CURRICULUM OVERVIEW
NURSERY CLASSES

At Hillcrest, we take great pride in providing all our preschool children with a well-balanced curriculum that meets each child's individual needs. Through play, arts & crafts, story time, music and outdoor fun, each day becomes a learning experience for the children.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

- to promote independence and self-help skills
- to enhance eye-hand co-ordination
- to encourage responsibility
- to develop a sense of belonging - "My Cubby"

SHELF TOYS - PUZZLES – BLOCK CENTRE

- to experience cause and effect
- to experience 3-dimensional objects
- to develop communication skills, social skills and co-operative skills
- to enhance and promote imaginative play
- to enhance fine motor skills when manipulating the different puzzle and toy pieces
- to develop thinking skills and problem solving techniques
- to promote and enhance sharing and turn taking

CIRCLE – LANGUAGE & LITERACY

We will be introducing an alphabet program. Each week we will be learning a new letter, and the corresponding sound. Through arts & crafts, show & share, and stories, the children will have a better understanding of each letter.

- name recognition through various name cards, cubby labels, and name games
- to promote and enhance the recognition of both upper and lower case letters
- to develop a phonetic awareness of each letter, through weekly activities and learning circles
- to develop and enhance listening skills and attention span
- to develop an appreciation of books
- to promote verbal skills
- to develop thinking and co-operative skills

CREATIVE EXPLORATION - FINE MOTOR - PRE-PRINTING

- to develop an awareness of colour, design and texture
- to increase ability to concentrate
- to develop self expression and imagination
- to allow the child to experiment through process, rather than product
- to promote eye-hand coordination
- by using a variety of writing tools, the children will understand the first steps to pre-printing ie: scissors-lacing-tongs-clothes pins-tracing activities
- introduction to different media

COGNITIVE AWARENESS: MATH & SCIENCE

- to promote curiosity
- to develop and enhance the children's 5 senses
- to explore the world around us
- to predict an outcome and compare to the actual results
- to learn and explore the ages of the earth
- to allow themselves to become a scientist and experience a sense of wonder
- to promote number recognition and rote counting from 1-5.
- to begin the process of one-to-one correspondence
- an introduction to patterning and sorting
- to enhance skills such as: classifying, size discrimination, sequencing, colour and number concepts, and THINKING SKILLS

SENSORY

- to help a child to explore the environment using his/her senses i.e. touch, sight, smell, taste, hearing
- to develop social skills through sharing and co-operation

IMAGINATION STATION – DRAMATIC PLAY

We thrive on small group settings to help children build confidence and trust within their own personal shelf.

- to promote and enhance imaginative skills
- to develop communication skills with the children and teachers in the different rooms

MUSIC

Daily musical activities are carefully designed to help the children develop motor, auditory and rhythmic skills. Group participation, imaginative expression and building of self-esteem are naturally incorporated into the musical experience. Unique songs, school wide music circles and day-to-day programming provide endless opportunities for fun and laughter. Our music team provides a fun and stimulating music experience for everyone in our Hillcrest family.

OUTDOOR PLAY

- to promote and enhance gross motor skills (large muscle)
- to gain confidence with control of body parts when using the equipment
- to promote dramatic and imaginative play
- to release energy and have FUN

LIBRARY TIME

The book centre is a quiet area for reading and relaxing. The children are able to:

- first steps to reading: prediction and outcome
- enhance their imagination and concentration skills
- develop their appreciation for books
- promote conversation with peers and adults
- help develop oral language skills
- to understand and appreciate individual quiet time

JEWISH HERITAGE PROGRAM - HEBREW

The children celebrate Shabbat (the Sabbath) every Friday. You are welcome to join in this special time with your child. Please contact your child's teacher to arrange a mutually agreeable date. Jewish holidays are introduced and celebrated through storytelling, songs and creative activities. Our regular newsletters and communications will advise you of all our special events.

JEWISH HERITAGE PROGRAM - HEBREW cont.

During the weekly Hebrew program, the children are encouraged to speak the language through games, songs, repetition and by labelling many visual props. The children will learn Hebrew names for the Jewish holidays and their symbols. They will also acquire an everyday, basic vocabulary, such as greetings, people in the family, body parts, seasons, gender, colours, counting and more!

SMARTBOARD

We have now implemented Smart Boards into all of our ¾Nursery classrooms. The children will be participating interactively through the use of the Smart Boards. Children will be able to use the Smart Board during our opening circle and for colour and shape recognition, sequencing, counting, matching, calendar activities and story telling.

SPECIALIZED ART PROGRAM

All Nursery children participate in an art-based program. Children are never too young to start learning about Art and basic Art History. The classes will be comprehensive and process-focused and will balance learning, exploring various artistic techniques and creative/emotional expression. The program will involve a variety of art media including painting, collage and sculpture through story-telling and hands-on learning.

LUNCH TIME

A hot, nutritionally balanced lunch is provided on a daily basis for extended day and full day Nursery children. Lunch is supervised by our staff and children will be encouraged to eat and enjoy. The children will practise social skills while sitting with their friends at a table, while learning patience, manners and nutritional knowledge.

