Inclusive Learning Environments

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Shining Stars
Preschool
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“We live in a world in which we need to share responsibility. It’s easy to say, ‘it’s not my child, not my community, not my world, not my problem.’ Then there are those who see the need and respond. I consider those people my heroes.”

– Fred Rogers
History of Shining Stars Preschool

- Before SSP, preschool classrooms in elementaries
- Site-based program founded in August 2005
- “old” E. Stapleton Elementary campus
- 100 students
- 8 classrooms
- Small Library with 100 books
- 1 playground
Today at Shining Stars Preschool

- 29 Classrooms
- 625 students and growing...
- Social Communication Program
- Vision Program
- Phonological Cycling Programs
- 7 outdoor learning spaces
- Music, Art, Library, Computer Lab, STEaM Lab, Little Gym
Intensive Communication and Social Skills Program (Autism/Behavioral Differences)

Needs for our New School

- Common Area for extended learning environment
- Focus/Calming Area/Observation Room
- Storage for Supplies/Materials
- Calming Environment with neutral colors
Vision Program
Needs for our NEW School

- Safe Campus with easy transitions
- Sufficient storage for equipment
- Outside light source (window) 1 per wall
- Focus on Lighting/Indirect Lighting and Dark Room
- Focus Room
- Access to Campus and Playgrounds
- Location near Community Area
- Use of textures and sensory components
**Phonological Cycling Programs**

**Needs for the NEW School**

- Connecting Classrooms with option for open space
- Focus room for Intensive Speech Therapy
- Operate on a 2–day a week schedule, location in the building
Growth Trends in Special Education

2009-2010
- 89 Children Evaluated
- 83 Qualified for Special Education
- 51 Transitioned from 0-3
- 15 Transferred to RRPS

2015-2016
- 110 Children Evaluated
- 101 Qualified for Special Education
- 78 Transitioned from 0-3
- 11 Transferred to RRPS
Goals for Our Students
School-Ready

Independence
- Toileting
- Maneuvering
- Feeding
- Playing

Foundational Skills
- Exploring
- Observing
- Early Literacy & Math

Social Skills
- Turn-taking
- Sharing
- Empathy
- Engaging Others
The Faces of Shining Stars Preschool
Empowering Families

**Support**
- Special Education Parent Support Group
- School Social Worker
- Community Resources
- Navigating Special Education

**Family Resources**
- Parenting Classes
- 24/7 Dad
- Explora with parents

**Adult Education**
- GED classes
- Bilingual classes
- Computer Literacy

**Giving Back**
- Giving Tree
- Holiday Dinners
- Little Free Library

**Family and Community Engagement**
- Literacy Nights
- Informances
- Open House

**Transition Planning**
- Getting Ready for Kindergarten
- PreK to Kindergarten
- Communications with all 10 RRPS elementary schools
# Integrated Learning

## Music
- Self-expression through:
  - Movement
  - Song
  - Instruments

## Library/Storytime
- Reading enjoyment
- Book care
- Roles of Author and Illustrator

## Computer Lab
- Mouse and keyboard skills
- Headphones
- Educational Programs/Resources
- Click and drag

## Art
- Creativity
- Self-expression
- Variety of media
- Colorful, tactile

## Little Gym
- Growth
- Motor planning
- Regulation
- Taking Turns

## STEaM Lab
- Discovery
- Exploration
- The Senses
- Experiments
Learning Environment
Response
About SSPS

- Inclusion 60-40 Ratio
- Speech
- Preschool/PreK
- Phonological Cycling
  - Speech Therapy
  - Pre-Literacy Intervention
- Autism
- Vision
School Approach

- Home Scale, Front Porch
- Weather Protection
- Hand to Hand Exchange
- Parent Interface and Access to Resources is Key
- Child Height Check in
- Child Play Area in Reception
- Children Arriving by Bus: Wagons, Walkers, Strollers, Etc
Classrooms

- Wayfinding with Color
- All Classroom Details encourage Independence
  - Reading/ Displays
  - Quiet Areas (Cubes and Caves)
  - Light/Sensory Tables
  - Circle Area with LCD Panel
  - Block/ Manipulatives
  - Art Areas/Drying
  - Classroom Theme/Topic Area
  - Couch/ Kid Chairs
Collaborative Group Areas

