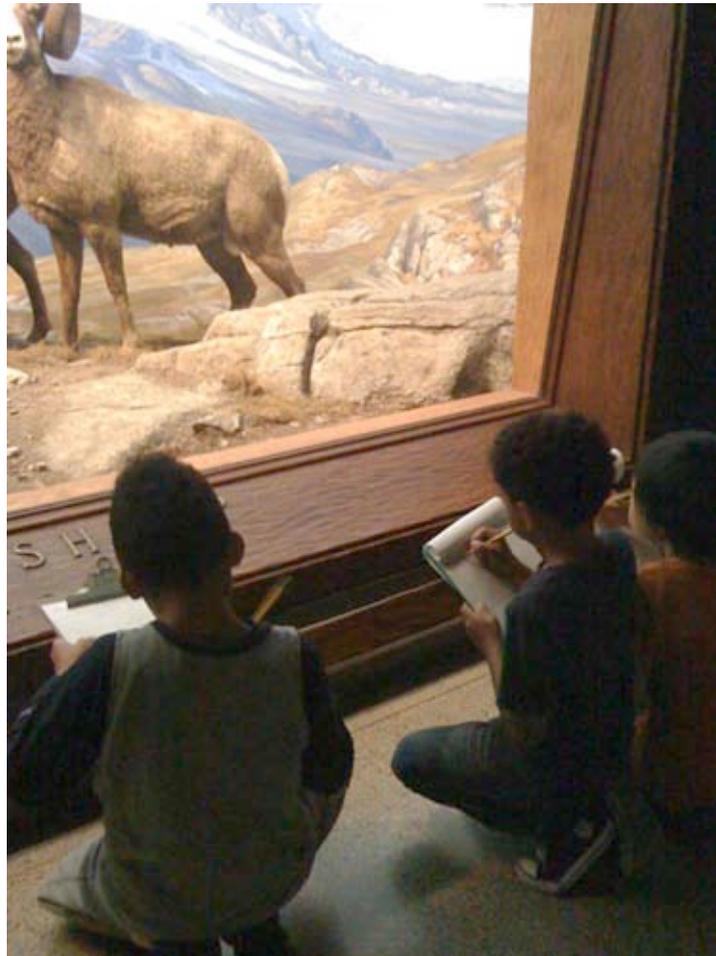


The Neighborhood School



Curriculum Outline 2008-2009

Curriculum is at the heart of our school. It is born of the interests and developmental capacity of the children and the goals and knowledge of the teachers. We understand that children are learning to make sense of the world. They need to be equipped to live in the world. We work with each child to further that child's academic and social development. The curriculum provides opportunities for children to find new areas of interest and strength as they grow, to present their ideas and be well spoken and self assured in public presentations. Children develop a sense of responsibility towards the community through their group work, as well as towards their own individual learning.

We provide children with work that is real. We look at what real writers do, what good readers do in order to build curriculum that is important and relevant to the lives of the children. We teach children to be researchers from pre-kindergarten up through 5th grade and to reflect on their experiences to ask questions and learn.

We assess children through looking at collections of their work, through observing them work and participate in class activities, by keeping notes on their progress and through conferencing with them about their work.

Every spring, each grade level and the administration meet to decide the curriculum for the following year. Our mixed age classes are on a two year cycle of curriculum, to match the two years the children are in the classes. We choose topics and areas of study that are important and worthwhile, that spark the ideas of children, that provide a platform for later learning. We look at benchmarks and standards put out by groups such as the National Science Foundation, the National Conference of Teachers of Math, the National Association of Educators of Young Children and New York State. We work with organizations such as the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, the Institute for Literacy Development at Long Island University, Bank Street College and Math in the City to ever hone our skills and ideas in teaching and learning.

This curriculum outline details the range of studies in which your child will engage this year. You will receive more in depth information from curriculum night and the curriculum letters your child's teacher writes to you. If you want to see the curriculum outline for the whole school, from pre-k through 5th grade, you will find it on our school's web site. You will continue to receive a new curriculum outline every year from now at the beginning of the school year.

