Parent Handbook

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A. Program Overview

Welcome to the Young At Art Museum Preschool. The Museum Preschool employs an art & literacy focused, museum-based, experiential, educational pre-school program designed to prepare children for kindergarten.

What we believe...

- Art Influences Learning

Most people are aware that art enhances a child’s creativity, imagination, and self-esteem, but did you know that art also influences intellect, critical thinking, and learning?

Our current conventional education system places great emphasis on academic development; as a result, art and music programs are reduced or even eliminated. When, in reality, if we are to truly improve academic achievement a stronger focus on art is necessary. Art educators and child development specialists recognize that the arts are not a "frill" or enrichment activity; art is basic to the foundations of learning.

Through art, children learn complex thinking skills and master developmental tasks. Art engages a child's senses & emotions, his or her body and mind, to develop cognitive, social, emotional and sensory-motor skills. Art can also be a cooperative learning experience that provides pleasure, challenge, and a sense of accomplishment.

Art provides children opportunities to practice skills within a developmental stage with all their senses... learning, experimenting and eventually mastering the skill, at their own rate.

Art is an outstanding tool for teaching not only developmental skills, but also academic subjects such as math, science, culture and literacy. The most effective learning takes place when children do something related to the topic they are learning. When children study any given concept, they learn it better and retain it longer if they do art that reinforces that learning. This information has been recognized by teachers since the time of Confucius, when he said:

"I hear and I forget. I see and I remember; I do and I understand."

- Art promotes literacy

*YAA is a museum and public library, from the design of the building to the activity within it; we understand the profound effect that the melding of Art & Literacy can have on children & families.*

When children listen to stories and view artistic illustrations they develop expressive and reflective skills that enhance storytelling and future creative writing, promote print awareness, spatial relation skills, visual literacy, and verbal creativity. Art tools such as paint brushes, clay cutting utensils, crayons and markers introduce pre-writing experiences, as early learners grasp tools that later help them hold a pencil for writing.
Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS)*

VTS is “how” we help children hone their art and literacy skills. In VTS, teachers show children works of art and then facilitate discussions about the work.

*People learn 90% of what they know from looking. Give them the chance to talk about what they see, and their language skills improve. Ask them to probe and to back up ideas with evidence, and their thinking skills grow. To help someone learn, start with what they are good at. Then ask them to get even better at that by providing the right challenges. Their success breeds confidence. Their skills transfer. – VTS co-founders cognitive psychologist Abigail Housen and veteran museum educator Philip Yenawine.

VTS is a research-based, child-centered teaching method that uses art to develop visual literacy, critical thinking, and oral and written language skills.

- **Art Studies & Shows**

At the Museum Preschool, on-going, structured art projects introduce children to famous artists, art techniques and real art mediums. Regularly scheduled art exhibits display children’s work in true art-gallery format! Once a year students participate in an art exhibit. Parents are invited to see Museum projects features.

- **Authentic Art and Music**

The Museum Preschool believes the environment is the “third teacher” in the room. Children benefit from exposure to displays of professional art and beautiful music. So listen, you will hear classical music, cultural/ethnic international beats and lively rhythms to accompany the children’s day. Similarly, the artwork displayed around the room is either the work of children, displayed in a respectful artistic manner, or “real” art by real artists.

Children love art because it’s fun and provides them with authentic self-expression: The freedom of choice, thought, and feeling. At YAA we understand that art also teaches important skills for living and develops young minds… join us as the art-venture begins...

B. Involving Families

- **It's the Process**

The YAA curriculum incorporates art across the curriculum and also encourages art as a family activity & value. Parents are encouraged to enjoy their child's art in various ways - at shows, in classroom displays and in individual art portfolios. We often hear parents get excited about their child’s art and talk about how surprisingly beautiful it is. While products are often stunning, we call attention to the process. It is the process of doing art that is so important to learning. We invite every family to expand their value of art and to keep art supplies at home, designate a household area for "messy art," and become more involved generally in art.
• Culture and Traditions

At Young At Art Museum Preschool we choose to celebrate all children enrolled in our program, their families and their backgrounds. In order to do this, we invite each family to share a little about themselves throughout the year (your classroom teacher will supply a sign-up calendar for this purpose). This might mean sharing a special food, a traditional ethnic celebration or a culturally significant art project with children. Each way you choose to share about your family will help children understand their friends and thus accept differences in all people.

