



Sleepy Hollow Preschool



Learning Through Play Since 1949

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Our Mission

To work together to nurture and support our children as they develop self-confidence and self-awareness, interacting with their world through play.





Our Cooperative Environment

The opportunity for parents and guardians to participate in our school program is both a unique benefit and a key responsibility of membership in the Sleepy Hollow community. Parents are welcomed into every aspect of our school, from an occasional extra set of hands in the classroom to leadership roles on our school board and committees. This participation allows parents to influence and share in the experiences that help our children grow and develop.

Member families are provided with the training required to be an active classroom participant. Each new family becomes an important part of our community, an ever-expanding network of teachers, parents, and alumni who support the children and their families. Often, the cooperative spirit our members and students experience during their time at SHPS follows them throughout their lives. Past members and alumni tell us that the supportive friendships made here follow them throughout their lives; through relocations, graduations, and even the birth of the next generation of SHPS students.

Learning Through Play

Play is a natural and effective way for children to make sense of the world and to try out the many roles and paths available within it. More than this, however, play is transformative. Through play, our children gradually discover who they are and who they want to be. Rather than developing rigid, structured lessons plans, Sleepy Hollow Preschool provides a carefully planned selection of open-ended activities. Students are free to select their own play from among active or quiet environments, large or small motor skill activities and a variety of materials. Teachers work with students to develop an emergent curriculum that encompasses the children's interests, whether they involve engineering, science, literature, or any topic the children wish to explore.

Our approach readies children for the experiences and learning to come in Kindergarten and beyond, and encourages them to become independent and confident learners. Recently published studies now link play to increased intelligence, well-being, and a strong sense of self.





It's always a wonder
to see them make
their first real friends.
— SHPS Parent



Two Year Olds

Sleepy Hollow Preschool's program for our youngest students is built around a classroom that feeds toddlers' budding curiosity and independence. We provide a safe and familiar environment that gives each child confidence and security and supports them in trying new things. In-room activities are selected for their ability to help with age-appropriate learning and development, and include water and sand play, artistic and dramatic play, puzzles and toys, and a quiet and comfy corner for listening to books or music. More rigorous physical play occurs outdoors on our private playground, or in the larger play rooms within our facility. Age and size-appropriate structures and activities are all around, including slides, climbing and dramatic-play structures. There are numerous areas in which toddlers can safely run, jump, splash, and slide as they learn how to interact with their world.



We were a part of his transformation from reluctant participant to fun-loving explorer.
- SHPS Parent

Three and Four Year Olds

Activities for our older students further expand their confidence, encouraging interactive, multi-age play while providing problem-solving opportunities. Introductory literacy and math skills are taught through embedded instruction. Children practice a variety of skills during their routines and transitions and while participating in numerous free-choice activities. We use both indoor and outdoor spaces to learn and discover: playing in other classrooms during Open Centers time, going on nature walks, using the playground for curriculum exploration, and gaining a sense of the larger world.

Common Activities:

There is no shortage of opportunities for learning through play at Sleepy Hollow. Outside play provides opportunities for large and fine motor-skills development, physical fitness, nature exploration, and even messy outdoor art projects. Homebase rooms provide group-oriented activities such as singing, story-telling, and directed discussions, as well as sharing snack time with friends. Our Open Centers program allows children to select from multiple rooms and activities as they plan and construct their own learning experiences. We have areas for indoor sand and other tactile play, caring for small animals, art projects, woodworking and using tools, blocks, puzzles, and countless other developmentally-appropriate toys and activities. Children also enjoy our Pretend Room for themed imaginative play.





Awards & Grants

Our teachers and staff are frequently honored by prestigious and influential organizations seeking out examples of excellence in service and support of children. The recognition includes:

- One of "America's Ten Outstanding Preschool Teachers" from Child Magazine
- "Outstanding Teacher of the Year" from VCPC
- "Service to Children Education Award" from Family Friends of Northern Virginia
- "District Award" recipient from Parent Cooperative Preschools International
- "School Readiness Educator Award" from Fairfax Futures

Additionally, Sleepy Hollow has been awarded numerous grants in support of our mission to provide children and families with the highest quality preschool education available. Grants include:

- Four Washington Post Grants In Education for Emergent Literacy, Inclusion, Science, and Emergent Curriculum
- Two NVAEYC grants for Project Inclusion and Child-Centered Curriculum
- VAECE Training Scholarship for Inclusion
- AT&T Grant for NAEYC Accredited Programs



**Play gives children
a chance to practice
what they are learning.**
- Fred Rogers

An Inclusive Program

Sleepy Hollow is a fully inclusive preschool that allows children, with and without developmental challenges, opportunities to play and learn together. Children with additional needs are included in a group of stimulating and positive peer models, involving them in a wide range of learning experiences and expectations. The entire classroom also benefits from inclusion. At this young age, children's attitudes about themselves and others are just developing. It is an ideal time to learn to interact positively with peers who may appear to be different in some way. Through inclusion, children learn to treat others with respect and integrity, regardless of the similarities or differences they see. These early experiences provide an important foundation for future social and emotional growth.

