

# Kindergarten Program Highlights

## Literacy

Reading, writing, speaking and listening are integral to all that we do in kindergarten. Literacy is delivered in an integrated way, across the day, building rich, language-based experiences that serve as the foundation for reading and writing. Interactive read-aloud provides a venue for exploring characters and their stories. Oral storytelling and conversation build vocabulary and fluency. Writing experiences develop along a continuum as children gain understanding of letter names and sounds. Phonemic awareness and beginning phonics skills become cornerstones for decoding. Our literacy benchmarks are aligned to the Common Core English/Language Arts standards.

Kindergartners 'make books' during Writer's Workshop time, by drawing and experimenting with letters, words and sentences. Teachers use children's literature to model story structure and writing strategies. Students create and share original stories and poetry, and teachers provide daily opportunities for shared writing experiences across the curriculum.

Kindergarten literacy units include:

- *Small Moments*
- *"How To" Books*
- *Mentor Authors*
- *Comparative Fairy Tales*

Beginning print handwriting is taught using the *Handwriting Without Tears* program.



## Mathematics

The *Everyday Mathematics* program is a research-based, field-tested curriculum that emphasizes life-long mathematical understanding. Its lessons engage students in hands-on activities to build and reinforce computational and problem-solving skills. *Everyday Mathematics'* kindergarten benchmarks are aligned to the Common Core standards.

Critical areas of focus for kindergarten include:

- *Representing Quantities With Objects & Numbers*
- *Describing Shapes & Space*

## Social Studies

Kindergarten social studies units explore the child's roles and responsibilities with family and friends, as well as to the world around them. Three thematic units provide hands-on and engaging activities to build concepts related to culture, problem solving and beginning geography skills.

Kindergarten social studies units include:

- *My Family & Me*
- *Friends*
- *The Park*

In addition, all ISD students participate in a celebration of global cultural diversity, Senegalese art, and traditional West African music during our school-wide World Culture Month.

## Science

*FOSS* science kits provide our kindergartners with thematic lessons that incorporate hands-on scientific exploration in the areas of Life, Physical and Earth Science. Kindergarten benchmarks are aligned to the National Science Education Standards.

Kindergarten science units include:

- *Trees*
- *Wood & Paper*
- *The Environment*

## French Language

Students receive daily instruction in the French language for 45-minute instructional blocks. Based on AERO (American Education Reaches Out) and French national standards, the curriculum offers opportunities for integrated reading, writing, speaking and listening, as well as for exploration of the French and Senegalese cultures.

## Visual and Musical Arts

Kindergartners attend separate art and music classes twice per 6-day cycle. During these 45-minute sessions, children explore the visual and musical arts through hands-on experiences that encourage creativity, collaboration and interpretation. Students perform in school-wide concerts and art exhibitions during the year. When possible, music and art lessons are integrated into classroom units of study.

## Physical Education & Health

Physical education is offered two times per 6-day cycle in 45-minute sessions. During this time, students build loco-motor and movement skills through games and play. Swimming instructional units are offered twice a year, in September and in May. Kindergarten Health topics are embedded in classroom units and facilitated by teachers and the school nurse.

## Technology, Research & Library

ISD's technology curriculum is an integrated program that infuses critical computer literacy benchmarks into existing grade level units of study. Students create media-based projects that build 21st century digital skills.

Students visit the library to learn about the power of books and research. ISD uses the Super3 Research model for information problem-solving, and students learn to PLAN, DO and REVIEW while they develop research projects that are integrated into classroom units of study. Kindergartners visit the library once a week to check out books.

## Service Learning

ISD takes pride in an established community service program and maintains ongoing relationships with two local organizations:

- *Samusocial, a Dakar-based support agency for Talibe street children, and*
- *Le Pouponniere, an orphanage for Senegalese newborns and toddlers whose mothers have died at childbirth.*

Kindergartners participate in activities to raise funds for the preservation of mangroves as part of an environmental unit as well as working with our school-based initiative, *Jappaile*, which supports ISD local staff.

