

CHESTERBROOK ACADEMY -- NOT A DAYCARE BUT A VERY SPECIAL LEARNING CENTER

– Sandy Conrad
sconrad@fvshopper.com

Chesterbrook Academy is a very special place. Located at 750 Fifth Street in Oswego, (630/554-2100), it is a Nobel Learning Community. Links to Learning, organized according to age and state of development, draws on the expertise of renowned early-age educators who created a curriculum that reflects on the latest early educational research. The eight components of Links to Learning are Language & Literacy, Mathematics, Social-Emotional, Wellness, Creative Expression, Science & Social Studies, Citizens of the World and Digital Interactions (technology).

Principal Christie Joyce is very proud of the fact that her school combines academic learning experiences and structured play in a nurturing environment.

Formerly the Director of a Plano Day care facility, she joined the staff at Chesterbrook in 2009 as the teacher of Toddlers. In 2011, she was promoted to Assistant Principal and then Principal.

Chesterbrook students range from 6 weeks old to 5th grade. Children are given plenty of room for their bodies and minds to develop. All teachers are certified and receive strictly specialized training pertinent to the age group of their students. They are enthusiastic about the child's needs and help each one to discover, in their own way, the fascination of both play and learning. A productive partnership between educators and parents is encouraged through daily reports and videos of their child's activities (naps, meals, bathroom trips, and what they learned). A classroom parent board includes info on Spanish vocabulary and phrases, weekly skills, classroom highlights, weekly lesson plans and learning goals for each class. Monthly folders help continue learning at home. Parent Teacher conferences successfully prepare students for their next step or program.

The curriculum is never theme related, but is what they call "literacy based." In other words, if they are teaching about the beach, they start out by reading a book ABOUT the beach. This puts all students on the exact same level (on equal footing, so to speak) as to what they understand about the subject. Subjects are chosen according to what the students are concerned about.



Infants six weeks to one year get holding and cuddling, receive an introduction to sign language, and learn to grasp toys, vocalize sounds, recognize pictures of familiar objects and obtain a variety of other skills.

Toddlers, one to two years old, physically explore their world inside the classroom and outside on the playground. They participate in structured activities, like learning centers and circle time, concepts of color and size and a greater vocabulary.

The Beginners (2-3 years) program introduces more routine; children build vocabulary, learn numerical skills, and are encouraged to use reasoning to explain everyday things. Science & Social Studies and Spanish are begun at this age.

Intermediates (3-4 years) explore learning centers and participate in dramatic play. Children learn letters, sounds and counting. Digital interaction begins at this stage.

The Pre-K program (4-5 years) prepares kids for kindergarten by teaching literacy and math skills. It continues development of skills in the arts, creative expression, Spanish and wellness. Character education utilizes songs, puppets, games, books and activities to nurture social and emotional skills, like listening, understanding feelings and resolving conflicts, all of which they will encounter in school. Additionally, a Pre-K2 program is designed for those who completed Pre-K or missed the cut-off for Kindergarten due to the date of their birthday.

On Friday mornings, Pre-K students are bused to the Chesterbrook Elementary School in Naperville to encounter Music, Art, Spanish, Technology and Physical Education. Children are bused to and from District 308 schools for a Before and After program provided by Chesterbrook Academy for students to age 12. Ask about the Summer Camp program.

There are presently 137 students enrolled at Chesterfield Academy; there is room for 41 more! If your child would benefit from this type of education, call today to arrange a tour of the school and meet with Christie and the teachers.

