

The Acorn School at Vanderbilt University

Program Framework
and Pedagogical Articulation

www.vanderbilt.edu/child-family-center/child-care-center/index.php

“The creation of a thousand forests
is in one acorn.”



– Ralph Waldo Emerson

Mission

The Acorn School commitment to innovative teaching in early childhood education is founded upon a vision of children as capable and competent citizens of the world possessing an infinite capacity for wonder and discovery.



Providing
early childhood care
and education
to children ages
six weeks through
six years.



Philosophy

The Acorn School provides a Whole Child (mind, body, spirit) approach to early childhood care and education. Inspired by social-constructivist systems thinking theories, including the works of John Dewey, Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, Howard Gardner, and Loris Malaguzzi, educators know that children's conceptual understandings emerge through their engagement with the world.

Through primary adult and peer relationships, shared language and concepts become the tools which children use to absorb social practices and construct their knowledge of themselves and their community.



July 2020 – July 2021 Calendar

The Acorn School is open twelve months a year
Monday – Friday from 7:00 AM – 5:30 PM

The New School Year begins August 10, 2020 and ends August 4, 2021

Enrollment Packet is due June 1, 2020

Classroom Open House is August 7th from 5:00 PM – 6:00 PM

The Acorn School is closed on the following holidays observed by Vanderbilt:

Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, day after Thanksgiving, Winter Break, New Year's Day, and Memorial Day.

Additional dates of closure for teacher inservice:

August 6-7, 2020; September 28, 2020; February 26, 2021; and May 21, 2021

There is no tuition proration for dates of closure or child absences.

Curriculum

Teaching practice reflects the research-based understanding that play is essential to children's health and well-being, and foundational to children's learning. Emergent curriculum is framed by teachers and reflects their observation of the play schemas of children, demonstrating that activities responsive to children's interests provide meaningful learning opportunities.



Infant Program

Adults have influence over and responsibility for children's developing self-concept by the way they engage with, speak to, and respond to children.





Toddler Program

Young learners newly mobile are excited to explore the world with all five senses. With gentle coaching from nurturing teachers, children learn to manage big feelings and engage successfully with peers.





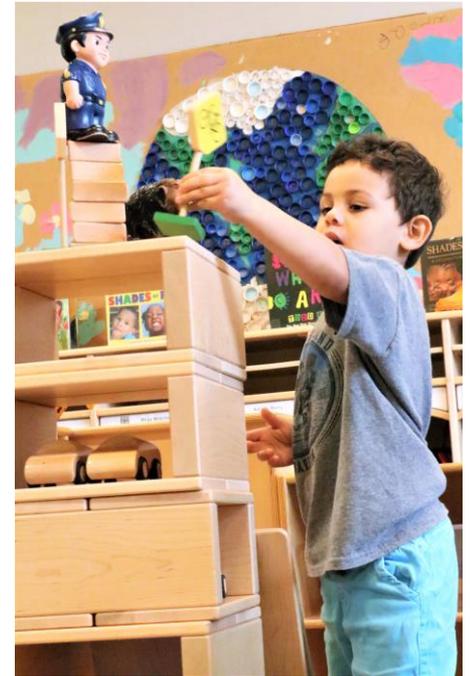
Twos Program

All humans want to feel respect and self-worth and a sense of belonging which occurs in coordination with primary routines, classroom activities and the design of the learning environment.



Preschool Program

By perceiving children as curious, competent and capable of self-control, and honoring their interests and needs, adults will enable children to solve problems, responding to others with kindness and empathy.





The ability to effectively communicate is an important life skill. Teachers support children's many ways of expressing their big ideas and design the learning environment to provide developmentally appropriate experiences foundational to children's learning to love to read and write.



