**Curriculum Outline**

Social and Emotional

Through our play based curriculum children are encouraged to interact, play and learn from and with one another.  Through the sharing of materials children naturally begin to collaborate with one another and in doing so they learn about themselves and others as social experiences arise.  During whole and small group activities children learn what it means to become a part of a group while listening to others, waiting for a turn and responding to different thoughts and ideas shared.  In this environment children learn to balance their needs with the needs of the group by practicing self-control.  Each day at meeting time, outdoor time and during whole and small group activities children get to practice these skills.

Language Literacy Communication

Through play children have the opportunity to practice their speaking and communication skills as they work together to identify and act out roles, share ideas and form plans for their play.  This is the most natural way children practice and develop their speaking, listening and communication skills.  At our meetings each day we sing songs while practicing phonemic awareness.  The children listen and respond to stories told aloud in our special woods spot we call our “outdoor classroom”.  In addition, the children are encouraged to retell the stories by using the storyboard. We expand and extend this understanding of literature and text by offering props to familiar stories, which encourages children to act out the stories they become familiar with.

Mathematics

As teachers we look for natural opportunities to point out math in the children’s every day lives.  As we prepare for meeting, the children sit in a boy girl pattern.  Once everyone is sitting a child is chosen to count the number of people present at the meeting, at which time the teacher writes the numbers on the board.  As children build with multiple types of materials outdoors, teachers take opportunities to point out the shapes they’ve created by placing different pieces together.  Children excitedly notice whose structure is taller, wider, shorter, and longer than the others. Through observation in the outdoors, song, dance and every day experiences we practice color shape and size recognition.

 Science

Each day the children explore the natural world around them whether in our“Loose Parts Play”area, on a hike, or in our “outdoor classroom” in the woods. Here the children expand their imagination by playing with what each season offers them, while recognizing the differences in the plants, sky, temperature and feel of the outdoors.  We often bring the “treasures” we find back into the classroom for further exploration.  When a child’s interest is peaked, we use magnifying glasses and books to search for more information on the particular article found, whether it be a beautiful leaf, drop of sap or melting snow. Children learn through doing and experiencing with all of their senses. Nature offers the perfect opportunity to learn through curiosity and exploration while testing their theories about what we may find and discover.

 Social Studies

During our first month of school we begin a yearlong conversation about who each child is, and how they are the same and different from one another as we share about our ourselves and our families.  As the year continues we extend this conversation to the greater community as we dive into units of study derived from student interests.  These units give us opportunities to learn more about the topics we are interested in by using the resources our community has to offer.  For example, during our unit on construction we visited the wood shop in our building, used by the high school students.  Along with this, we took a field trip to the local hardware store to learn about where construction workers buy the tools they use to build.

Creative Expression

 Music, movement and art some of the most important outlets children have to express themselves.  In our classroom we foster this expression by offering children an ever-changing dramatic play area, which focuses on the unit of study.  This year our dramatic play area has changed from a bear cave, to a campsite, to a bakery.  Here children are encouraged to use the dramatic play area to act out what experiences they have had or wish to have while learning more about the topic, themselves and each other.

Our classroom has an art center equipped with various medium that children have access to at all times.  Here students can explore freedom of expression and beauty as they create, manipulate and explore materials.

Each day we sing, dance and move together at our meetings.  This is often the children’s favorite part of the day!

Physical Health & Development

Children learn with their whole bodies, the outdoor environment offers the space and freedom to do just this.  During group games in the large field children learn about body awareness and space while recognizing those around them. While in the classroom we encourage children to move to the beat of the song, or follow the body movements during group games.  While outside, children are free to move as fast or slow as they choose as they play hide and seek behind large oat trees, or build snow people with their friends.