• Conscious Discipline

The Museum Preschool strives to foster an environment of love, trust, creativity, and respect. With this in mind, we invite parents to learn with us and their children about the concepts and principals inherent in the Conscious Discipline technique of interacting with each other.

Conscious Discipline is a comprehensive preschool program that integrates social-emotional learning and discipline. Conscious Discipline empowers adults to consciously respond to daily conflict, transforming it into an opportunity to teach critical life skills to children. Conscious Discipline is evidence-based, and was named as a national model for character education by the Florida State Legislature.

• Parent/Teacher Communication

We believe that good communication between parents and teachers is essential for the success of our students and our school. Good parent/teacher communication will ensure that we are able to identify and meet the needs of our students and the expectations of their parents.

In addition to the ongoing dialogue between parents and teachers regarding daily school happenings, we will also utilize various other forms of communication to keep parents informed about individual, class, and school news. The following are some of the ways in which we will communicate events, progress, and general news about our students and our preschool:

- Email: Teachers will use email to relay information to parents about issues such as school closings, reminders, school news, and announcements for special activities at the preschool. All teachers have Young At Art Museum email accounts, and parents may email their child’s teachers at any time with questions or concerns.
- Telephone: All teachers and staff are available to speak with parents by telephone when needed. Parents will be provided with all relevant preschool phone numbers.
- Conferences: Parents may sign up for one-on-one conferences with their child’s teachers to discuss developmental progress and set individual goals. Conferences will be offered twice a year for VPK and once a year for Pre-K.
- Preschool Events: Open houses, family activities, and special events will also provide parents with the opportunity to engage in further dialogue with their child’s teachers.
o Parent Questions, Suggestions, and Concerns: We encourage parents to discuss any questions or concerns they may have with their child’s teachers and the preschool director. We do ask parents to reserve discussion of more detailed matters for after school hours, so that the teachers may ensure the safety of the children during class time and offer their full attention to parent concerns. We encourage parents to share any relevant information concerning their child that will help teachers to better meet that child’s needs, such as major changes in a family situation or recent changes in the child’s behavior or disposition.

C. School Readiness

• Florida Early Learning and Development Standards

When developing curriculum, lesson plans and activities for children the Museum Preschool adheres to the Florida Early Learning and Development Standards. The Standards help to guide teachers as they plan intentional and appropriate experiences for young children based on an understanding of each child’s developmental accomplishments and anticipated next steps. To view these standards go to http://flbt5.floridaearlylearning.com/

Florida’s Early Learning and Development Standards are organized into eight domains; we address these domains as we work with you to monitor your child’s growth and development.

 o Physical Development
 o Approaches to Learning
 o Social and Emotional Development
 o Language and Communication
 o Scientific Inquiry
 o Social Studies
 o Creative Expression Through the Arts

• Broward County Public School Kindergarten expectations

We also monitor and document each 4-year-old child’s progress toward the Broward County Public School school-readiness criterion. Upon entering Kindergarten, teachers like to see 5-year-olds who can...

 o Count out loud to 10
 o Recognize numbers 0-10
 o Recognize capital and lower case letters of the alphabet
 o Recognize the sound that each letter of the alphabet makes
 o Recognize and draw the 4 basic shapes – circle, square, triangle, rectangle
 o Recognize and write their first name (starting with upper case, followed by lower case)
 o Button, zip and begin to tie
 o Color with crayons and cut with scissors
 o Use listening skills: Pay attention and follow directions
 o Understand sharing and taking turns
• **Child Growth and Development Portfolios**

The Museum Preschool uses developmental and age-appropriate criterion to monitor each child’s growth and development. Teachers construct a portfolio documenting each child’s development with pictures, original art work, and anecdotal comments. Twice a year, families are invited to formally review the portfolio and discuss their child’s development. Portfolios are sent home at the end of the year.

**D. Museum Preschool Learning Environment**

• **Days and Hours of operation**

8:30 – 5:00 PM Monday – Friday, every day the Broward County Public schools are open.


