

# Early Childhood Program

PRESCHOOL & KINDERGARTEN



## Our Early Childhood Philosophy

At Baker, we believe in the power of play. At this stage, through discovery and experiential learning, children are beginning to learn about not just themselves, but the world around them. Research shows that play enhances the structure and function of the brain, helping children develop intellectual, social emotional and communications skills. Through play, our preschool and kindergarten students practice leadership, collaboration and problem-solving. Children engaged in play are focused, attuned only to the activity in front of them. Early Childhood is a time for spontaneous, student-led lessons that allow children to explore their interests while the foundations for math, literacy, and critical thinking are being laid.

## Our Teachers

Our Early Childhood teachers are experts in the developmental ages they teach. They know students are building their cognitive and motor skills while providing a bridge between academics and play. Math and literacy are embedded in how classrooms are arranged and how our teachers work with students, creating opportunities for organic learning. Teachers follow a child-centered curriculum that can change from day to day, based on what students are interested in learning. Vines growing on the playground may turn into an impromptu preschool lesson in gardening and the life cycle of a pumpkin. A child's curiosity about tadpoles can lead to a whole science exploration about frogs. A trip to Lighthouse Beach becomes an opportunity for kindergarteners to observe their environment, feel the sand beneath their feet and take note of changing seasons. Along the way, teachers are facilitating these lessons and guiding students, observing and learning more about them as they explore.

### Our Outdoor Classrooms

Our Early Childhood program utilizes Baker’s outdoor spaces and the local community to create a unique, outdoor classroom where students engage with their environment. In Kindergarten, every Wandering Wednesday, rain or shine, warm or cold, students spend the day outdoors. They observe the weather, chart the temperature and take their curiosity outside, wherever it may lead. Preschool students learn about the outdoors and respecting the earth. Teachers lead them in experiential lessons about wildlife, such as immersive studies of tadpoles and cicadas, helping to instill a love of nature at a young age. These nature explorations provide contexts to build confidence and develop a sense of wonder about our world.



### Our Specials

Early Childhood students attend specials classes, including:

- Spanish
- Physical Education
- Library
- Swimming
- Music
- Movement

Specials classes aid students in building intangible skills, such as developing a routine, handling transitions and relating to a teacher other than their classroom teacher. Early Childhood students build an appreciation of the arts, books, language, and physical education through what they learn in their specials courses.