I hope that this curriculum outline provides information that helps you become more connected to our school and to your child's learning. If you have any questions, ideas or feedback, please e-mail Neighborhood School's new principal, Milo, at milo.novelo@gmail.com.

Fondly,
Judith

Pre-kindergarten/Kindergarten

Children at this age are making sense of their world and play is their work. They experience everything in relation to themselves and through close observation of and experience with the social and physical world outside and inside the classroom, they form ideas about how the world works. Classrooms are stocked with a variety of materials such as sand, water, blocks, cooking and natural materials, so that children can explore and raise questions to make hypothesis about the world. They use blocks, dramatic play, writing materials, math manipulatives, books and art to explore, investigate, research, develop and present their developing ideas and understanding. Through their play, children learn to socialize, work collaboratively and work independently.

Our goals are for children to see themselves as capable thinkers, makers and doers. As children participate in independent and teacher directed activities, they increase their knowledge and understanding, range of strategies and expand their ability to reflect on their experiences and work. We help them raise questions about what they are thinking or seeing, and to persevere in finding ways to solve their questions. We support them to express and share their thoughts and experiences with others and to listen to, understand and respond to the ideas of others. We offer them a variety of experiences that will enable them to become independent, responsible, self aware, confident individuals who can work well with others and enjoy the rich diversity of our community.

Social Studies

The core social studies topic for pre-k/k this year is Ourselves/Human Growth. Questions we explore are How does a family, classroom, community take care of its members? What do people need to grow and thrive? How do we learn how to work together in the classroom? How do we express our ideas in ways that respect other people? How do we observe and describe? How do we share our ideas? How do we disagree in ways that don't hurt the feelings of others?.

Children begin this study by sharing information about themselves so that they can form connections with each other and build a cohesive classroom community. Over the course of this year long study, children learn about growth and human development, the five senses and how the body works, different

family cultures, and how we live in interconnected communities (family and school).

During the course of this study, children take neighborhood walks and other trips to places such as the Farmer's Market, Botanic Garden, and the American Museum of Natural History.

Math

The studies we undertake reinforce and build on each other. None are undertaken in isolation. We will pull out a particular area of math to study to focus deeply on those skills and concepts.

Measurement

Measurement is an important way to describe and understand physical properties of objects and their relationship. Children expand their understanding of size, length and weight and refine their strategies for measuring and comparing. They measure and compare length, weight and quantity using a variety of nonstandard and standard units of measure including unifix cubes, cuisinaire rods, measuring tapes, rulers, counting bears, parts of our body, balance pans and measuring cups and spoons. Our emphasis is on the compiling and use of our results by graphing findings on bar graphs and tallies and use these for practical purposes such as how many crackers we need for snack.

Repeating Pattern

Repeating pattern is the basis of our number system. It is central to human expression and is found throughout the physical world. Children learn to identify, describe and compare repeating patterns. They learn to create, replicate and extend pattern in two and three dimensional work.

Sorting and Classifying

Our brain is organized to sort and classify. It is the foundation of the natural sciences. Children learn to identify the attributes of an object and to classify objects using one or more shared attributes. They learn different ways to sort objects such as this big, flat red, rough four holed button can go with the set of red buttons or big buttons. We structure math activities for children to develop flexibility in thinking and problem solving.

Number Sense

Children extend their recognition of and ability to write numerals. They develop an understanding of one to one correspondence (one object represents one spoken number) and develop strategies for counting objects more accurately. They practice describing numerically and estimating quantity. They make sets of objects and explore the concepts of addition, subtraction,

multiplication and division using concrete materials in real life contexts such as cooking or serving snack. They build early understanding of numerical relationships through working out number combinations (e.g. six is three and three as well as five and one).

Geometry

Children explore and name geometric shapes and recognize and describe their attributes. Using two and three dimensional geometric shapes, children develop their sense of spatial relationships and volume.

