

What Does Learning Look Like at the Weekday School?



Learning in a preschool classroom looks like children making choices, engaging in conversation, and creating art, structures, and friendships. They may choose to write on paper. They may also choose to play with blocks. Some are wearing dramatic play clothes. Others are finger painting. In a preschool classroom, **learning looks like play because children learn best when at play.**

Building blocks are a favorite in preschool classrooms. Preschoolers build the most amazing structures. The feats of architecture are evidence of learning. Children who build learn about **spatial relationships**, balance, and weight. They have made size comparisons and solved problems. Building blocks are **geometry in action**. Children working together have learned about cooperation and team achievement while melding their creativity.

The **dramatic play** area is full of **pre-literacy skills and confidence building activities**. Children may use dress up clothes, pretend to cook meals, care for dolls and more. This area is full of opportunities for oral language development. Children and teachers share new vocabulary words as they play in a pretend world. **Cooperation and communication** is the key to pretending together. Role playing is the beginning of understanding symbolism – one thing can represent another. Inanimate objects come alive. Children can be someone other than themselves. It is through being others that children begin to learn empathy. A child pretending to be a parent is experimenting with how it feels to be that person.

Manipulatives are generally defined as items that can be used on a table and require the use of fine motor skills. A great deal of fine motor development occurs as children use puzzle pieces, small building items and lacing tools. Children using manipulatives can often be seen **classifying, sorting, and patterning**. They collect and group items. The children are building their pre-math skills and conceptual knowledge. They also develop an understanding of one-to-one correspondence. One-to-one correspondence is an essential pre-reading skill.

Process art is an open-ended activity that is all about the experience the children have while they're creating. The end product isn't the focus of process art. It allows children the chance to **explore the world around them, ask questions, and see how things work**. They make their own decisions, about style color, medium, and just create! The end product may not have a recognizable form but children have utilized gross and fine motor skills in conjunction with sensory perceptual skills to explore the process of **creating without limits**.

Your children are learning everywhere in their preschool classroom. It is perfectly acceptable for a child to choose to play with blocks every day and forego the art table or visa versa. The child is trying to add to existing knowledge and master a skill. It is also acceptable for children to have preferred activities – don't you? **No matter what they prefer, they are learning.**

