lessons of daily interactions with their peers and the modeling of teachers. Storytelling, role playing, singing and the study of world religions introduce commonly held values such as kindness and generosity to the class. Children naturally awaken to their inner hearts through stories and songs.

Role plays allow students to find solutions to common classroom issues, such as sharing materials or taking turns when talking. Drawing from the common elements of world religions, we inspire and guide the child in making decisions and choices for their higher good and the higher good of all. Students are encouraged to appreciate one another for acts of kindness at the closing circle, and throughout the day.

At this age, one of the most important works the students are involved in is learning how to interact with others. They are awakening to the outside world and seeking the tools with which to successfully express their hearts and communicate their needs. Peaceful resolutions to conflicts are practiced with role playing, using "I" statements to express feelings (such as "I would like a turn on the swing", or "I feel sad when you take the crayon I was using").

Conflicts are resolved in the Peace Corner with the help of an adult or older student mediator if needed. As they interact with their peers and practice these essential skills, the students learn how to express their needs and respect the needs of those around them, thus learning essential lessons in how to be friends and how to be part of a community.



MUSIC

Rhythms, songs, singing, instruments, reading music, creation of own songs/music

WORLD RELIGIONS

In conjunction with our cultural studies, we expose students to differences and similarities in belief systems around the world to promote tolerance and understanding

COOKING

Cultural food preparation

ARTS / CRAFTS

Visual arts, painting, sculpture, form drawing,

HANDICRAFTS

Sewing, finger knitting, weaving,

MOVEMENT

Brain gym, eurhythmy, creative movement

PHYSICAL EDUCATION / SPORTS

Team games, individual skill-building

Manifestation

A culmination of Academy and Self-Discovery work brought forth to the world.

COMMUNITY MEETING

Songs, dances, skits, community games, seasonal/holiday celebrations

FESTIVALS & SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

United Nations Day, Festival of Lights, Earth Day/Week, Peace Run, Science Fair, Spring Tea, Field Day, Art show Auction,, seasonal celebrations

PERFORMANCES

Within each classroom, at community meetings, at festivals, organized around a central theme, talent shows

EXHIBITS & DEMONSTRATIONS

Art shows at school, libraries, and local businesses; special class presentations, peaceful conflict resolution demonstrations

BUDDIES – KIDS HELPING KIDS

Manifestation of the multi-age classroom, interaction between the age levels

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Identifying the needs of others in the world, helping those in need, manifesting values learned, practical applications.

AFTER SCHOOL CLASSES

Music lessons, soccer, art classes, drama, chess, dance, mad science

The Curriculum

(Please also see pages 4 and 5)

Our curriculum is divided into 3 parts:

◆ Academy

Traditional academic subjects representing the child's exploration of the world around him/her.

◆ Self Discovery

The arts and other subjects representing exploration of the child's inner world.

◆ Manifestation

The crystallization of Academy and Self Discovery representing how the child views him/her self in the world and how he/she chooses to participate in it.

Academy

In the Peace Garden classrooms, children work with materials independently, have individual lessons, and engage in large and small group activities. Children gradually master new skills at their own pace, according to their individual interests, needs and abilities. The opportunity to choose which activity to work on enhances the excitement of learning. A mixed age environment provides a natural model for social development.

Language

From the moment of birth, we are members of the human community. As members, we inherit the legacy of the human language; it is our birthright. A baby learns to recognize his or her parents' voices even before birth, in the womb. As a child develops, it is language that forms the core of his or her emotional growth and spirit; it is



Self-Reflection

Circle time and the Peace Corner, and the Sacred Items are vehicles that naturally transport the Peace Garden student toward a place of self-reflection. These tools help the child discover the power of silence, connect with a natural sense of wonder, and provide a respite from the clamor of the bustling, modern world. Children discover that silence is a gift and something to cherish, not only in specific times, such as circle, but in the spontaneous moment.

During circle time, the whole class spends a moment each day "making silence". A candle is lit, a child rings a chime, and students are asked to listen to the silence together. The Peace Corner is a special space where the child can go to contemplate some mystery or unique object related to our current or seasonal theme. The Sacred Items are special objects used in ceremonies and the honoring of the season. The children can touch these objects, which inspire awe and set a tone for the classroom.

Self-Discovery

In the early years, children are gradually awakening to their deeper selves, their gifts, their potentials and the outer world. As they expand their awareness, they begin to understand the needs of others, the sacredness of life, and the ability to embrace a community consciousness. The following are some of the methods we use to assist the child in this process.



language that helps the child take his or her rightful place in the family of human kind. It is with this understanding that we seek to develop language as a means of communication in all areas of the Peace Garden classrooms.

Children are fascinated by language. A 4-5 year-old loves to play with words and discover the names of things. They delight in sounds and textures, and are especially sensitive to auditory as well as tactile information. Therefore, at this level, reading and writing are introduced simultaneously in a hands- and ears-on fashion, tailored to each child's individual skill level.

