

CURRICULUM SPOTLIGHT

An “excellence plus” PreK education

Parents investing in Christian education for their pre-school children are asking for a holistic program that includes both the faith dimension *and* the rigors of academia.

Locust Grove parent Dawn Leaman describes that balance as “a well-rounded Christian education that makes a great transition to kindergarten,” and Lancaster Mennonite has coined it “excellence plus.”

To make sure the “excellence” part of the program is intact, the school this year introduced “Blueprint for Early Literacy,” a PreK curriculum that recognizes that learning begins with a strong literacy foundation. It was developed by Children’s Literacy Initiative (CLI), a non-profit organization whose goal is to transform instruction so “all children can become powerful readers and writers.”

The new curriculum includes read alouds from high-quality children’s books; five author studies; a daily modeled writing/shared reading program called Message Time Plus which helps develop alphabet knowledge, phonemic awareness, and print conventions; instruction to build vocabulary and comprehension; and small group learning applications that stress letter and phonemic awareness, math concepts; and development of independent learning skills.



JONATHAN CHARLES

State-of-the-art playground equipment at each campus provides opportunities for children to develop gross motor and socialization skills as they enjoy safe, free play with their friends (above photo taken at New Danville Campus). In photo at right, Kraybill PreK teacher Jessica Lloyd makes learning fun with the help of “reading glasses” and *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom*.



“It has added a richness to our PreK program,” says New Danville PreK teacher Anne Roth, who has been in early childhood education for 14 years. “It is so important for young children to be exposed to the world of words through good literature.

“I am so thankful that at LMS, we are able to address the needs of the whole child—social, emotional, spiritual, physical, and intellectual. During the PreK day, we provide opportunities for the children to grow in these areas through Bible stories, prayer, singing, free choice time, recess, learning stations, a strong literacy program, and a nurturing, caring environment.” ❖

More about PreK at LMS

- Teachers are state licensed and early childhood certified
- Teachers tailor their lessons to meet individual learning styles and abilities so their young students can feel successful from the very beginning.
- Parents like the fact that they can choose from two, three, four or five-day programs.
- Learning Stations give children opportunities to manipulate, engage in art activities, and develop skills in other “hands-on” ways.
- Daily Free Choice time allows children to choose what to play, how to play, and who to play with. Social and verbal skills are developed as children interact with each other.
- Music opportunities, science exploration, and global awareness activities are woven into the day.
- The Everyday Math program engages children in active learning.