

Half-Pints

Language Development and Communication

Most children have mastered 2-3 word phrases and we are beginning to work on building full sentences. Even though the children have many words we are busy enriching their language skills by doing teacher guided activities, flannel boards, songs, and books that encourage new vocabulary. Children this age will start to have emerging skills such as conversations, stories, and even letter recognition. We are constantly talking and asking open ended questions to help these skills along. As children move to our classroom they have the skills for following simple and multiple step directions. We will continue to add on to the multiple step directions so that we have it almost mastered by the time we transition to the Junior Sprouts room.

Social and Emotional Development

As children reach the age of 2 ½ to 3 they have basic social skills like parallel play mastered and our cooperative play skills are already emerging. Children at this stage in development have an understanding of basic emotions (happy, sad, mad, excited, etc.), which means being able to recognize it in themselves as well as others. We help guide each child to learn how to show sympathy and respect for others' feelings by acknowledging emotions and talking through each situation. Children at this stage will also initiate trying new skills and repeat an action purposefully with pride as they learn or master the new skill. Learning to problem solve with little adult assistance is a skill that we strive to achieve and work diligently on.

Health and Physical Development

Mastering self-help and toilet training is a large part of our classroom. Many children will be using the toilet on a regular basis or are already in underwear, but we build on these skills by encouraging them to use the bathroom without teacher direction. Many children at this age are able to rest or sleep with no adult assistance. We will work on mastering self-help skills such as dressing, using utensils, washing hands/faces, wiping noses and recognizing when they need to do these things on their own. Fine motor skills, such as grasping or pinching, are worked on daily by providing toys or activities that stimulate these muscles to gain strength. During this time we will continue to work towards controlling their bodies in an intentional or purposeful manner and be self-aware of themselves as well as others. Gross motor skills like alternating steps, jumping with both feet, and balancing are just a few skills that we will work on to help strengthen those large muscles. Our goal is to help each child become as autonomous, or independent as possible.

Approaches to Learning

No two children are exactly the same nor do they learn in the same ways. By providing multiple activities at different skill levels we are able to accommodate for the diversity in development from child to child. During this time a preference towards a particular learning style will start to emerge; however, most children at this age will participate in new styles with peer or adult encouragement. This is why we have a variety of activities throughout our day such as group time, free choice, and guided small group time. A child will learn to express themselves through music, movement, dancing, and art. We provide all of these areas to make sure each child can have a chance to express themselves freely. Children also show curiosity to try new and unfamiliar experiences. We know that attention spans vary between children so we encourage children to try to participate in longer activities, but they may find other interest areas if they desire. We provide a structured daily routine to help each child feel comfortable in their surroundings and let the children know if things are different.

Cognition and General Knowledge

Children at this age naturally love to explore and we assist them in learning how to process what they are learning. Using their senses to explore is the first step to learning about the world around us. We provide different sensory activities not only in our “sensory table”, but also through art and other materials in the classroom. Children will also start to remember, recall, and talk about events they have experienced. We encourage this by asking open ended questions that allow each child to answer without any adult leading. This also encompasses math and science skills. Children will start math skills such as counting, recognizing basic shapes, sorting or categorizing, and comparing size. We work on these daily during both large and small group activities. There is a large variety of toys at different skill levels to encourage the progression of these skills. Children will also use their tendency to explore to build their science skills. We use the garden and our natural surroundings to help these emerging skills. Asking questions, using cause/effect, and hypothesizing outcomes is greatly encouraged in the Half Pint room!

What is special about the Half-Pint Room?

We strive to make each child feel as though they can touch the sky all on their own! The classroom is set up to allow the children more freedom and encourage independence through a multitude of choices. By allowing the children to do more on their own we are building their autonomous self. It is amazing to see the sense of pride when children are able to learn or master a skill all on their own.