- MAXIMIZE MULTI-AGE COLLABORATION:
  - Art and Sensory Areas
  - Readings and Story Time
  - Group Meal and Snack Time
  - Supervised Indoor Large Motor
  - Builds Independence Skills
STEaM

- SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, ART AND MATHEMATICS

- A holistic way of thinking about how educators and parents should be helping students integrate knowledge across all disciplines in a connected way

- Hands on, Investigative

- Explorative Freedom

- Builder Principles

- Accessible to All Skill Levels
Autism
A Serious Developmental Disorder that Impairs the Ability to Communicate and Interact.

- Difficulty with Communication
- Difficulty with Social Interactions
- Obsessive Interests
- Repetitive Behaviors

Early recognition, as well as behavioral, educational, and family therapies may reduce symptoms and support development and learning.
Designing for Autism

- **SCALE:**
  - Lower scale; not institutional
  - Focus area for calming
  - Sensory caves, nooks and crannies

- **COLOR & TEXTURE:**
  - Neutral tones vs Colorful
  - Natural surfaces (comfort to the touch)
Designing for Autism

- **ACOUSTICS:**
  - Quiet Infrastructure: lighting and HVAC
  - Acoustic Surfaces: carpet, rubber or cork, soft seating

- **LIGHTING:**
  - Variable by Control
  - Homelike; Not too Cool/Warm
  - Moderated Natural Light
Vision

Blind/Vision Impaired children require full-time intensive services in a specialized learning environment:

- **Low Vision Children:**
  When using buildings, rely entirely on the ability to see

- **Blind Children:**
  When using buildings, rely entirely on other senses i.e., touch, hearing, smell and touch.
Vision

▪ LIGHTING:
  - Avoid Glare from Shiny Surfaces
  - Light placement to avoid shadows; which cause optical illusions
  - Avoid fluctuations between light and dark
  - Task Lighting
  - Dimming Capabilities
  - Diffuse Natural Light from High Sources
Vision

- **COLOR:**
  - Colors should contrast at about 70%
  - Colors too close in hue are indistinguishable
  - Limit Color Schemes; Keep it Simple
Vision

- Use Textures that are easily identifiable
- Detectable warning surfaces underfoot to identify hazards
- Countable textures for location
- Hand rails with ridges; signaling changes
- Tactile signs with Braille – child height
Little Gym

- INDOOR PHYSICAL THERAPY/OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY
  - Gross Motor Activity
  - Fine Motor Skills
  - Large equipment: mats, climbing, ball pit, trampoline, balance beams, swings
  - Neutral Tones; Contrast w Equip
  - Dramatic Play Areas
Outdoor Learning

- **PLAY IS THE WORK OF CHILDREN**
  - Thematic: Quiet, Noisy, Sensory, Gross Motor, Construction, Music
  - Wet, Messy Projects; Water Play
  - Team Gardens; Planting
  - Transitional Porches
Outdoor Learning

- GARDENS ARE FOR LEARNING
  - Gazebo/ Contemplation
  - Extension of the Classroom
  - Cooperation; Rules of the Road
  - Creativity; Exploration
WELLNESS

▪ WHOLE CHILD APPROACH
  - Many fragile children with daily health and monitoring needs
  - Areas for parent consultation
  - Additional Nursing Staff
  - Small child sized equipment
  - Nutritional Programs/Needs
Community

- TRANSITIONAL COMMUNITY AREA
  - Parent Meetings and Events
  - Community Kitchen
  - Kids Cooking
  - Community Gatherings
Community

- MULTI-GENERATIONAL, MULT-USE
  - Reading Tree
  - Grandparents Time
  - Pet Sharing
  - Support Animals
Parents

- FAMILY/PARENT ACTIVITIES
  - Cooking with Kids
  - Parent Education/ Training
  - 24/7 Dad
  - Parent Support Group
  - School Events
  - After School
the Difference that we make

A child walks.
First words spoken.
That smile...when they did it themselves!
Celebration of independence.
Let’s Share Ideas
Thanks for Sharing

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