



Infants (6 weeks to 18 months)

At Building Blocks, your baby will be safe, nurtured, and loved. Cuddling and holding very young children is a big part of what we do everyday. Our infant room is filled with places where babies can roll, sit, crawl, pull up, and walk. We provide a flexible daily schedule that helps children develop a sense of trust and allows them to explore independently at their own pace. As they try new things under the watchful eye of our trained teachers, your child will be provided with plenty of warm praise and encouragement.

The youngest children in our center delight in exploring the world around them. Even routine activities such as feeding and diapering provide opportunities for our teachers to sing, talk, and interact with your infant. The introduction of sign language around six months of age provides our children with the foundation for strong communication skills. Books, songs, sensory experiences, art explorations, and fine and gross motor skill activities are carried out on a monthly basis.

Individual portfolios are created where the development and early learning experiences of each child will be documented throughout their journey at Building Blocks.



Toddlers (18 months-3 years)

During their toddler years at Building Blocks children develop social skills as they learn to care for and respect one another, and as they learn to problem solve. Loris Malaguzzi, founder of the programs in Reggio Emilia, has taught us that children express their thoughts and feelings through 100 Languages, the spoken word certainly, but also through gesture, music, constructing, dramatic play, dance, paint, clay, and drawing to name a few. Exploring these languages prepare children for their future journeys in preschool.

Hands-on and authentic experiences guide the curriculum for children to discover. Children are encouraged to use their senses as they explore the world around them. Through early literacy experiences, children learn to appreciate language, gain new vocabulary, and learn to use new words and concepts. Simple participatory songs and finger plays are important introductions to speech patterns, motor skill development, and math concepts.

Project work often steers their curriculum. Our teaching staff observes the children's interests through their play. Activities are developed and items are added to the environment to encourage further exploration, questioning, and discovery. It is proven that children learn more when the subject stimulates them; therefore colors, numbers, and emergent literacy are all strengthened through the Project Approach.

Our teachers and staff are quick to provide both encouragement and a safe, secure environment as these busy little people develop self-confidence. Toilet training is another component of our toddler program. Our staff will work together with parents to establish a toileting routine for toddlers. We feel consistency between home and school will obtain the best results.

Evidence of their growth and learning is documented and placed in a portfolio for each child.



Preschool (3-5 years)

Our multi-age preschool grouping of children 33 months to 5 years is intended to increase the heterogeneity of the group to capitalize on the differences in the experience, knowledge, and abilities of the children. By combining a multi-age group of children, team teaching, the Reggio Emilia approach, Emergent Curriculum, the Project Approach, and Themed Units we have truly created a child-centered environment.

Multi-Age Grouping

This term refers to grouping children so that the age span of the class is greater than one year to emphasize the goal of using teaching and curriculum practices that maximize the benefits of interaction and cooperation among children of various ages. Social competence develops for older children out of their roles as teachers and nurturers, and for younger children out their opportunity to observe and model the behavior of their older classmates.

In a multi-age group, younger children are capable of participating and contributing to far more complex activities than they could initiate if they were by themselves. Once the older ones set up the activity, the younger ones can participate, even if they could not have initiated it.

Every method of grouping children has risks. Single-age groups create pressures on children and teachers to expect the same knowledge and skills from all children, in groups of children with a wide age span, the range of behavior and performance likely to be accepted is wider. Research on mixed-age grouping suggests that in spite of its risks, the potential advantages outweigh the disadvantages.

Curriculum

All of our programs are inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach to Early Childhood Education. The Reggio philosophy builds the curriculum based on the interests of the children. Our approach to teaching is designed to make learning memorable, fun and inspiring. Two-week themed units are created each quarter keeping in mind the Reggio Emilia Approach.

The preschool curriculum is also focused around the Project Approach and Emergent Curriculum. The teachers observe the children's interests through their play and during this observation period the teacher will present a project topic. The children will share with their teacher what they already know about the topic and then lessons are developed to encourage further exploration, questioning, and discovery. It is proven that children learn more when the subject stimulates them; therefore colors, numbers, and emergent literacy are all strengthened through the topics chosen by the children. The results are incredible.

When the classroom is not buzzing with project work the children are learning uppercase and lowercase letters, phonics are introduced, numbers reaffirmed, basic math skills explored and science investigations carried out. During the course of the year our teachers collect documentation that includes the Michigan Department of Education Early Childhood, Early Learning Expectations.

Each child's learning experiences are documented through portfolio assessments. The portfolios are available for students and parents to view. Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled mid-year or as needed. These scheduled conference times provide an opportunity to discuss children's learning styles and growth. Parents may also express concerns and this can be a time to exchange information to support children's needs and development.

Learning Environment

Our goal, as it was for the schools of Reggio Emilia, is to create an environment for children, teachers, and parents. The multi-age preschool class is staffed with two teachers; however, in the Reggio approach the environment is considered the "third teacher." Our classrooms provide a

home-like learning environments and our playground extends the classroom outdoors. Each classroom is set up to inspire, nurture and encourage discovery. We believe children are lovers of learning and we create an environment to encourage and support this desire. Classrooms are divided into learning centers that intrinsically foster social skills, cognitive development, and academic skills, while engaging their desire to learn, as they explore and discover together. Learning activities, materials, and other items are introduced into the classroom environment that focuses around the interests of the children. The daily schedule provides a structure that helps the children feel secure and competent.



Full-Day Preschool

Our full-day preschool program achieves the best balance between the nurturing comfort each child needs and the stimulation that preschoolers thrive on. Our preschool curriculum, which is included in our full-day program, provides a foundation for life-long learning and prepares them for their future education. The enrichment afternoons provide in-depth learning experiences through fun activities in a particular area of study. Our learning atmosphere is an enriching environment that stimulates a child's natural desire to learn. Your child's creativity, learning style, and individual needs will be attended to by our highly qualified staff of educators.

Traditional Preschool

For many children this is their first experience with non-family members, and their first exposure to a social environment with their peers. Our comfortable, nurturing environment helps to ease the transition as they grow and adjust in their new surroundings. Children are welcomed at their individual stage of development and will be encouraged to continue their development individually. Our traditional preschool program follows the Huron Valley School Districts Academic Calendar. The traditional preschool students join our full-day preschool class. Children are not required to be potty trained. Children enrolled in our Preschool program at Building Blocks must be 3 years old on or before December 1, of the academic school year.