Literacy

Fiction/Non-fiction/Poetry

Classroom libraries provide a rich variety of books for children to enjoy. Through being read to and reading in groups, partnerships and individually, children become familiar with many types of books and stories. Children are exposed to the structures of different genres of text and how to read and write in a particular genre such as personal narrative. Through work in reading and writing, they learn conventions of print such as reading from left to right and simple punctuation. Children develop greater understanding of how the alphabetic system and print works, and how to make sense out of text. Children are immersed in books and story and develop understanding of story structure and conventions. They further develop comprehension skills through retelling, reflecting on the text and predicting what will happen next.

Reading

Children learn strategies for making meaning from text. These include recognizing familiar words, using the illustrations to understand what the text is about and using letter sounds such as initial consonants to figure out the word. Children also learn to recognize and predict the pattern of a text, and to stop and decide what sounds right and what makes sense.

Writing

Children begin writing by drawing pictures of what they wish to communicate. As they increase their knowledge of print, children also begin to record their ideas using letters to represent text. Children write stories about themselves, their families and other personal topics that interest them. They have varied opportunities for purposeful writing such as invitations to classroom events, signs for the block area, menus, cards, letters and notes. They write "How To" and/or "All About" books that convey information about a specific topic or how to do something. Children listen to, write and share poetry as well.

1st and 2nd Grade



Children at this age are curious and have a growing awareness of and interest in the world around them. They learn best by actively engaging with materials and by having opportunities to extend their own ideas. They also reflect on their thinking by making and doing, and through plentiful social interactions.

Our goals are for children to continue to develop as confident, independent thinkers who pursue their interests and curiosities. They expand their capacity for learning by explaining thinking and becoming aware of the ideas of others. They begin to understand what it means to be an engaged citizen within the classroom community, school community and the larger world. We support children in their efforts to treat one another with kindness and to understand the feelings and viewpoints of each other.

Social Studies

The core social studies topic for 1st/2nd grade for this year is Community: Getting to Know the Classroom, School and Neighborhood Community, and a study of the Built Environment and Architecture in New York City.

Some of the essential questions we explore are: What is a community? How does a community take care of its needs? How do individuals contribute? How are the roles of community members interconnected? How do individuals contribute within the larger city? What are the responsibilities of individuals and groups? and How do individuals have membership in various groups simultaneously?

In this year's work, children participate in regular, rich discussions that cover topics that are planned and emerge from the work of the group. The children build on earlier work to make and record observations, make predictions, estimations and educated guesses as well as to learn interviewing skills. They make and take surveys, classify, organize and report their results and findings. Learning and using content specific vocabulary is also part of the social studies curriculum in this grade.

Children take numerous trips in the course of this study. Each trip is selected and planned to propel the curriculum through the particular trip experience and related work before and after the excursion. The children meet and learn from professionals in the fields they are studying. The students then use these experiences to create classroom simulations to grapple with, emulate and show what they have learned.

Math

Data Collection

This is a key study because so much information in our world is compiled, presented and understood mathematically. Children collect and organize data to answer a question of their choosing, display data in the most appropriate format, and make statements and draw conclusions based on data.

Number Sense and Computation

Children gain greater facility in manipulating numbers and applying the operations of addition and subtraction in various situations. We help children develop an understanding of these computation operations by using concrete materials such as counters, thinking about real situations and visualizing the action in story problems. Number relationships such as doubles, combinations of 10 and multiples of 10 will be explored so that children can comfortably manipulate the number system for their own purposes. Children also build facility with basic addition and subtraction facts.

Geometry

In this study, children learn how to put together and take apart shapes to make other shapes and will have many experiences building shapes with various materials to deepen their understandings of geometric figures. Children also understand how both two- and three-dimensional shapes play an important role in architecture.

