

Kids' Stuff Private School Program

2017-2018

OVERVIEW

Kindergarten is your child's foundation to a lifelong love and enjoyment of the learning process and school. Our Kindergarten year is designed for you and your child to experience many exciting moments and share memories to last a lifetime. Our First Grade curriculum is an extension of our Kindergarten program and each child is leveled up upon mastery.

This brochure is designed to give you a glimpse in to your child's school entry year. It will also help you make the necessary adjustments for your child's transition from home or preschool to the School Age classroom. Our goal is to help your child reach his/her maximum potential. Together, we must develop a strong relationship between your home and our school – a relationship based on open communication and a strong dedication to for the best interest of your child.

WHY KIDS' STUFF PRIVATE SCHOOL?

Our program provides the strongest foundation attainable for your child's education. Our small class instruction guarantees your child will receive the individual attention he/she deserves, and may require, to make this possible. Your child will learn to work independently and confidently in both large and small groups. Our 'family like' classroom environment will strengthen their self-confidence, and realize their learning potential, preparing for their successful transition to First Grade, and if repeating Kindergarten, into a larger school system.

Our program stimulates growth in all aspects of your child's development. Kids' Stuff curriculum incorporates the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards and touches on the Common Core Standards as set forth by the Florida State Board of Education as well as implementing our proven traditional teaching techniques. Our robust curriculum is enhanced uniquely Spanish immersion and updated technology resources in the classroom. Your child will also participate in the following specialized inter-curricular programs: Physical Education, Music Education, Guidance, and Art.

Kids' Stuff Private Kindergarten program delivers the same concepts and standards as our surrounding public schools, but is tailored to the socialization and the development of the whole child. The opportunity to eliminate the stresses and demands of a much larger elementary school atmosphere allows children to be more engaged, and benefit from the importance of socializing and building confidence in all areas of their personality. Our Kindergarten experience is staged in a small, uncomplicated, and nurturing learning environment that affords our students the extra time necessary to become well-rounded confident, Kindergartners or First Graders who are very ready and excited for their new experience in an elementary school environment.

Kids' Stuff Private School program introduces concepts of leveled instruction. This allows each child to develop at their own pace, while being challenged to excel in the best of their abilities. Each child is observed and leveled during the first month of school. Your child's level may be determined as Advanced Pre- Kindergarten, Kindergarten Ready or Kindergarten/First Grade Ready. Determining each child's level, will help carve the teaching path for each child throughout the school year. We challenge and level as tolerated by each child, until the child has met the goals set forth.

Our program incorporates teaching, practicing and exploring life skills; teaching and practicing research and critical thinking skills; introducing and utilizing technology; exploring science and social studies experiences in addition to engaging in the logic of Mathematics and the importance of Literacy, all in a natural atmosphere and a comfortable homeschool-like setting.

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LANGUAGE ARTS/LITERACY

The Common Core State Standards have raised the level of reading and writing that our students will undertake. Our focus point is to build the foundation for young children to share their ideas and to handle increased levels of reading and writing in future grades.

ORAL LANGUAGE

- Express ideas in conversation with individuals and/or in group activities
- Thought provoking questions using the five W's – Who, What, Where, When, and Why
- Share information about events in and out of school
- Elaborate on an event in sequential definition
- Increase spoken vocabulary

LISTENING COMPREHENSION

- Retells stories in sequence - can summarize a story and make predictions about stories being read to them
- Identify characters
- Elaborate on unknown words in text
- Encourage visualization

AWARENESS OF PRINT

- Identify parts of a book; front, back, spine, table of contents, index & chapter
- Identify print as a source of a story
- Understand the difference between a letter and a word
- Identify letters and their sounds
- Point and follow left to right
- Punctuation and spacing
- Proper handwriting skills

RESPONSE TO LITERATURE

- Choose reading materials
- Share books
- Pretend reads – reads – sounds phonetically
- Interpret through activities
- Participate in shared reading
- Begin to read – advance levels in reading
- Relate vocabulary to real life connections
- Fiction, non-fiction, and informational
- Visualize and illustrate
- Introduce parts of speech – nouns/verbs/adjectives

