

City of Little Saints Learning Centers Room

Our learning centers room, **Learning Lane**, has been set up using our city theme. We have six centers which the children can use for “constructive play” during their roughly one hour of free exploration each day at preschool. What is constructive play? Early Childhood Educators agree that it encompasses the following:

- ☺ Is safe, wholesome and non-violent.
- ☺ Stimulates children to develop skills and positive relationships.
- ☺ Inspires children to learn more about themselves and the world around them.
- ☺ Enables children to fully realize their potential.
- ☺ Encourages creativity and helps develop a child's personality.
- ☺ Makes learning fun.

The following is a description of each center including the school readiness skills that are learned and practiced:



Little Saints Chapel (Faith formation)

City of Little Saints is using The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd for the children's Faith formation. It is rooted in the New Testament, the liturgy of the church, and the educational principles of Maria Montessori. With this approach, children have a hands on opportunity to experience their Faith using materials that are introduced on a gradual basis. For example, the children learn how to set a prayer table and are then given the opportunity to practice the ritual and say prayers.



Imagination Alley (dramatic play)

Dramatic (or pretend) play develops the social and emotional skills of children. Through cooperative play, they learn how to take turns, share responsibility, and creatively problem-solve. When children pretend to be different characters, they have the experience of “walking in someone else's shoes”, which helps teach the important moral development skill of empathy. Imagination Alley is situated on a 4” maple platform with railing to encourage children to step up into the area. We rotate the theme each month (i.e., kitchen, laundry room, restaurant, pet hospital) to add variety and maximize role playing opportunities.

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Games and Puzzles Parkway

Playing games and making puzzles develop the social, emotional, language, and intellectual skills of children. Children learn to follow directions, focus, take turns and problem solve. Our games focus on building literacy and counting skills. The children can work on a variety of themed puzzles at the puzzle counter within the classroom. Table games are played with teacher support.



Reading Rest Stop (literacy)

Giving children the opportunity to look at picture books or to be read to by a teacher takes place in a comfortable and quiet corner of Learning Lane. The children can choose from a multitude of theme oriented books that are rotated on a monthly basis.



Sensory Street (art and sand table)

Sensory Street is where children's imaginations take flight. Play dough, easel painting, a sand and water table along with other art activities provide the children with hands on, multisensory experiences. For example, the children have assisted in making scented and colored play dough. Fine motor skills and social skills like sharing and taking turns are practiced while visiting Sensory Street.



Construction Zone (blocks)

When children play with blocks, they are practicing mathematical skills. Because it involves measuring lengths, widths and heights, block play develops a child's ability to mentally visualize relationships; skills used in geometry and algebra during later school years. Cleaning up involves math, too: sorting identical and dissimilar shapes, and organizing by size. The Construction zone is situated on a large carpeted area within the room to give the children ample space to build.