



## WELCOME TO JUNIOR KINDERGARTEN (JK)

Hello, my name is Acacia Becks and I am honored to be serving as the Junior Kindergarten Lead Teacher this year. I look forward to working with your children and am excited about learning from them as well throughout the year. We will be pursuing a Project Based approach in my classroom using the Investigations Curriculum, which was developed by blending ideas from some of the leading experts in Early Childhood Education. This approach is child- and family-centered, as we explore topics and areas that are of most interest to the children. And, it will cover all content standards of what your child should know and be able to do prior to entering public school. This is going to be an exciting year!

I have been with Bright Start Learning Center for 8 years and have worked with children in other roles for over 15 years. I enjoy playing tennis, reading, crafting and spending time with my son, Isaiah. I also volunteer with children at my church as my first love is to God who has given me talents towards my second love, children.

Below are some questions I thought parents new to the curriculum would want answered. I hope they satisfy most of your questions.

Thank you,  
Acacia Becks

### **A Brief Introduction to the Dolphins classroom**

***The goal of Bright Start Preschool is to have the children learn to try, experience success, develop confidence within themselves and others, and an intrinsic motivation to learn.***

Our preschool program is highly focused, offering an ever-growing child-centered learning environment with multiple opportunities for children to experience new and familiar activities. The children are encouraged to make choices, experiment with ideas, problem solve, and develop other important skills. The Dolphins class introduces the children to a more formal class setting and starts to set the stage for kindergarten readiness.

The Dolphins classroom is staffed a minimum of one teacher for every ten children. Since we understand that play is such an important process for these young learners, we offer numerous activities for the Dolphins to do just that. Each day, the children are given opportunities to build,

pretend, and use a variety of supplies to create their own artistic masterpieces for their parent's enjoyment. They are also asked to follow established routines such as bathroom, wash up, clean up, nap, and circle times for stories, songs, and to introduce table time activities. Our table time activities might include such things as learning letters, numbers, colors, and solving puzzles.

### **Circle Time**

Similar to our other classes, our Dolphins enjoy circle time. The circle times last a little longer than in earlier classrooms and include a larger range of activities that are more appropriate for this age group. The children not only sing songs and listen to stories, but they also are given the opportunity to speak in front of the group to share ideas and experiences and to make connections. This type of activity will aid in their development of confidence and comfort with using language to effectively communicate with others.

### **Small Groups & Centers**

Learning centers are available to small groups of children (no more than five) in the Dolphins Class to facilitate basic preschool skills. These learning centers also provide students with the building blocks of social interaction and interpersonal communication. Some of the learning centers of study are:

- ✓ **Literacy-** A time for children to begin to facilitate pre-phonics and letter recognition skills.
- ✓ **Math-** Developing an understanding of counting, patterning, one-to-one correspondence, beginning sequencing, and shape comparison and identification.
- ✓ **Science-** Exposure to various items in the preschool environment on a sensory level; as well as gaining an understanding of the surrounding world with a focus on needs and characteristics of items in nature.
- ✓ **Art-** Students are given a variety of art media, as well as many different styles of art to work with and develop confidence and pride in their own works of art.
- ✓ **Fine Motor Development-** Using items such as play-dough, scissors, and puzzles; students develop muscles essential to writing skills and fine motor enhancement.
- ✓ **Gross Motor Development-** Developing coordination within the classroom setting in the areas like basic balance, running, catch, etc. in a safe and nurturing environment.

Computers are available for the children to use during the "school year." They are allowed no more than 10 minutes during Center times and are introduced to the use of the computers by the teachers. At Bright Start Learning Center we partner with the future by teaching children the basic skills they'll need to succeed in the age of technology.

Dolphins participate in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math), Computers (during the fall, winter, and spring) and Spanish enrichment activities. Each Friday morning, they participate in Music for Life class. Children in this classroom also enjoy sports classes in the Spring and Fall.

## What All Parents Need to Know

Licensing requires that:

- We maintain one teacher for every ten children (10:1) for children in our preschool.
- Children must be fully potty trained to be in enrolled in our preschool.
- All food/drinks must be labeled with the child's name and date. Please help us by labeling your child's food/drinks before you place it in the cubby.

We also need your help with the following:

- If your child is going to be late and plans to eat the school lunch, please notify us by 11:30 am so that we can reserve a lunch portion for your child. If we are not informed by 11:30 am, then we cannot guarantee that your child will be eating the same thing that is listed on the school menu.
- If you check your child out from the center and plan to return later, please notify us as you leave so that we can make appropriate staffing arrangements and/or lunch/snack preparation arrangements.
- Please keep us updated with any changes to your child's allergies or other medical conditions that might affect him/her while in our care.
- Please keep sippy cups at home.
- Please help us by providing a change of clothes to be kept in your child's cubby.
- Please do not place any sunscreen (topical creams), or medications in child's cubby. Give these items to your child's teachers.
- We are not responsible for personal items such as, rings, hair clips, silly bands, bracelets, etc.
- Have your child bring only 1 item for "Show and Share" related to either our "Letter of the Week" or the theme for the week.

## Dolphins GENERAL SCHEDULE



7:00-8:30 Welcome Time/ Center activities/ Hand Washing

8:30-9:00 Breakfast/ Center activities

9:00-9:30 Circle Time/ Creative Movements

9:30-10:00 Center Activities

10:00-10:30 Large Group Activities/ Literacy Language

10:30-11:00 Bathroom/ Hand Washing /Creative Movements

11:00-12:00 Outdoor Play

12:00-12:20 Bathroom/ Storytime

12:20-1:00 Lunch

1:00-1:15 Clean up & Bathroom

1:15-3:00 Nap Time

3:00-3:30 Bathroom/ Hand washing/ Snack

3:30-4:00 Clean up/ Afternoon circle time/ Preschool Math

4:00-4:50 Outside

5:00-5:15 Hand washing/ Snack

5:15-5:30 Creative Movements/ Story Time

5:30-6:30 Activity/ Free Play

## Answers to Questions Concerning the Junior Kindergarten Curriculum

**Question:**

How do you start a project?

**Answer:**

Topics are first selected, based on child, family, or teacher interest. The topic will then be researched by the teacher and planned out according to the *Investigations* steps of planning.

**Question:**

How or who decides the project is over?

**Answer:**

The topic will end when the children's interest has faded (my assumption is this will not happen). Secondary to interest, will be when all planned activities have been covered and assessed. If a child and/or teacher shows interest in another area corresponding with topic (that was not planned out on the activity web) we will continue with his/her interest.

**Question:**

How many projects will we have going at one time?

**Answer:**

I believe one at a time, however, as we delve into a topic we may find another intertwines with the investigation. I do not know as of now.

**Question:**

How will this curriculum cover the basic information the children need for kindergarten?

**Answer:**

Each investigation will be outlined (webbed) with the corresponding milestone. Performance standards for the state of Virginia will be incorporated with-in any topic with attention to those missed in a prior investigation. Thus, equipping the children with the skills they need for graduation.

**Question:**

How will you assess their learning?

**Answer:**

Each performance standard with-in activities will be assessed through the *scaffolding* and recorded on a regular basis by **EACH** teacher.

**Question:**

What types of learning styles will this incorporate?

**Answer:**

All types of learning styles will be incorporated.

**Question:**

How often do you anticipate field trips?

**Answer:**

I do not know as of now. Although, I assume a local field trip will be sought out and approved if the investigation calls for such.