Literacy

Personal narrative/Non-fiction/Poetry/Purposeful writing

As children study each genre, they are immersed in literature via read alouds, shared texts and independent reading. Each writing study includes attention to crafting, editing and revising each student's own work to make their writing more powerful. Alongside these genre studies, children participate in individualized literacy instruction that helps them develop as independent readers and writers. This instruction includes work with comprehension strategies, handwriting, vocabulary and word study. Ultimately, we aim to help students continue in their journeys as lifelong readers and writers.



Third Grade

Children at this age are becoming more independent and responsible for the choices they make. They begin to wrestle with more abstract ideas and concepts, while still needing concrete examples and reinforcement. In many areas such as reading and writing, they are developing the ability to sustain focus for longer periods of time as well as personal tastes. Children are also honing their ability to solve problems socially.

Our goals are for children to build their independence and responsibility both on academic and social fronts. We want children to take pride in the quality and quantity of their work. We want them to formulate their own ideas and feel confident about expressing their personal tastes and points of view.

Social Studies

At this stage of development, children's understanding of the world moves out of their communities and into the more abstract realms. We study history by tracing our own family stories and the history of this neighborhood a century ago. We step back in time and visit immigration on the Lower East Side at the turn of the century. Later in the year, we take a bigger leap back and study life in the days of New Amsterdam.

Some of the essential questions we explore are What is history? Why do people leave one home and settle in another? What do people bring with them and why? What do people need to survive? How do people adapt to a new home? What immediate and long term impact do newcomers make? and What is the role of children?

Immigration Study

Children learn how to get information from maps, charts and different kinds of graphs. They explore family traditions and keepsakes. They investigate family heritage and interview family members, creating personal and family time lines based on their findings. Children role-play to work out and represent their imaginings and ideas about life one hundred years ago. Trips may include visits to such sites as the Folk Art Museum, Museum of Natural History, Ellis Island, Tenement Museum, Museum of the Chinese American, New York Historical Society and Jewish Museum.

New Amsterdam Study

Children take a look at medieval world exploration and the silk route. They plot resources and trade trends on world maps and compare past and present trading trends. Children explore spices and their role in our lives. They explore timelines and the lifestyle of New Amsterdam. Trips in this unit may include visits to the Metropolitan Museum, Museum of Natural History, Museum of the City of NY, St Mark's on the Bowery, Middle Collegiate Church, Lefferts Homestead or Wycoff House, Van Cortland Manor or Philipsburg Manor and the Battery in Lower Manhattan.

Math

Addition and Subtraction and the Number System

Children deepen their understanding of how our number system works by representing addition and subtraction on the number line. They explore place value to develop more flexible thinking about numbers and quantity. For example, 35 can be three 10s and five 1s, or five 5s or thirty-five 1s. They develop strategies to add and subtract accurately and efficiently.

Data Analysis

Children build on their previous experiences in data representation by classifying data in multiple ways. They describe, summarize and compare data from multiple sources. Children find out that different forms of presenting data will affect our interpretation of results.

Geometry and Measurement

Children describe and classify two-dimensional figures. They describe and compare angles and have experience measuring and finding equivalents with standard units measuring volume, length and mass.

Multiplication and Division

Children learn the meaning of multiplication and explore how it works. They learn how to use and understand the notation of multiplication and how to write and solve multiplication problems. Children learn the multiplication combinations with products up to 50 fluently.

Patterns, Functions and Change

Children use graphs and charts to represent change over time and make predictions based on trends in data. This is related to one form of algebraic reasoning.

Fractions and Decimals

Children explore relationships between parts to the whole and equivalents. They will add and subtract like fractions using concrete materials and numbers.

Literacy

Reading

In the third grade, we work with children to choose books that interest them and which they can read, build up reading stamina and develop personal tastes in reading genres. Students retell stories, discuss story elements such as setting and look closely at characters and how they develop. They build inference skills and develop ideas about plot and character through writing. Students learn how to differentiate the reading skills they use for fiction and non-fiction. The units of study in reading for this year are Launching Reading Workshop, Inference and Growing Ideas, Non-Fiction Reading, Poetry, Book Clubs and Partnership Reading around Mysteries.