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LANGUAGE ARTS/LITERACY CONTINUED

WRITTEN LANGUAGE

- Support own ideas when writing
- Share writing with others
- Add written information to a journal
- Explore digital tools to publish writing
- Interpret informational text

RECOGNITION

- Syllables
- Rhyming
- Positional
- Distinguish from letters to words to sentences to paragraph

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MATH

Mathematics instruction teaches students to ultimately solve problems independently. The Common Core Standards encourage the use of more than one strategy for problem solving, and to use writing to explain and justify your answers. Kids' Stuff believes there is more than one way to solve a problem. We touch on Common Core methods and strategy as well as teaching proven Traditional Mathematical logical thinking techniques, as we believe this sets a better foundation for the love and understanding of Math.

SORTING/CLASSIFYING/MEASURING

- Dimensional shapes & Multi-Dimensional shapes
- Analyze, compare, create, and compose shapes
- Classify groups and sets
- Measurements using multiple attributes

PATTERNING

- Construct and extend simple to complex patterns

NUMBER CONCEPTS

- Count objects 1 to 100 and by tens -
- Recognize numerals and sets 0 to 20
- Identify place value 11 – 19 and beyond to 100
- Understand concepts of more, less and equal

ADDITION AND SUBTRACTION CONCEPTS

- Demonstrate an understanding of addition and subtraction processes by:
 - Adding to and taking away
 - Using manipulative operations
 - Written demonstrations
 - Model drawings
 - Visualization
 - Mental math

FRACTIONS

- Demonstrate an understanding that a fraction is part of a whole
- Able to represent a whole, half, third and fourth

MONEY

- Demonstrate an understanding of each coin's name and worth

TIME

- Create awareness of elapsed time and time measurement

See attached First Grade Math Concepts that will be introduced

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WORLD LANGUAGE/GLOBAL AWARENESS

Kindergarten lays the foundation for the development of leadership skills necessary to succeed globally.

- Spanish Immersion
- Learning collaborative work ethics
- Understanding team management and parts of a team
- Developing trust and responsibility
- Learning diversity and culture

SCIENCE AND SOCIAL STUDIES

The Common Core State Standards encourages the integration of Science and Social Studies throughout the school day. Kids' Stuff incorporates this directive during teachable moments using informational text and resources, such as National Geographic for Kids and other hands-on materials, as well as real life experiences.

DIGITAL EDUCATION

Digital Education is introduced during Literacy Center rotations via a software program created to enhance literacy skills at Leveled Instruction. This is also incorporated into our Spanish Immersion Program.

LITTLE TECHS

Little Techs is a weekly Kindergarten program that exposes your child to an enriched curriculum through the use of iPads. Each child is challenged by leveled work through concepts in math, geography, literacy, and science. Research shows that students in technology-rich environments experience positive effects on achievement in all major subject areas. In addition, students' attitudes toward learning, and their own self-concept, improve consistently when technology is used for instruction. The Little Techs program enhances the age-appropriate progress of students in attaining the state-adopted performance standards, and helps prepare students for the following grade level based on Common Core Standards. In addition, we have incorporated ipad use into more of our classroom operations.

SPANISH

Our unique Spanish Immersion Program exposes your child to the written and spoken Spanish language throughout the entire day. It begins the year deliberately delivering very simple instructions to the children only in Spanish ("would you like a glass of water", "would you like to go to the bathroom"). Before the children even realize what is happening, they are replying totally in Spanish; they very soon begin asking for certain things only in Spanish. It is a very subtle experience and it grows very quickly. By the end of the Kindergarten year, students are conversing naturally in Spanish over a very broad range of subjects and instructions.

This method broadens their understanding of the language and makes their daily Spanish tutoring a very rich experience.

Early exposure is imperative for the child to feel comfortable listening to sounds that are different than those of their native language. Kids' Stuff strongly believes learning a foreign language at an early age increases listening ability, memory, creativity, and critical thinking - all thinking processes that increase the overall learning experience. In addition to developing critical thinking skills, foreign language study exposes children to alternative ways of looking at the world.