SEE SAW APP

We are happy to have incorporated "SEE SAW" into our program. It is an app that is downloadable to any smart phone, where teachers post photos and classroom news. It helps to keep you informed of the fun activities that take place during the school day and enables teachers to share important and general information with you!

MUSIC WITH MISS DRISCOLL:

In this music program, the children will be introduced to the basic vocabulary to understand music. Through the use of interactive games on the Smart Board, playing instruments, singing and group activities and games, the children will learn about beat, pitch, tempo and rhythm. In addition, children will be exposed to a variety of music and instruments from around the world and be given the opportunity to make their own music.

FRENCH

Children will be introduced to the letters of the alphabet and simple words in the weekly French program.

STEAM

S = SCIENCE

T = TECHNOLOGY

E = ENGINEERING

A = ART

M = MATHEMATICS

Each of ***STEAM's*** 5 subjects share a common approach and focus. They require gathering and using evidence to create knowledge or solve problems. ***STEAM*** learning happens naturally everyday as children explore, play, and try new things. When young children have the opportunity to investigate the world around them, they learn and experiment.

STEAM learning begins early. It includes examining shapes, building forts from cardboard boxes, playing "grocery store," pouring liquids and other materials, filling and emptying containers of different sizes, and mixing paints to create new colours. Many of children's everyday activities use ***STEAM*** skills. d

STEAM learning happens naturally everyday as children explore, play, and try new things. When young children have the opportunity to investigate the world around them, they learn and experiment with new ***STEAM*** skills and theories.

S is for Science

Children are natural scientists. They try to figure out just how the world works by engaging in a series of steps called the scientific method. The scientific method includes observing, forming questions, making predictions, designing and carrying out experiments and discussing as they explore and discover the world around them. Children find patterns and build theories to explain what they see and collect "data" to test those theories. A theory is like a guess or possible explanation for something. Like scientists, children learn from others. They watch what children and adults do and learn from trying to repeat what they've seen or by asking questions and seeing the results.

T is for Technology

The "T" in technology stands for any type of man-made object. Technology includes simple tools such as pulleys, wheels, levers, scissors, and ramps. They support children's cognitive development, because as children play with these tools, they observe and learn from the underlying cause and effect. These simpler technologies allow children to understand how tools help us accomplish tasks. Children can see the cause and effect behind them, like how adding wheels below a large object makes it easier to move, or how raising a ramp makes a ball roll faster.

E is for Engineering

Engineering applies science, math, and technology to solving problems. Engineering is using materials, designing, crafting, and building – it helps us understand how and why things work. When children design and build with blocks or put together railroad tracks, they are acting as engineers. When children construct a fort of snow, pillows, or cardboard, they are solving structural problems. When they figure out how to pile sticks and rocks to block a stream of water or how objects fit together, they are engineering.

A is for Arts

Active and self-guided discovery is core to the arts and to ***STEAM*** learning. Children engage in painting, pretend play, music, and drawing. Art is sensory exploration. Children can feel the paint on their fingers and see colours change the way paper looks. As they grow, children include symbols in their art that represent real objects, events, and feelings. Drawing and play-acting allow them to express what they know and feel, even before they can read or write. Music is also linked to ***STEAM*** skills such as pattern recognition and numeration.

M is for Math

Math is number and operations, measurement, patterns, geometry and spatial sense. From birth until age five, children explore everyday mathematics, including informal knowledge of "more" and "less," shape, size, sequencing, volume, and distance. Math is a tool children use every day! Children learn early math concepts like geometry and spatial relationships when they explore new objects with their hands. They make math concepts visible when they connect them to objects and actions.

Supporting **STEAM** Learning

A great deal of ***STEAM*** learning happens during activities like free play, where children are given the opportunity to freely explore materials and make discoveries. Teaching staff can foster ***STEAM*** exploration during play and social interactions through the use of scaffolding. Scaffolding means offering the right support and structuring the environment to take a child's knowledge to the next level. Just as a scaffold supports construction, adults can scaffold a child's experience. To scaffold an experience, teacher's can provide assistance by cuing, prompting, questioning, modeling, discussing, and telling. By observing what children are doing and then asking questions and working with them as they develop their own understanding of the world, teachers can help walk them through increasingly complex ways of thinking. A little guidance can help children reinforce their knowledge, correct misconceptions and extend their thinking. This helps them figure out even more than they manage to learn on their own.

Everyday materials that support **STEAM** thinking

* Balls
* Books
* Role-play materials
* 2 and 3 dimensional shapes
* Blocks
* Building sets
* Pulleys
* Wheels
* Levers
* Ramps
* Cardboard
* Clay
* Paint / water-colours
* Scissors
* Rulers / measuring tapes
* Tubes, funnels, sifters
* Sand / water
* Snow / ice
* Magnifying glasses
* Sticks and rocks
* Plants
* Stamps and stamp pads