

Overview of TCA's Kindergarten Curriculum

"The entire object of true education is to make people not merely do the right things, but enjoy the right things – not merely industrious, but to love industry – not merely learned, but to love knowledge – not merely pure, but to love purity – not merely just, but to hunger for justice." ~ John Ruskin, *The Crown of Wild Olives*

Classical Education and Charlotte Mason

A classical education advances through three stages (grammar, logic, rhetoric) to impart basic knowledge of core subjects, to train students to think critically, to instill in them a lifelong love of learning, and to equip them with the learning tools which can be applied to any field of study or endeavor beyond their school career. While having adopted a classical model of education focused on the liberal arts, The Classical Academy desires to also integrate the teachings of Charlotte Mason, a turn of the century British philosopher and educator. Her opinions about education shaped her belief that children are born persons thirsty for knowledge with a need to feast on the best in great books, great art, great music and the wonders and beauty of the natural world.

In our desire to accomplish our mission, our curriculum is carefully considered and chosen through the lens of our philosophy and our Core Values.

Language Arts

Reading and writing are such complex tasks, it can seem like a miracle such small children become so accomplished. We use the Spalding Method in language arts throughout the elementary grades to help us achieve this great work. As a complete language arts program, Spalding integrates instruction in listening, speaking, spelling, reading, and writing. In kindergarten, students begin with phonemic awareness - focusing beginning sounds, ending sounds, print awareness, and rhyming. Students progress to learning phonograms, a single letter or combination of letters that represent speech sounds.

At school, we practice phonograms, handwriting, spelling, and elements of grammar daily. Your work with them at home will accelerate their launch into reading. We begin sending home books as each child begins decoding words and it is one of the most exciting moments of the year. Every day at school, we share beautiful books that help develop a taste for meaningful literature. They will learn about the story elements of a narrative and the text elements of informative writing. Making reading with and to your child part of your daily routine at home is essential in this beginning phase.

Math

During the year, your child will learn numeracy skills through hands-on experiences with manipulatives, movement, exploration, and discussion. Our daily Dimensions Math lessons include a whole group interactive discussion to introduce new concepts and skills, practice on the new skills and a review of those previously learned. Lesson follow a concrete to pictorial to abstract continuum to develop conceptual understanding. Each lesson also includes mental math to build number sense and written practice to build fluency. As proficiency is gained, the concepts progress to problems that require kids to go beyond superficial understanding to critical thinking and problem solving. Your child will have the opportunity to practice and extend these new skills in small math group and independently. Concepts and skills in Dimensions Math include:

- identifying common shapes
- numbers to 100
- counting by 5s and 10s
- addition and subtraction within 10

History, Science and Geography

We follow the Core Knowledge Sequence for history, science, and geography, which is rich in ideas and fosters curiosity about places both familiar and unfamiliar in the larger world. Kindergarten begins with geography lessons about maps and globes, the seven continents and the oceans. History lessons are centered around reading historically based narratives by authors who are passionate about their subjects. Throughout the year we study many of fascinating people who shaped our nation including Native Americans, presidents, inventors, explorers, and scientists. In science, students interact with their world through hands-on experiments and observations about the five senses, plants, animals, and weather.

Character Education

“Knowledge become evil if the aim be not virtuous.” ~Plato

The formation of virtue is the chief end of a classical education. Character conversations are incorporated into every part of our day and highlighted, especially through the use of story. Throughout your child’s time in kindergarten they will learn about respect and responsibility, diligence, gratitude, generosity, courage, loyalty, compassion, forgiveness, hope and wonder. What we know about ourselves as people, is that we are creatures of habit. It is up to the adults in children’s lives to help them discern good habits from bad habits. We work continually throughout the year to build productive habits that support our students in becoming more mature. Charlotte Mason held that children were born naturally curious, but that we must help them develop “helpful habits” like attentiveness, respect, and truthfulness in order cultivate virtue and develop a strong moral compass.

In the words of Charlotte Mason, we choose our curriculum, and structure our days in order to reflect our belief “...that a child is a person in whom all possibilities are present – present now at this very moment ... our aim in knowing this is to give them a full life. Education is a life. That life is sustained on ideas... we must sustain a child’s inner life with ideas just as we sustain the body with food.”