Early Childhood camp are offered on no school days)

**Daily Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:30 AM</td>
<td>Arrival/ Playground</td>
<td>Families drop off children, speak with teachers and say good-by in our outdoor play space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:50 – 9:10 AM</td>
<td>Table Top Time</td>
<td>Table top activities are based on the four learning areas: print, phonics, math, and language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:10-9:25 AM</td>
<td>Circle Time</td>
<td>Children will welcome each other, sing good morning songs. Calendar activities and bathroom time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:25-9:50 AM</td>
<td>Museum Time</td>
<td>Each day they take a guided tour of different museum exhibits. The children get hands on experiences with art and expression.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:50-10:10 AM</td>
<td>Snack</td>
<td>All food come from home for healthy and happy nutritional experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:10- 10:25 AM</td>
<td>Circle Time</td>
<td>Circle time provides a time for listening, development, of attention span. Promoting oral communication, and learning new concepts and skills such as letters numbers and words.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:10-11:30 AM</td>
<td>Story Time Literacy Learning</td>
<td>This time serves to reinforcement for learning as well as practice development, prewriting and emergent reading skills. We use books, puppets and musical stories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30 AM</td>
<td>Front Desk Dismissal</td>
<td>Students that leave at 11:30 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30-11:45AM</td>
<td>Music Time for All Day Students</td>
<td>Afternoon Dancing Fun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45-12:30PM</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
<td>All food comes from home for healthy and happy nutritional experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30-1:30PM</td>
<td>Relaxation Time</td>
<td>We offer a period of relaxation children are encouraged to choose quiet activities to do on their mats. Books, puzzles and relaxation music are offered during this time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30 – 2:30PM</td>
<td>Library (Day 1)</td>
<td>Every child will receive a library card and take a trip to the library to check out a book and enjoy a story!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Art</td>
<td>Open-ended art materials are offered for children to choose and explore, with no adult agenda.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cooking</td>
<td>Children follow artist-inspired recipes and create master-chef master pieces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>Accessing art through science concepts is fun and enlightening.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Movement</td>
<td>Walking, dancing, skipping with exploration of water, sand, grass and seeds the world is their canvas...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:30 PM</td>
<td>Playground Pick Up</td>
<td>Students that leave at 3:30 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:45 PM</td>
<td>Snack</td>
<td>All food comes from home for healthy and happy nutritional experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00-5:00 PM</td>
<td>Enrichment Program</td>
<td>Preregistration Required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enrichment Programs</td>
<td>Programs are preselected and scheduled throughout the school year. Classes subject to change.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
II. Admissions

A. Age Requirement
- Pre-K - Children must be three and toilet trained before the first day of school.
- VPK students must be four on or before September 1 of the school year.

B. How to Register
- Fill in Child Enrollment Form
- Submit registration fee
- Fill in and submit all forms listed on the “Child’s File Checklist”
- Request “Blue & Yellow” forms from your child’s pediatrician and submit them BEFORE your child’s first day of attendance.
- Receive Parent Handbook electronically and submit last page, signed.

C. Tuition
- A $500 deposit is due at enrollment to hold your child’s spot in the class. This will be applied to tuition.
- YAA preschool tuition is based on annual enrollment. Please see registration form for payment options.
- Cancellations made up to 30 days prior to first day of school year will receive a refund (less a $100 administration fee)
- There are no refunds, transfers or make-ups for absence, withdrawals, no-shows, or dismissals.

III. PROGRAM POLICIES

A. Child Drop off & Pick Up
- 8:30 am Drop Off In order to ease the daily transition from home to school, the Museum Preschool requires families to park and come into the building to drop children off; sign them in, have informal discussions with teachers and say good bye in an unrushed atmosphere. All children must be in the classroom prior to 9 am.
- Pick up Families should park and come and sign their child out. Only those authorized, in writing, will be allowed to pick children up. Preschoolers not enrolled in extended care
  - 11:30 AM Pick up in the lobby
  - 3:30 pm at the end of the day, again who are picked after 3:30 pm will be automatically charged a late fee of $5.00 plus $1.00 per minute.
  - 5:00 PM Pick up in the lobby
- Security Password: You will be asked to supply a security code, a word or short phase, on your registration form. If you call to add someone to your authorized pick-up list we will ask you your security code to verify your identity.
B. Birthdays

Birthdays are acknowledged as special days for individual children. Due to allergies, dietary concerns and time limitations parties are not celebrated in class. If you send birthday party invitations to be distributed at school, there must be one for every child in the class.