Writing

The main goals for writing in third grade are introducing the writer's notebook, independently engaging in the writing cycle of generating ideas, drafting, editing and publishing, developing stamina and independence, learning to write in different genres using a variety of crafting elements such as dialogue and further development of writing mechanics such as spelling, punctuation and grammar. The writing units of study are Launching the Writing Workshop, Introducing Writing Notebooks, Personal Narratives, Non-Fiction Writing, Poetry and Independent Projects.



working on 1000's

Fourth and Fifth Grade



building a model of “green” design

Children at this age are continuing their progress in gaining independence and expanding their capacity for abstract thinking. They are exploring broader issues in the world around them such as why there is hunger or why laws are made. They are developing and supporting their own ideas and theories, while also understanding multiple perspectives.

Our main goals for the children include independence, problem solving, community building and support, investment in their work and awareness of social justice issues and their own agency.

Social Studies

These are the two core social studies curriculum topics this year.

Government and Elections

The essential questions we explore include What is the basic structure of government? How does the election process work? What are the big issues facing the country? and Where does each candidate stand on the issues?

During the course of this study, children have relevant trips to election exhibits such as “If Elected” at the New York Historical Society, “Campaigning for President, New York and the American Election” at the Museum of the City of New York and a trip to City Hall. Students also follow the election by reading current events and discussing relevant issues.

Mesopotamia

Some of the essential questions explored in this study are What is ancient? What does it mean to have a civilization? What can we learn from studying ancient civilizations? How do climate and geography affect culture? and Myths and Legends: Why do people tell stories?

During the course of this study, children have trips to the American Museum of Natural History, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and other relevant sites. They read, write, discuss and create projects based on the essential questions. For example, children create and write their own myths, build a clay terrain model of the region, learn about writing in cuneiform and develop non-fiction reading, critical thinking and note taking skills.

Math

Two-dimensional geometry

In this study, children explore the properties of a polygon, and how to classify and measure angles and polygons. They learn how to measure area and perimeter through consideration of real life problems.

Multiplication and Division

Children build on their more concrete third grade work with arrays to develop efficient and accurate strategies for solving problems using only numbers and operations. They explore the connections between multiplication and division and gain fluency in basic multiplication and division facts.

Addition, Subtraction and Place Value

Children learn how to solve problems efficiently and accurately using multiple strategies and will explore the connection between addition and subtraction. They deepen their understanding of place value through exploration of models of the number system such as number lines and charts.

Fractions, Decimals and Percent

Children learn what each is and why to choose one particular format instead of the others. They explore the connection between fractions, decimals and percent. They also investigate equivalency and how to add and subtract basic fractions, decimals and percent.

Data and Probability

In this study, children expand on their prior knowledge of how to collect and represent data. They learn the language such as median and mean associated with data and probability. They explore how fractions support understanding of probability.

Reading

The topics of study in reading this year are Story Elements, Non-fiction Reading, Partnership Reading around Short Texts, Author Study Book Clubs, Myths and Legends Book Clubs and Non-fiction Social Studies Reading.

Our main goals in reading are to expose children to multiple genres and reading skills, for children to choose books appropriate to their interests and understanding, to engage personally with books by activating their prior knowledge, to build their inference skills, to support their theories and big ideas with text evidence, and to become more deep and independent readers in life.

Writing

The topics of study in writing this year are Living a Writerly Life, Personal Essay/Document Based Question, Memoir, Literary Essay, Independent Writing, Realistic Fiction, Mentor Author Study, Mythology and Poetry.

Our main goals are helping children be independent writers, use the writing process fully, learn different genres of writing and how to make decisions about crafting their work, and develop skills and mechanics in spelling, punctuation and grammar.



