



## **SUNRISE LANGUAGE CURRICULUM SUMMARY**

The acquisition of reading and writing is carefully woven throughout a child's years at Sunrise.

### **PRE-READING ACTIVITIES AND EXPERIENCE**

Toddlers are encouraged and given time to verbally express their needs and desires in simple ways. Teachers continually name items, events, feelings, etc. to help each child enrich his vocabulary. Materials in the classroom begin teaching pre-reading and pre-writing concepts.

Preschool activities lay the foundation for the reading and writing, which begin in earnest by the Kindergarten year. As in all Sunrise programs, learning to read and write is not built solely on the work done in the Language Area but is integrated into all areas of each classroom. There are many activities that are building blocks to successful reading and writing, many that most parents think are "just for fun". For example:

1. When a preschooler is pouring water, stringing beads, using tweezers to transfer objects and scrubbing tables, he is developing the eye-hand coordination and finger, arm and shoulder muscles necessary for future success in writing.
2. All activities in the Practical Life and Sensorial are arranged from left to right, just as our eyes move when we read. This arrangement is key in strengthening and preparing young eye muscles for reading.
3. In order to read and comprehend, children must be able to sequence events, categorize objects and distinguish shapes and sizes. These skills are reinforced day after day through materials in the Practical Life, Art and Sensorial areas of the classrooms.

All of these necessary pre-reading and pre-writing skills, and more, are found throughout the toddler and preschool classrooms. An underlying purpose to the "fun" your child is having with our colorful and enticing materials is to gain the skills and tools she needs to become a good reader and writer.

### **BEGINNING READING AND WRITING IN PRESCHOOL AND KINDERGARTEN**

Pre-reading and writing exercises are found throughout the Montessori classroom. These exercises develop and refine readiness skills in tracking, patterning, classification, development of finger-pincher grasp, and eye-hand coordination. Children are read to daily in a language-rich environment. Once introduced to formal symbols, refined skills support children in analyzing sounds, building simple words, and reading words left to right. The children illustrate ideas and label them, creating posters and books of their own design. As children learn to build and blend sounds into reading words, they expand to two and three word phrases, sentences, and phonetic readers. When they are ready, children are

introduced to consonant blends, silent vowels, sight words, and sentence analysis with articles, adjectives, nouns, and verbs.

Writing practice begins long before symbolic representation, as children have traced lines, shapes, puzzles, copied pictures and labels, and practiced fine motor skills through their artwork. Once the internal order for language and fine motor development are ready for writing, the child easily transitions into recording work. When they become able to write symbols, they begin with unlined paper, then move to writing in boxes, and then on lines and forms.

Kindergarten children enjoy the formal literature appreciation program, "Making Meaning", and practice formal handwriting lessons using the "Handwriting Without Tears" program. They also maintain personal dictionaries and receive workbooks which compliment their readers (Explode the Code and Primary Phonics). Afternoon cultural lessons also provide opportunities to work in reading, research, and writing.

Repetition of activities and practice using skills produce capable readers and writers. Teachers continue to observe needs and suggest or create activities to support the children in their development.

## **READING AND WRITING IN LOWER ELEMENTARY**

In Lower Elementary, children build on the skills that they have brought with them from kindergarten. Teacher expectations increase at a logical pace, taking into account each individual's skills, abilities and readiness. By the third year in lower elementary, most students are writing paragraphs, enjoying simple research projects and writing creative stories that they share with their classmates. Handwriting strength and skills have developed along the way and, throughout lower elementary, students practice handwriting as an important part of their daily work. Reading skills grow each and every day as the children use materials that increase their reading vocabulary, phonetic abilities, word analysis skills, and sight word acquisition. Silent and oral reading take place daily. Reading short children's novels becomes a favorite past time and the classroom library is a popular place.

## **READING AND WRITING IN UPPER ELEMENTARY**

It is expected that students entering Upper Elementary are established readers. Reading for pleasure is a daily adventure and the students develop their ability to read critically for the information needed for reports, essays and discussion. Reading aloud is practiced for fluency, intonation and expression. While the Lower Elementary focus is on "learning to read", the Upper Elementary focus is on "reading to learn". This learning refers to content literacy in Science and Cultural Study as well as a deeper analysis of the elements of fiction.

Writing skills grow by leaps and bounds in the Upper Elementary program. The students write on a daily basis in all areas of the classroom and cursive writing, which was introduced in lower elementary and is expected by the middle of the fourth year of elementary. Upper Elementary students continue to perfect punctuation, learn parts of speech and diagram sentences. Creative writing, a variety of essay forms, along with writing informative historical and geographical reports are practiced throughout each year.

The children in the upper elementary program have many opportunities to practice public speaking in front of their classmates, classroom parents and children from other programs. The 6th year students undertake a year long Senior Project and each student researches a topic of his choice. The students learn to take and organize notes, write an in depth research paper, and present an oral presentation with visual aids (power point, slides, video, etc.) to their family members, elementary classmates and parents and the Sunrise staff.