C. Dress

For security purposes and to ease family morning routines, the Young At Art Museum Preschool has a uniform policy of a YAA polo shirt. Uniform shirts are for sale in the YAA Shop; shorts, pants or skorts are acceptable and readily available in any department or uniform store.

While we offer smocks, please remember, in an art-based curriculum the likelihood for paint, clay and other materials staining clothing is always a possibility.

D. Open Door Policy

Any Broward County child care facility must provide parent access, in person and by telephone, to the child care facility during the facility's normal hours of operation. Our facility is open to you and our classroom phone number is 954-424-5059.

E. Security

The museum preschool takes your child’s security seriously and employs several security measures to ensure their safety at all times.

- Only you or those authorized by you in writing, will be allowed to sign your child out of school; until we get to know you, you will be asked for identification each time you pick up your child.
- The museum houses 50 security cameras monitored by a live security guard from 8 am to 6 pm daily and record up to 30 days of video.
- A live security guard is on duty all hours the preschool is open.
- The preschool room has a security code key-pad so that only those authorized can gain entry to the room.
- Preschool children will only enter public spaces when the museum is not open to the public (before 10 am).
- All preschool staff has been thoroughly background-screened by Broward County Child Care Licensing and Enforcement.

F. Child Abuse Mandatory Reporting

Teachers are mandatory reporters of suspected child abuse. Our staff is trained to detect signs of abuse in children. If we suspect abuse or neglect in the home, we must, by law, notify the Florida Abuse Hotline.
G. Medical Procedures

• Medical Emergency
In the event of an extreme medical emergency, Young at Art Museum staff will contact emergency medical personnel and will then contact the child’s parent or guardian. Based on medical personnel’s assessment, your child may be transported to a local hospital to receive further medical attention. Emergency Medical personnel will not honor requests to bring children to specific hospitals, doctors or medical establishments.
• Medical Information
Parents are required to notify YAA Museum Preschool of specific medical conditions, chronic behavioral problems and allergies at time of enrollment.
• Medication
If your child must take medication during camp hours, the medication must be packed in a sealed container, clearly labeled with your child’s name, age, medication, dosage and time. Medication will be stored in a locked cabinet in the preschool room and returned to you EVERYDAY. One staff member is assigned to administer medication.

H. Extreme behavior (i.e. hitting or biting)

We must consider the safety and security of all children and staff. If your child has extreme behavior issues, including any action that could or does result in injury to themselves, other children, volunteers or staff we will:

1st offense – Send home an incident report with a written “1st offense warning”.
2nd offense – Call a teacher/parent/director conference with a written “2nd offense warning”.
3rd offense – Written notice that if there is one more offense child will be asked to leave school.
4th offense – Immediate removal* from Young At Art Museum Programs

*No refunds are given if child is dismissed due to behavior issues.

I. Payment
Monthly tuition is payable in advance of service and is due on the 1st of every month. Any monthly payments not made by the 5th of the month shall be assessed a late fee of $35.00 every week that payment is late. You are responsible for payments each month regardless of the number of days missed whether from illness, vacation, or weather related problems. There are no refunds for non-attendance.

J. Emergencies

• Unusual Incident Policy- Please refer to registration information
• Hurricane – We follow broward schools protocol.
• Fire Drill – We are required to conduct monthly fire drills
• Museum Codes and Drills – Children safety is priority. To ensure the safety of students and staff the BCSO and the fire marshal has provided training on how to protect children during an emergency.
Receipt of Young At Art Museum Preschool Parent Handbook

__________________________________________ Date

This is to verify that I, ________________________________________, have read and agree to abide by the Young At Art Museum Preschool Parent Handbook.

__________________________________________ Child’s Name

__________________________________________ Parent’s Signature