Science



Using the “Scratch” program in technology studies

Our main goal in science this year is to cultivate in the children a love for and understanding of the natural world, so that throughout their lives they can enjoy it as well as help to conserve it. The emphasis for the younger children is on refining their skills of observation. The older children build on these skills with more sophisticated tools for modeling. They also learn to frame questions, conduct experiments and collect, represent, and interpret data.

With the younger children, our emphasis is on helping to encourage and direct their natural curiosity and wonder. Toward this end, we are using all five senses in observation, developing a vocabulary to describe what we notice, and using different tools and styles of drawing to record what we see. Since having the words to describe something helps them perceive it more acutely, we work to develop a shared vocabulary for the qualities of objects. We are also doing lots of observational drawing, during which I challenge them to draw what they *notice* about the object of observation, as distinct from what they know or imagine about it. For example, around Halloween we examined split-open pumpkins. While some children, when it came time to draw them, were inclined to draw jack-o-lanterns, I reminded them to really observe what the split-open pumpkin looked like. They then made considered choices of color, shape, texture, and line, and showed the arrangement of seeds inside, the thickness of the pumpkin's shell, and the difference in color between the skin, flesh, stem, and seeds. This close

observation, in turn, prepared us to discuss the function of the different parts they noticed and to study seeds and get ready to dry and plant the pumpkin seeds we harvested.

In order to help cultivate a sense of responsibility and stewardship toward the natural world, we are raising various living things in the classroom, and we discuss the needs of those plants and animals as we care for them. To give one example, we are engaged in a year-long project to raise trout – native to the New York City watershed – from eggs to small fish which we will release in a stream upstate. To be successful, we must mimic the trout's natural conditions, including cold, clean water. This gives us opportunities to study their natural environment, use chemical tests to monitor the water quality in our 55-gallon tank, and learn about the impact of human development on their habitat.

The project has added significance for us as consumers of New York City water, since the trout's habitat is also the source of our drinking water. In addition to the curriculum on trout development and life cycle, we are engaged with the Department of Environmental Protection in a study of the sources of our drinking water upstate, the engineering feats involved in using gravity alone to bring water hundreds of miles to the city, and the need to collaborate with farmers and loggers upstate to keep their land unpolluted so our water remains clean. This water study coordinates with the 4th and 5th graders' focus this year on the ancient inventors of irrigation – the Mesopotamians.

Qualitative observation, of course, only tells half the story in science. The other half is quantitative. The trout project alone generates ample data. Every day, teams of students in each class take turns with the clipboard to collect data on water quality, temperature, pH, ammonia level, and mortality. We will be discussing meaningful ways to represent this data, with charts, graphs, diagrams, and timelines. We will then look for correlations to help us frame questions about the project.



feeding the trout

Technology

We use technology every day in class as a tool to aid in observation (digital camera), discussion (projection), model-making (animations to represent the transformation of trout eggs to hatchlings), and communication (emailing reports and digital photos to other participants in the project; making posters). Students use the computer to do research, publish reports on their observations, and create graphic representations of data.

The younger children work with Roamer, a robot they program to move forward, back, and around corners. Working with Roamer demands that they define their intention, then figure out (using numbers) how to write a simple program which will enable Roamer to follow a certain course on the floor.

Another aspect of my work is to collaborate with teachers to help integrate technology into their classroom practice. For example, I am working with Dara's class on a book and digital animation project featuring Action Words as acted out by the students. A series of digital photographs illustrates two children Running toward the camera. Another series illustrates a girl Zipping up her jacket. Another shows two children Cooking. I will involve the children in assembling the photos on the computer. I bring Roamer down to the classes for our push in time, and work with pairs of students in the hallway outside the classroom. Roamer is programmed to move forward and back in increments matching the size of the floor tiles, so it helps the children understand and count his movements.

Finally, I offered technical support to a class who used Google Maps to create a hyperlinked, annotated map assembling what they learned from a novel set in Alaska.

Espanol

Our students are very fortunate to have Spanish as part of their school curriculum. The long term goal is communication. Other goals are appreciating other cultures and the value of communicating in another language and motivating them to pursue a language study throughout their educational lives.