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MUSIC EDUCATION

The National Standards for Music Education in Kindergarten is used as a foundation in the creation of our lesson plans. Some topics covered during the school year at Kids' Stuff are:

- Steady Beat (tempo)
- Fast vs Slow (tempo)
- Loud vs Soft (dynamics)
- High vs Low (pitch)
- Melodic Direction (music scale)
- Steps, Skips & Leaps (intervals)

These elements are explored using Kids' Stuff classroom instruments. We discuss each instrument's timbre (tone 'color') and how the sound is produced. These typically include:

RHYTHMIC INSTRUMENTS

- Maracas & Shakers
- Metal Instruments: jingle bells/tambourines/triangles/tambourine sticks/finger cymbals
- Wooden Instruments: tone block/sand block/rhythm sticks
- Drums: lollipop /tom tom /bongo /gathering

MELODIC INSTRUMENTS

- Hand bells
- Cow bells
- Boomwackers
- Step bells
- Resonator bells
- Xylophones

We study the different Orchestra families: Percussion, String, Woodwind and Brass.

We also spend time studying 'music that tells a story', and incorporate creative musical projects.

PRESENTATIONS/CONCERTS

The students enjoy preparing for, and performing at, the annual Winter Holiday Concert, where they also sing in Spanish; and the year-end Mother's Day presentation, as an opportunity to display the various musical skills learned throughout the year.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Kids' Stuff has cultivated our existing Physical Education Program to include exciting new format that incorporates sessions such as muscle strengthening, whole body conditioning, teamwork and good sportsmanship ethics as well as smart food choices.

ART

In addition to the thematic illustrative writing and storytelling experienced during Language Arts/Literacy, Kids' Stuff incorporates designated artistic instruction sessions where students will explore uses of different art mediums and expression.

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GUIDANCE

There are other considerations, besides program academics, that influence a child's success in (and out) of school. Among these are feelings of capability and personal significance, and the capacity to formulate positive and constructive choices in the face of disappointment and challenges.

Using methods designed for early elementary grades, our Guidance program helps our children:

- improve upon important positive thinking skills,
- cope with unfounded fears,
- develop anger control,
- realize competencies,
- recognize their worth and
- how to be a good friend.

Our cognitive approach to teaching positive self-esteem skills through a structured, sequential, and skill-based approach includes stories, story discussion, songs, and sharing.

The above concepts are introduced to create a baseline on each child, from Advanced Pre-Kindergarten level up to Kindergarten level. First Grade Concepts will be introduced and developed once these levels are mastered.

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THE KINDERGARTEN TEAM

Kids' Stuff has offered our Private Kindergarten Program since the fall of 1999. As we enter our 17th Kindergarten year, we are proud to present the team that will nurture, grow, and care for your child.

MISS VANESSA – LEAD TEACHER

Miss Vanessa is a graduate of East Carolina University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Early Childhood Education, Birth-Kindergarten.. She has 15 years of teaching experience, with a focus on working with children ages two through Kindergarten.

Miss Vanessa joined the Kids' Stuff family in 2006 teaching the three-year old classes; she transitioned to Kindergarten program in 2011. Miss Vanessa has invited the challenge of incorporating First Grade into our program at Kids' Stuff in 2016.

"The whole art of teaching is only the art of awakening the natural curiosity of young minds for the purpose of satisfying it afterwards". Anatole France

Miss Vanessa believes that consistent classroom management skills are the foundation for a productive learning environment. When expectation and procedures are clear and consistent, learning can take place. She believes in building a sense of community in the classroom, and promoting positive relationships among students and teachers. Students must feel they are in a safe, fair, and comfortable environment where they can equally contribute by sharing and gaining knowledge. She believes all students are capable of learning. Her goal as a teacher is to ensure every student reaches his or her full potential. Differentiated instruction is vital to accommodate all learning styles, abilities, and interests. She promotes an active learning environment that encourages students to wonder. She enjoys engaging her students in a variety of experiences designed to make them think.

Miss Vanessa fully engages her students in the learning process; this enables students to truly retain information, and motivates them to learn more. She encourages students to take responsibility for learning, and to develop a pride for their own work. She has a patient yet persistent manner when reaching out to students.

