



Curriculum

What children learn and how it is taught



Guiding Principles

The development of the Early Learning Coalition of Manatee County's model for evaluating curricula was informed by the following Guiding Principles, which are based on child development research:

- Children learn best when their physical and emotional needs are met and they feel safe and secure.
- Play is an important vehicle for children's social, emotional and cognitive development, as well as a reflection of their development.
- Children learn best at their own pace through active, hands-on interactions.
- Children construct their own knowledge in an attempt to gain an understanding of the world around them.
- Content should have meaning for a child. Interest and the building of understanding is what motivates children to learn.
- Learning occurs in an environment that is well planned and includes a rich variety of materials, choices, and opportunities.
- Children learn through social interaction with other children and adults.
- Children have different ways of thinking at each stage of development and their thinking will change over time.
- Teachers should guide learning experiences and ask questions that encourage children to think creatively and problem solve.
- Parents should play a meaningful role in the school and have a good understanding of its philosophy and goals.
- Learning is an ongoing process with four stages:
 - Awareness (exposure to and notice of events, concepts, people, and objects in the environment)
 - Exploration (figuring out or bringing personal meaning to events, concepts, people and objects)
 - Inquiry (developing understanding of events, concepts, people and objects)
 - Utilization (applying or transferring what has been learned about events, concepts, people and objects)
- Development occurs in a relatively orderly sequence, with later abilities, skills, and knowledge building on those already acquired.
- Development proceeds at varying rates from child to child as well as unevenly within different areas of each child's functioning. Development and learning result from interaction of biological maturation and the environment, which includes both the physical and social worlds that children live in.
- Children are active learners, drawing on direct physical and social experience as well as culturally transmitted knowledge to construct their own understandings of the world around them.
- Development advances when children have opportunities to practice newly acquired skills as well as when they experience a challenge just beyond the level of their present mastery.
- Children demonstrate different modes of knowing and learning and different ways of representing what they know.
- Curriculum shall demonstrate meeting the domains of the current standards of the State of Florida for children ages birth through five years of age and/or current VPK standards.