We know that learning occurs in meaningful contexts that are significant for the students, such as social and cultural situations. For that reason, we use familiar and enjoyable activities and situations for language learning. Their comprehension and vocabulary are increasing while they learn songs and rhymes, read the class news in Espanol, find the date on the calendar, tell the weather, listen to familiar story books, make books and play counting or vocabulary games such as "Simon Dice" (Simon Says) and pantomime. Through these games children are engaged in learning language and they demonstrate comprehension through their actions. Later students will participate orally by answering simple yes/no questions then making choices and finally answering

open-ended statements. Children in the upper grades can participate in brief conversations over familiar topics using simple sentences. They are able to read and write simple sentences in Spanish.

Children are learning basic expressions that help them get by in class every day, for example, how to ask for permission to go to the bathroom ¿Puedo ir al baño?, and for a drink of water ¿Puedo tomar agua?, and many more.

Learning another language enhances a child's English ability and opens up doors to the world!



Library Program

Our library program focuses on nurturing children's love of literature and enthusiasm for investigating knowledge. The curriculum is guided by the American Association of School Librarians' (AASL) "Standards for the 21st Century Learner" and the Information Fluency Continuum standards developed by the New York City Department of School Library Services: Using Inquiry to Build Understanding, Pursuing Personal and Aesthetic Growth, and Demonstrating Social Responsibility. Library lessons are developed in connection with classroom learning. Skills at each grade level build incrementally on prior grades and at all levels reading comprehension strategies are employed. Children visit the library with their classroom teacher on a fixed, regular, bi-monthly schedule. In addition, open access slots are available to allow teachers to work collaboratively at points of need, as well as for students in upper grades to visit independently.

Pre-K/K

Pre-kindergarteners and kindergarteners can answer "What is the Library? and Who is the Librarian?" Regular library class activities include finger plays, nursery rhymes, and read-alouds. Literature themes connect with social studies units, such as Our Families, Our School, Our Bodies. Among the benchmark skills for Library are understanding that there are many types of books in the library, recognizing parts of a book, and the roles of author and illustrator. PreK/Kindergarteners begin to check out books from the library, learning responsibility associated with proper care of books, and the concept of borrowing (sharing with the school community).

Grades 1/2

First and second graders ask "I Wonder" questions. The library offers an opportunity for children to share what they already know about a topic as well as to connect our library's resources to their own interests. Students recognize that the library provides resources for reading for enjoyment and reading for information. Among the benchmark skills for grades 1/2 are understanding the difference between nonfiction and fiction, recognizing facts to answer questions, and recognizing the purpose of the library's online catalog. First and second graders understand that the library is organized into sections, and that the call number represents the "address" of the book on the shelves. A variety of fiction and nonfiction is read aloud in library class. Children understand the roles of author and illustrator, and begin to recognize their distinct styles. In keeping with the social studies curriculum, some literature themes have included New York City, restaurants and cooking, architecture, and folklore.

Grade 3

Third grade classes connect resources to their own interests, and develop an awareness of their reading tastes. Building on what they learned since second

grade, they understand the organization of the library—for nonfiction, the ten major Dewey areas and what main topics are included in each; for fiction, by author's last name. Third graders practice using the online catalog to search for materials. Reference sources, including, encyclopedias, dictionaries and atlases, are introduced. Benchmark skills for third graders include using websites selected by the librarian to find appropriate information; distinguishing between fact and opinion; and discussing problems and solutions in a story. Literature themes are drawn from the English language arts and social studies curricula, and include geography, immigration and family stories, as well as various genres and nonfiction topics.