Miss Vanessa wants to inspire and enable her students to become successful in their lives, as well as teach them to be responsible, positive, and productive members individuals of society. Her classroom is full of wonder, experiences, and constant motivation.

Miss Vanessa has two children. Her son is a Senior at Land O'Lakes High School who enjoys playing soccer and is pursuing college. Her daughter is a fifth grader at Countryside Montessori Charter School;- she loves to dance and read books. Miss Vanessa enjoys spending time with her children and family, going to the beach, and trying to read a good book when time permits.

MISS JENNA – PHYSICAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

Miss Jenna Strand has her Child Development Specialist certification and is actively pursuing her AA in Education. She has been teaching with Kids' Stuff for 15 years! Miss Jenna has diligently developed a structured and age-appropriate physical education program that incorporates teacher/coach guided activities, gross motor skill and coordination development, and creating an environment conducive to team-building and good sportsmanship.

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SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL GROWTH

CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS.

While in the classroom we will work on many areas of expected conduct. These include:

- following classroom and school rules,
- coping with problem situations in an acceptable manner,
- participating and contributing during group activities,
- sharing materials and taking turns with equipment and supplies,
- respecting the rights, feelings and property of others,
- transitioning appropriately from active to quiet tasks smoothly,
- demonstrating the ability to be both a leader and a follower at appropriate times,
- making appropriate use of classroom time,
- selecting a wide variety of activities and materials and
- demonstrating responsibility in managing personal needs.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Studies show that when parents are involved with their child's education, the child usually enjoys learning and school life more. This involvement improves their academic skills and attitude which enables them to do better in school, develop confidence in themselves and they become better prepared for the future.

Kids' Stuff encourages our parents to become as involved as possible, while realizing the need for structure and routine in the classroom.. There will always be opportunities to chaperone field trips, get to know your child's teachers, volunteer inside the classroom, and become involved in homework or class projects. Participating in just one of these types of activities emphasizes to, your child that value you place on education.

WHAT CAN I DO AT HOME TO PREPARE MY CHILD?

There are many things that you can do at home to prepare your child for their Kindergarten year and to enrich the experience they have here at Kids' Stuff.

- Stimulate a love of literature by reading and discussing a variety of literature with your child.
 - Remember to include nursery rhymes, poems, fiction and non-fiction, characters, settings, problems and resolutions
- Encourage your child to use oral language by speaking with them about their daily experiences.
 - Ask them to describe things they see or do.
 - Question them about what they did, what they see, where they are going, or where they have been.
- Provide opportunities to play, share, and work with other children.
- Provide opportunities to work with scissors, crayons, markers, pencils, pens, glue, paint, chalk, play-doh, or clay.
- Teach your child to become independent with snapping, buttoning, and zipping clothing; putting on and removing sweaters and jackets; and cleaning up and putting items away when finished.

CLASSROOM INFORMATION

Each week your child's teacher will send a copy of their 'Classroom Times' to advise you on classroom happenings including:

- Week at a glance – updates - reminders
- The week's curriculum.
- Details of curriculum covered by Inter-curricular subjects

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- Important due dates, events, or information you need for the week

Please ensure that you read the Classroom Times each week.

WHEN SCHOOL BEGINS

SCHEDULE

Kindergarten class students should all to be dropped off at the Kindergarten playground where they will play until class begins at 9:15 a.m.

During the first week of school, we invite you to bring your child in to the classroom every day if you would like. Class will begin every day at 9:15 am; the teacher will relax the morning schedule slightly from 9:00 am until 9:15am every day that first week. During those 15 minutes, you can remain in the classroom, watch your child as they begin to set up their day, help them find where they will sit, where their backpack will be kept, etc.

The teacher will begin class at 9:15 AM; we suggest a swift exit as we find that lingering goodbyes are harder for the child.

Please feel free to call the school after you have left the property to check that your child adjusted well to his/her day.

After the first week, normal drop off arrangements should be followed.

BELONGINGS

Please provide your child with a backpack and a change of clothes

Label all belongings such as backpacks, lunchboxes, jackets, sweaters, etc., with your child's name.

ATTIRE

A large portion of Kids' Stuff activities require active play as well as painting, coloring, and pasting. Dress your child in comfortable clothes that are allowed to "get messy." .