Classroom Flow-of-the-Day: August 10, 2020 – August 4, 2021

Lead Teachers are scheduled to open the classroom at 7:00 AM, to provide greeting and a Well Child check *(symptoms that will exclude children from school are detailed in The Acorn School Parent Handbook.)*

Children are required to be signed in at school by 10:00 AM every day to support their social and emotional development with a consistent routine *(an exception will be made for pediatric appointments, with a note.)*

Children ages twelve months and older are provided lunch and a morning and afternoon snack, with all foods catered by Vanderbilt Campus Dining. Families provide 100% of nutrition for infants younger than twelve months in containers labeled with the child's first and last names. *Families will be apprised of any community events where food sharing is appropriate but are asked to not provide snacks to share for birthdays.*

All children are required to play outside every day that the temperature registers between 32 and 95 degrees Fahrenheit. *Children arrive ready to learn in play clothes and weather necessary outerwear, with bug spray and sunscreen applied at home in the morning (teachers will reapply by noon and as needed.) Non-skid, closed toe and heel shoes with socks are highly recommended.*

Children will be combined in age-appropriate cohorts in a classroom or on the playground between 4:30PM and 5:30PM.

Children are provided opportunity to nap between 12:00PM and 2:15PM. *Children twelve months and younger will have an individualized nap schedule.*

Adventure
Community
Creativity
Discovery
Exploration
Movement
Nature
Outdoors
Relationship
Self-Help
Transformative



K-Camp



K-Camp is a transformative nature education summer program for PreK children entering elementary school designed to reinforce the individual child's self-image as an independent and competent learner. K-Camp provides rising kindergartners an opportunity to confront change through the joyful adventure of exploring the buildings and grounds of Vanderbilt University with risk and rigor! With the coaching and support of their parents and camp counselors (trusted teachers) the children celebrate their increased confidence and capabilities, departing the small pond of preschool for the big seas of elementary school.

**K-Camp 2020 begins July 6, 2020
and ends August 5, 2020**

(August 5, 2020 is the PreK children's last day in The Acorn School.)

New Child Enrollment Process

The Acorn School is open twelve months a year Monday-Friday from 7:00 AM – 5:30 PM

Application with non-refundable fee places the child on the Wait List; VU families are allowed one right of refusal when offered a spot before being moved to the end of the wait list.

The Acorn School admits children through rolling enrollment twelve months per year as spots become available.

The majority of spots will become available for an August 10, 2020 start date, families will be informed of an age-eligible spot for this start date by April 2020.

To secure the offered spot the following mandatory steps must be completed:

- 1) One parent/guardian must attend a mandatory orientation within 15 business days
- 2) Parent/guardian must attend a school tour within the week of orientation
- 3) To commit to the spot, parent/guardian completes and submits the Emergency Information and Authorization Form (*failure to submit this within 2 business days after tour results in forfeit of spot*)
- 4) Parent/guardian must submit a completed enrollment packet at least five business days prior to the child's first day of school (*due by June 1st if child begins program August 10th*)
- 5) Classroom Teacher Meet and Greet is August 7th from 5:00 PM – 6:00 PM

The New School Year begins August 10, 2020 and ends August 4, 2021

Re-Enrollment Process for 2020-2021 School Year

*The Acorn School is open twelve months a year
Monday-Friday from 7:00 AM – 5:30 PM*

Process

- 1) Parent/guardian completes and submits the re-enrollment packet by June 1, 2020. Forms not received by this date will result in disenrollment (**effective August 5th**) as the child will not be placed on the class list for the upcoming school year.
- 2) Parents will be informed of class placement July 31, 2020.
- 3) Classroom Teacher Meet and Greet is August 7th from 5:00 PM – 6:00 PM
- 4) Children start in their new class on Monday, August 10, 2020.
- 5) Re-enrollment forms are not required for children transitioning out of program on or before August 5, 2020 (e.g., K-Campers.) **Thirty days written notice is required OR the last day of school will be documented and financially processed as August 5, 2020.**

Parent Partnership

The Acorn School recognizes the pivotal role parents play in their child's education, honoring the parent as the child's first teacher. Through consistent and respectful verbal and written communication, parents and early childhood educators strengthen their relationship, united to support a shared understanding of the unique child.

Activities and Events

K-Camp Bridge Ceremony August 5, 2020

Teacher Meet and Greet August 7, 2020

ASQ Tool due by September 1, 2020

Family Potlucks tbd September 2020

Parent-Teacher Conference October 2020

Family Feast November 2020

ASQ Tool due by February 1, 2021

Parent-Teacher Conference March 2021

Week of the Young Child April 2021

K-Camp Bridge Ceremony August 4, 2021





The Acorn School

AT VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY