

What is the Garden Sprouts Pre-K Education philosophy and practice? Huntsville Botanical Garden believes:

- Children should learn in a nature-based, child-centered atmosphere that is positive, peaceful, and productive.
- Children are in “flow” when they are immersed in a dynamic blend of learning freedom and structure.
- Children learn early science (STEM) concepts both through spontaneous exploration and in guided experiences.
- Teachers support an environment conducive to improving children’s critical and cooperative thinking, cognitive skills, and social and emotional communication.
- Children are allowed to interact with and observe nature, thereby increasing their self-confidence and growth mindset through exploration.
- Teachers support the children’s progress throughout their learning journey with thoughtful planning, observation, documentation, evaluation, and reflection.
- Activities encourage children’s personal growth based on their individual abilities and interests.
- It’s essential that the children are valued, nurtured, and respected as individuals, appreciating the uniqueness of each child and celebrating a diverse range of backgrounds and cultures.
- It’s essential for teachers to partner with families, providing a solid base of communication, support, and encouragement for each child.
- Teachers are positive role models who display emotional intelligence and conscientious actions, and align with the Garden’s Core Values.

Education Practice

The Garden has designed programs to promote learning by providing an environment that encourages discovery and experimentation. While exploring several different inquiry units throughout the year, children have the chance to help shape the content by communicating their interests in each theme. No matter what the topic, the class will explore each theme by taking nature walks, studying natural phenomena, and engaging in activities that build physical, social-emotional, and cognitive skills. The program will include activities intended to engage children and take them to the next level of understanding based on their abilities and interests.

HBG believes teachers are facilitators of children’s learning through exploration of their world. The Montessori, Reggio-Emilia and Nature Play philosophies drive the program, and teachers, parents, and students are the collective team that brings the program to life. The Garden’s team considers parents to be the primary educators of their children and see staff roles to be educational resources at home and support the learning journey in the program. The program experience emphasis is on cultivating awareness, independence, and responsibility in a multi-age community while setting standards for excellence and habits of mind that persist into adulthood. The Garden’s team is especially focused on providing opportunities for children to explore and learn to care for nature, for in the future they will be the stewards of our environment and part of a global community.

References

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