Comfortable close-toe shoes are required.

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KINDERGARTEN

DAILY SCHEDULE

2017-2018 SCHOOL YEAR

Kindergarten Daily Schedule	
9:00 – 9:15	Morning Meeting
9:25	Snack
9:40	Whole Group Reading
10:00	Literacy Centers/Technology - Independent and Small Group Rotation
11:10	Writing
12:00	Theme Related
12:30	Lunch
1:15	Recess
1:30	Inter Curricular Sessions - Physical Education M,W,F/Music Tu/Theme Th
2:15	Math
3:00	Recall
3:15	Dismissal

- **Guidance/Character Education is incorporated in to our program**
- **Choice Centers offered upon completion of required work**
- **Science and Social Studies integrated into daily curriculum**
- **Art/Medium incorporated into daily/weekly thematic lessons**
- **Digital Technology Instruction is each Friday at 2:15 – 3:00**
- **Schedule timing/order subject to change as need arises**
- **Physical Education and Music are offered as break out specials during each weekly schedule**

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TESTIMONIALS

JENNIFER GARNETT LUCAS - PARENT

Our son Christopher was one of those kids on the cusp. He has a late summer birthday and lacked confidence in school. I felt in my heart he wasn't ready for kindergarten, and his VPK teacher agreed. It was tempting to repeat VPK, and we considered it. I admit that the idea was appealing to me, because I don't think I was any more ready for him to start kindergarten than he was.

His teacher suggested Kid's Stuff Kindergarten as an idea, but I was a little skeptical about his readiness for that either. She offered to set up a meeting with Miss Kristy and Miss Vanessa. That afternoon, Kristy stopped me to talk about it. I had all the doubts lined up: He's not ready, I'm not ready, Common core, Common core (grrr)

I remember Miss Kristy saying, "Of *course* he's ready for Kids' Stuff Kindergarten. The class is small, and Miss Vanessa works with the kids where they are. Just come to the information meeting."

And we did. About ten minutes into the meeting, I knew this was the right choice for us, and I felt so relieved. He would be in a small class, instead of a huge public school class, or even a relatively much bigger VPK repeat class. He would be with kids around his own age, instead of too young or much older. He would learn what he needed to join the public school the next year. If he skyrocketed forward, we could feel confident that he would do great in first grade, and if he struggled a little, we could start him in kindergarten at the public school.

We signed him up. And let me tell you, that first day of school, I knew right away we made the right decision. He was going back to Kids' Stuff, which always felt like home. That was such a relief for me. But for him, he could feel as though he was moving forward. He got to go to the schooler house, which was a big deal to him. He got to go to the big kids' playground. He got his own cubby and his name on the table.

This year has been wonderful. There are just not enough good words to say about Miss Vanessa. She teaches with such patience and kindness and enthusiasm. You only have to talk to her for a minute to know that your child is in good hands. She makes the kids enthusiastic about learning. She challenges them without stifling them. She lets their personalities shine. I know all the other parents of Chris's small family class would say the same thing.

When Chris was President of the week. (Each of the kids get a week, and it's all about him/her). Miss Vanessa sent me a picture of Chris in front of the class performing a magic trick. That was such a special moment, because I could see the confidence he had gained this year in KS Kindergarten.

He loves his classmates and his teacher. The kids are all so good to one another, which is clearly Miss Vanessa's influence, as well as the rest of the Kids' Stuff team.

There were also logistical benefits we hadn't considered: Tuition is very affordable. It was what we had been accustomed to paying up until VPK, so we already knew it was well within our budget. Included in the cost is before and after care, which was a huge benefit to our family. Technology is also included in the cost. Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year and Spring break weeks are tuition-free, but childcare is available still on those weeks. Also, did I mention Miss Vanessa is awesome?

I honestly can't say enough good things about Kids' Stuff Kindergarten. If you also have a kiddo on the cusp or if you just aren't ready to consider a large public school, I would highly recommend this path. This year has been so special for Chris and our family. So far the only problem I have is that he doesn't want to leave. And I don't really want him to.

I'm just a parent, but if you have any questions for someone who's been there, please feel free to email.

