



Trails for Kids

A VENTURE IN NATURE

Trails for Kids, Inc
23 Stoneridge Road
Summit NJ 07901

908-484-4856
trailsforkidsus.org
EIN: 92-1794154

CURRICULUM

By integrating the strengths of Reggio Emilia, Montessori, play-based, and nature-led learning styles, we create a comprehensive educational framework that:

- **Respects and nurtures each child's individuality and potential.**
- **Provides a rich, stimulating environment that encourages exploration, discovery, and creativity.**
- **Fosters independence, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills through hands-on and project-based learning.**
- **Encourages learning through play and direct interactions with nature, promoting holistic development and environmental stewardship.**
- **Values the collaboration and partnership of teachers, parents, and the community in the educational process.**

This integrated approach aims to develop well-rounded individuals who are not only academically proficient but also socially and emotionally resilient, environmentally conscious, and equipped with the skills necessary for lifelong learning and responsible citizenship.

Critical Learning Skills

To foster a positive learning process, it is essential for children to develop six Critical Learning Skills: self-regulation, the ability to follow routines, sustained attention, perspective-taking, following complex directions, and effective communication and conflict resolution.

Physical Development and Health

- **Fine Motor Skills:** Children use fine and gross motor skills to explore their environment. Focus on developing correct pencil grasp, scissor use, and techniques for painting and drawing

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- **Large Motor Skills:** Emphasize building upper body strength. Activities like climbing fallen trees support this development.
- **Practical Life Skills:** Activities in this area focus on instilling care for oneself, others, and the environment. They are designed to teach children how to interact with their surroundings and develop concentration, coordination, and independence. Practical life exercises include tasks like opening and closing their own backpacks and lunch boxes, dressing, and practicing societal rules of grace and courtesy. As children advance, these activities become more complex and involved and gain a deeper understanding of health and nutrition.

Character Education

- **Virtues and Conflict Resolution:** Teach virtues such as honesty and respect, alongside conflict resolution skills. These principles and skills are integrated throughout the curriculum.

Culture

Cultural studies encompass history, geography, art, physical sciences (botany, biology, zoology), music, and physical movement. The goal is to help children understand their place in the universe. They start by exploring commonalities between their own culture and others, developing appreciation and respect for differences. Children learn about the fundamental connections between all beings and find ways to feel significant in the world. They study people and cultures from other countries with respect and admiration.

Nature and Science

This subject offers hands-on learning experiences that encourage children to explore, discover, and investigate themes such as Animals, Health and Feelings, Weather/Seasons, and Plant Life Cycles.

Sample Activity: Build a Habitat!

Milestone: Observing and Describing Living Things - Children describe or draw the type of shelter used by familiar animals.

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Sensorial- Sensorial exercises focus on developing the five senses and exploring the physical properties of the environment. These activities are designed to enhance cognitive skills, allowing children to classify and organize impressions through touch, smell, sight, taste, and sound. By honing their senses, children develop intelligence and independence. The sensorial area also introduces geometry through sensory experiences.

- **Observation and Inquiry Skills:** Developed through the study of seasonal changes, the senses, and living things. Simple experiments expose students to physical science and chemistry concepts.
- **Science Concepts:** Colors, seasons, weather, healthy eating, and simple experiments involving colors, scales, weight, and environmentally conscious practices.

Sample Activities

- Finding bugs
- Observing patterns and changes
- Making towers
- Identifying animals
- Building forts
- Collecting rocks
- Using a magnifying glass
- Designing and floating boats
- Identifying plants
- Using a net

Mathematics

- **Introduction to Math Concepts:** Children are introduced to foundational math concepts that will be expanded upon in kindergarten. Instruction includes both large and small group sessions, daily routines, and math workstations, exploring concepts such as numbers, sorting, ordering, and patterns.
- **Developmentally Appropriate Materials:** Instruction utilizes materials that are suitable for the child's developmental stage. Emphasis is placed on manipulatives to build understanding in areas such as number sense, counting, reading and writing numbers, geometry, data collection,

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equivalence, and estimation. Key math concepts include reinforcing numbers up to 10, patterns, sorting, basic addition and subtraction, understanding relative size, and number recognition and formation.

Mathematical Activities:

Mathematical activities involve hands-on experiences with concrete materials, helping children grasp basic mathematical principles and preparing them for more abstract reasoning. Montessori mathematics focuses on numeration, the decimal system, and geometry. Children begin with numbers 1-10, progressing to 11-99, and then 1-1,000. They learn linear counting and numeral recognition, leading to concepts of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. Activities are engaging, involving movement, manipulatives, and group work. As children grow, they are encouraged to work individually and start engaging in abstract thinking.

Social Studies

Explore ourselves, our families, our community, and the wider world.

- Units focus on understanding the self in relation to family, school, community, nation, and the global context.

Creative Arts

- **Self-Expression:** Engaging in music, movement, drama, and visual arts to express ideas and emotions.
- **Music:** Playing instruments, following rhythms, creating new songs, and coordinating movement with music.

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Language & Literacy

Activities encompass identifying all letters (both uppercase and lowercase), sequencing sounds correctly, writing and reading short words, along with other early writing, reading, communication, and vocabulary tasks.

Sample Activity: Finding "Mm" in Text

Milestone: Recognizes all letters of the alphabet, both uppercase and lowercase.

Desired Outcome: Students can name all 26 letters of the alphabet in both uppercase and lowercase.

Language

For children aged 3-6, language exercises train them to focus on and differentiate between sounds. The Montessori classroom provides a rich environment for oral language development, offering opportunities for conversation, poetry, and stories. Children naturally connect sounds to symbols by tracing sandpaper letters with their fingers, which supports the development of writing and reading skills. Writing is also a fundamental part of the language curriculum.

- **Reading Language Arts:** In a literature-rich environment, students begin the writing process through group activities, teacher modeling, and journal writing.
- **Language and Communication:** Skills include following 3-step instructions, early writing, alphabet letter recognition and formation, early reading skills (such as sight words and common phrases), and name writing.
- **Phonics and Reading:** Direct phonics instruction is integrated with meaningful reading experiences.

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