

# **PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION**

Research has revealed the importance of the formative years, thus increasing the emphasis on early childhood education. Children's minds, bodies and spirits develop most rapidly and with extreme ease at this time. Their experiences significantly influence their overall development and attitudes. The effectiveness of a program plays a vital part in preparing the child for future success. The key to success is in the realization that children are individuals, developing at their own pace and having distinct needs, varying learning styles and abilities. Concepts regarding God, Jesus, the Bible, church, self, family, the natural world and others are the basis for our curriculum. Developmental/Biblical education teaches children by meeting the developmental needs of the child and the values of the Christian faith.

The teacher's knowledge and understanding of early childhood development influences judgment and attitudes concerning children. It is vital that teachers accept each child as "unique" and not expect uniformity in their reactions to experiences. Our program is designed through the "learning center" approach, which allows children to be children in an enriched environment. Just as the Bible states in Luke 2:52, "Jesus grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men", our curriculum provides for intellectual, physical, moral/spiritual, emotional and social growth.

Meeting needs at the appropriate time is essential. Children who are exposed to experiences before they are developmentally ready often encounter feelings of frustration and failure. Children who are "ready" but whose needs are neglected can become bored. This could have a detrimental effect because the ability to experience success is one of the greatest stimulators. A child's ability to function and learn in the classroom environment is also dependent on the climate, setting and materials. We provide a warm, loving climate where the children feel cared for and secure, thereby enabling them to be receptive to new experiences. The physical environment is bright, varied and stimulating with numerous materials of various levels of difficulty provided to meet individual interests and developmental needs.

Biblical values and concepts that young children can understand about God's creation, His love for us, His plan for families, and our relationship to others are reinforced in a non-threatening manner through the program. We incorporate our praise, thanksgiving and concern for others in daily activities. While remaining sensitive to the fact that many children have non-traditional family relationships, we reinforce the traditional family lifestyle. Multicultural values are instilled as we teach that God has a different plan for each unique, special individual. Biblical truths will also enable children to evaluate right and wrong and make wise choices for their own behavior.

Our program focuses on the child by identifying individual needs and providing experiences and material that promote healthy growth and development. In realizing that "growth is an exemplification of the principle of continuity", materials and

experiences that are related in an organized and sequential manner. They move from that which is familiar to broader, unknown experiences. The program values the role of the teacher as caregiver, guide, stimulator and facilitator. It strives to give each child a strong foundation upon which to build further knowledge and success. It encourages parental involvement because early childhood programs are not a substitute for the home, but rather an extension of it.