Students trace letters made out of sandpaper, which provides the opportunity for them to have a tactile sense of the shape and to develop the sound of a letter, as well as developing their motor skills and memory. They develop visual discrimination and the left-to-right orientation needed for reading by doing matching games and sequencing activities. They write and read their own words using a wooden, moveable alphabet, learning how letter sounds combine phonetically into words. And, they practice the fine motor control needed for writing by tracing metal insets. In the Language area, children are nurtured and encouraged to naturally develop skills in the following areas: visual and auditory discrimination, vocabulary enrichment, and introduction to sounds, beginning writing, and reading.

Through art and other fun activities they begin to learn how to write letters correctly, recognize word families, and begin reading. Children in the last year of this program are involved in a kindergarten program which readies them for first grade.

Mathematics

Even very young children have the beginnings of what Dr. Montessori called a “mathematical mind”. They have the capacity to almost unconsciously absorb mathematical concepts through work with concrete materials. Every area of a Peace Garden classroom supports mathematical ideas such as one-to-one correspondence, longer and shorter, larger and smaller. A sense of order and sequence prepare the very young child to think mathematically. The actual math area contains materials designed to introduce basic mathematical concepts and processes through a concrete, hands-on approach. Learning happens in three stages: first, a concrete understanding of quantity is given (such as seeing the difference between one bead and one hundred beads), next, the symbol for the quantity is introduced (the number 100), and finally, the association between the two is made.

Students in the Peace Garden are introduced to the decimal system, learning numbers and place value using hands-on manipulatives. They discover the fundamental concepts of addition and subtraction, and are even introduced to concrete examples of multiplication and division. They explore measurement, fractions, money, and time. They work with physical representations of graphs and sets, and learn the names of basic and complex shapes in geometry. In all activities, students are encouraged to explore and discover for themselves the inner workings of math, thus laying a solid foundation as they journey from concrete towards abstract mathematical thinking.

Field Trips

In the Peace Garden, children are learning about the world around them, and blossom as they experience the beauty and wonder of nature as much as possible. The students go on field trips out into the larger world at least once a month. Wherever possible, trips are connected with the curriculum themes. For example, while studying flowers, the class might go to the National Arboretum to see the different types of flowers there. Or a trip to the Natural History Museum might accompany a study of rocks and minerals. Field trips also help students understand and celebrate the changing of the seasons, or various cultures and religions of the world. In this way, students have first-hand experience with the amazing and wonderful diversity of our planet, and develop a profound sense of respect for all the earth has to offer.



Practical Life

An area particularly attractive to the students is Practical Life. The activities offered in this area help to prepare them for everyday life while stimulating the natural desire to improve fine and gross motor skills and develop coordination. The activities are designed with a sense of beauty to attract the child and are frequently changed as our curriculum themes progress. Practical Life includes care of self (hand washing, clothes folding), care of the environment (table washing, sweeping, polishing), grace and courtesy (manners, greeting and sharing), and life skills (pouring liquids, transferring solids, using various utensils, sewing, and food preparation).

Foreign Languages

Peace Garden students are exposed to non-English languages as a way to help them appreciate other cultures and to help foster an attitude of tolerance and global unity. Language classes are held twice a week and give students elementary vocabulary in a language as well as expose them to elements of another culture, through songs, food, clothing, and games. At this time, Spanish and French are offered as separate classes, but other languages (such as the teachers' native languages – Italian and Swedish – and Sign Language) might also be introduced in the classroom.

Sensorial

The Sensorial area, unique to the primary level, invites the children to learn by exploring through their five senses. At higher levels, this area is incorporated into the Science area, but at this stage, children's use and mastery of their senses is a key area of development. Using various materials, they learn to distinguish differences and similarities in shapes, sizes, and geometric forms by sorting and classifying. Touching and matching objects and fabrics of different textures develop the tactile sense, which students can do using the fabric box. Similarly, musical instruments and related materials help refine the auditory sense. Tasting, smelling, and color discrimination are also refined. Discrimination and classifying skills are essential for development of the mathematical and scientific mind as well as of a sense of order.



History & Geography

History and geography introduce the child to cultural awareness, the concept of time, and each individual's relationship to the physical world. We introduce the concepts of air, land and water before we begin exploring the globe and the continents. The Colored Continent Maps and the Colored Globe help the child to have a better understanding of world geography. Different cultures are celebrated and highlighted in our annual United Nation's Day celebration. Each year we focus on the in-depth study of two continents through learning about customs, music, dress, food and dance. We encourage parents and guests to come and share different cultural knowledge with us.



Science

Science in the Peace Garden is designed to stimulate an awareness of the interconnectedness of the natural world. The curriculum uses a hands-on approach that fills the child with the awe of nature. In our studies we start from real life experiences with nature. We spend time outside everyday, collecting nature objects such as leaves, rocks, or samples of soil and water to observe. The classrooms have small pets for students to care for and observe, as well as visiting pets relating to classroom studies.

Classification activities, picture cards, and puzzles of nature (depicting elements of nature such as the parts of a tree, leaf, flower, or various animals) introduce children to scientific names and information about the variety and abundance of nature items in their world. Studies in science include topics such as Rocks and Minerals, Magnets, Dinosaurs, The Ocean, Vertebrates and Invertebrates, and Life Cycles of Animals and Flowers. Throughout the year, we observe the changing of the seasons and the changing of the world around us to bring forth in the child an awareness of the natural world.