Grades 4/5

Fourth and fifth graders continue to grow as library users. Library lessons are planned collaboratively with the classroom teachers, so that library and research skills are taught in connection with classroom content, especially for social studies. Benchmark skills for grades 4/5 include assessing questions to determine which can be answered by simple facts, which cannot be answered, and which would lead to an interesting inquiry. Students use multiple resources including print, electronic, and human, to locate information. They begin to evaluate print and electronic information for usefulness and select appropriate sources to answer questions. Fourth and fifth graders recognize and use nonfiction text features, e.g., table of contents, index, illustrations, and glossary, to find information. Students use online catalog, with guidance, to locate sources. Grades 4/5 learn to observe Internet safety procedures, including safeguarding personal information. Fourth and fifth graders have many opportunities to visit the library independently, outside of the bi-monthly class visit.



Physical Education/Conflict Resolution

The overall goals of the Physical Education Program are to have each student enjoy physical activity and participate constructively in each activity. This is accomplished by providing opportunities for students to play/work together to develop competence in sport, physical and social skills. Students also develop the ability to play the games and activities independently and productively. In the Lower Grades this becomes evident as the students demonstrate knowledge of the rules, speaking up when the rules are not being followed, stating how they want to be treated in the activity or speaking up about which activity they would like to start. In the Upper Grades the students are supported in taking a more active role in the activity. They get a turn to be on a committee of three classmates to choose three teams that they each lead for the month. These three teams take turns to referee a game. As two teams are playing, a third team referees. The disputes that arise in the activities are resolved peacefully by each side expressing their respective point of view and when appropriate, the referees make the call.

The students in the Lower Grades Physical Education Program primarily work in small group activities called Choice Time. During Choice Time the students choose one of six different activities to start. Each student stays at the activity and work collaboratively with the other students who have also chosen that activity. Every 5 to 10 minutes the students rotate to the next activity. This allows the student to practice various skills each day. The students are encouraged to refine their skills, work co-operatively and take great joy in sharing their accomplishments with the class or the teacher. The students also use a tremendous amount of imagination and find different ways of using the equipment and making connections with what they are learning at school and at home.

Team Building and Tag Games are taught in the Lower Grades and continue in the Upper Grades. The games focus on developing problem solving skills, creating positive associations with physical education and classmates and developing stamina for physical activity. Students also learn that there is an entry point for each student regardless of her or his physical ability or understanding of the game. As the student grows, they develop more sophisticated strategies to master the various roles in the game. Games favored by the students are "Toilet Tag", "Fishie, Fishie Cross My Ocean," "Snakes in The Grass" and Parachute.

The students in the Upper Grades Physical Education Program participate in team sports as captain, player and/or referee. Each month a specific sport is introduced and the sport-related skills needed to participate in the activities are practiced. There are ten different sports introduced each year. These are track and field, baseball, soccer, flag-football, team handball, hockey, lacrosse, volleyball and badminton, basketball and kickball. The focus of the activities and class discussions is to encourage participation of all students, modify rules to

allow everyone to feel safe and capable and to understand the rules of the game to referee (self monitor) the activity.

The Resolving Conflict Creatively Program (R.C.C.P.) is a cornerstone of the Physical Education Program. R.C.C.P.'s principles are that conflict is natural; students can learn skills to help them learn to deal with conflicts better, and students can strive to have a win-win solution and treat everyone with mutual respect. This process encourages active listening, creative problem solving, recognizing when something is not right, listening to one's own feeling, and being proactive to address the conflict instead of being the person creating the conflict.

Ellen Clarkson, an adjunct instructor at NYU, has been collaborating with us for several years. She teaches a "Real English" course at the NYU American Language Institute. Each fall and spring she brings her class of foreign language students to practice talking in English once a week with students in the Physical Education class. The NYU students are paired off with Neighborhood School students to form buddies. In these small groups the NYU students share their childhood experiences in their respective countries while the Neighborhood School students share their day to day experiences. All the students also interact in whole group activities such as playing with the parachute, tag games and other forms of collaborative games. These activities then produce rich dialogues to develop communication skills and a rich understanding of different cultures.

The underlying values of our physical education program, as in all our curricula, are the balance of the individual and the group's need and the encouragement of individual achievement while fostering an appreciation of community.