Sincerely,

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Jennifer Garnett Lucas, Happy Kids' Stuff Mom , jennifer.garnett@gmail.com

TESTIMONIALS

KAREN HUSSEY - PARENT

The decision of where to send my daughter Hannah for Kindergarten was one that my husband and I put a lot of thought into. In my opinion, Kindergarten is such an important year because it builds the foundation that continues to guide you through childhood and beyond. After weighing all of the options, we chose Kids' Stuff and it turned out to be a great decision. Kids' Stuff Kindergarten was a perfect fit for our family! My daughter Hannah not only received an outstanding education, but she gained a tremendous amount of confidence in herself and her abilities. She is naturally shy, but since attending Kindergarten at Kids' Stuff, she believes in herself and has developed the courage to try new things and to embrace new situations. Something else that makes Kids' Stuff stand out above the rest is the immersion type Spanish that the kids receive on a daily basis. I was so impressed to see the class reading, singing, writing, and acting out plays in Spanish throughout the year. I also appreciated the Music, Guidance, and Physical Education programs that provided the kids with a well-rounded experience. Academically and socially Hannah was very well prepared for first grade and made a very easy transition this year. I definitely attribute a large part of that to the foundation she received at Kids' Stuff. For my family, the fact that I could pick all of my children up and drop them off in the same place with people that I know love and care for them, gave me peace of mind; especially knowing how happy the kids were to be there as well. Above all else, the love and support Hannah received at Kids' Stuff made the choice of where to send her for Kindergarten clear and is what makes Kids' Stuff such an incredibly special and unique place. I feel so lucky that Hannah was able to spend this important part of her childhood here.

TARA SICKORA - PARENT

Richie loved learning and speaking Spanish every day in his class. He learned so much that he can now translate some for us and teach his 3 year old brother. Kids' Stuff Kindergarten allowed Richie to thrive in a small comfortable atmosphere. He was totally prepared and excited to go to 1st Grade and his transition in to a large public school went very smoothly.

CLAUDIA COKIS - PARENT

We chose Kids' Stuff Kindergarten for our Son because we knew that he would get the education, attention and growth that he would need to start a wonderful foundation for grade school. It was remarkable to see how much he grew in academics and his personality. I thank Kids' Stuff and their staff for all they have offered our Son and our family. I highly recommend Kids' Stuff private Kindergarten. The enrichments they offer are absolutely priceless, along with the education they give.

STACEY IRONSIDE – PARENT

With Pasco County incurring 4 million dollars in fines for too many students per class (including Kindergarten), we felt a smaller class would afford more one on one time. There were 2 teachers for the Kindergarten class at Kids' Stuff. Spanish was part of their daily work which is not offered at most Elementary schools. For us it was important that I could drop off and pick up at one place for 2 children. Low teacher/student ratio, Spanish, Karate Instruction which has taught discipline, and before and aftercare included in tuition all played a part in our decision to choose Kids' Stuff as Javen's Kindergarten.

CAROLYN POOLE – PARENT

Kids' Stuff Kindergarten was like a family – the class was small and very personal. I felt my son Zachary received a lot of one on one attention which was necessary to help with his maturing. I would highly recommend Kids' Stuff for Kindergarten.

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TESTIMONIALS

NOELE KLIEWER-PARENT

We very carefully researched all the options open to us for Grace's Kindergarten year and the decision for her to remain at Kids' Stuff in the loving and nurturing environment of her preschool years has turned out to be the right one. The small teacher/student ratio proved to be a big advantage academically. The Spanish, Music & Guidance programs offered in the Kids' Stuff Kindergarten are truly second to none and we were astounded at the breadth of knowledge she finished her Kindergarten year with. Grace began her First Grade year with a lot of confidence and totally ready for the new challenge ahead of her. Our youngest daughter (currently Kids' Stuff preK) will certainly be staying at Kids' Stuff for her Kindergarten year.

LISA BUIE-PARENT

The smaller student-teacher ratio meant Dylan and his classmates got more one-on-one attention, and when it was time for first grade, the Kids' Stuff Kindergarteners were academically ahead of their peers. The Spanish and high quality music programs also offered huge advantages.