

At Margaret's House, we use **The Creative Curriculum®**, an early childhood curriculum designed to foster children's social/emotional, physical, cognitive and language development, as well as enhance learning in literacy, math, social studies, the arts and technology. This curriculum was developed by Teaching Strategies® and is currently one of the most widely used preschool curriculums in the country as it features research based content and resources that are aligned with state early learning standards; it is both research based and field proven.

For over 30 years, Teaching Strategies® has helped early childhood educators across the country to plan and implement content-rich, developmentally appropriate programs that support active learning and promote children's progress in all developmental areas. Today, **The Creative Curriculum®** is widely regarded as a forward-thinking, comprehensive, rigorously researched curriculum approach that honors creativity and respects the role that teachers play in making learning exciting and relevant for every child.

**When is Curriculum Implemented in Preschool?** At Margaret's House after morning snack ends at 9:30am, the preschoolers get started on the bulk of their learning day. While support for learning is provided all day long, the majority of the curriculum program occurs between **9:30-12noon**. During this time, children are participating in small and large groups, discussing the current study, exploring the topic, and teachers are cultivating their curiosity. While additional support of the curriculum is provided as the day winds down from 3-5pm, it is important for preschoolers to be present from **9:30-12noon** to benefit from the preschool program as it is planned, otherwise they may miss out on the learning opportunities provided each day.

**The Creative Curriculum® for Preschool** features exploration and discovery as a way of learning, enabling children to develop confidence, creativity, and lifelong critical thinking skills. It is designed to help early childhood educators plan and implement a developmentally appropriate, content rich program for children with diverse backgrounds and skill levels.

The most important goal of The Creative Curriculum is to help children become enthusiastic learners. This means encouraging them to be active and creative explorers who are not afraid to try out their ideas and to think their own thoughts. The curriculum does not teach them *what* to learn, instead it teaches them *how* to learn. This approach allows children to learn at their own pace and in the ways that are best for them. It also facilitates good habits and attitudes, particularly a positive sense of themselves. Our goal is to help children become independent, self-confident, inquisitive lifelong learners.

The philosophy behind the Creative Curriculum is that the best way to help children succeed is to teach them to be creative, confident thinkers. Learning is not just repeating what someone else says; it requires active thinking and experimenting to find out how things work and to learn firsthand about the world we live in. That means offering opportunities for hands-on exploration and discovery that help build lifelong critical thinking skills and foster confidence as children explore the world around them by using all their senses (touching, tasting, listening, smelling, and looking). The activities we plan for children, the way we organize the environment, select toys and materials, plan the daily schedule, and talk with children, are all designed to accomplish the goals of our curriculum and give your child a successful start in school.

**Studies** The organization of The Creative Curriculum for Preschool focuses on project-based investigations, called Studies, designed to foster social-emotional, physical, cognitive, and language development in children.

**What Are Studies?** Studies are hands-on, project-based investigations of topics that are relevant to children's everyday experiences. Studies are exciting and engaging. They tap into children's natural curiosity, resulting in a learning environment that is both fun and intentional. The study approach is a method of

integrating content learning through children's in-depth investigations of a meaningful topic. Children raise questions about the topic, and, through exploration and discovery, they find answers to their questions. Throughout the year, children explore a variety of Studies through first-hand exploration and discovery. Studies in the preschool classes include Balls, Boxes, Buildings, Clothes, Insects, Gardening, Music, Pets, Sand, Trees, Water, and Wheels, among others. Teachers are able to structure instruction so each child receives appropriate support to ensure success. Additionally, social and emotional skills are a focus of The Creative Curriculum, giving children the opportunity to learn about sharing, turn taking and self-help skills.

**Why Studies?** The study approach allows for deep, firsthand exploration of topics that interest children, topics that are familiar to children as they are exposed to them in everyday life, and allows for a myriad of ways to learn about each topic. Plus, the study approach not only allows children to gain a deeper understanding of the topic but also encourages them to develop skills across all domains as they apply the investigative process.

**Let's consider the Clothing Study** One of the first lessons a teacher may choose in the Clothing Study utilizes a tiny baby doll onesie. The teacher holds the onesie up to themselves and asks the children, "Does this fit me?" Then, "Does this fit you?" The discussion can now pivot to how this tiny onesie fits a tiny baby doll, but neither the teacher nor the children. Truly the conversation is not about onesies at all, it is about small medium and large. Clothing was just the path to get to that concept, a foundational math concept.

### Advantages of Studies

- allow children to explore science and social studies topics while developing skills in language and literacy, math, technology, and the arts
- let children apply their acquired skills in meaningful, real-life contexts
- encourage higher-level thinking, development of intellectual interests, and positive approaches to learning
- give children the necessary skills to solve problems and find answers to their questions in a creative way
- support the development of social–emotional skills, such as resolving conflict, sharing responsibilities, and working collaboratively
- encourages family involvement

**Areas of Development** Our curriculum is designed to focus on goals in many areas of development:

**Social/Emotional:** To help children develop independence, self-confidence, and self-control, follow rules and routines, make friends, and learn what it means to be part of a group.

**Physical:** To increase children's large muscle skills – balancing, running, jumping, throwing, and catching – and use the small muscles in their hands to do tasks like buttoning, cutting, drawing, and writing.

**Cognitive:** To acquire thinking skills such as the ability to solve problems, to ask questions, and to think logically – sorting, classifying, comparing, counting, and making patterns – and to use materials and their imagination to show what they have learned.

**Language:** To use words to communicate with others, listen to and participate in conversations with others, understand the purpose of print, recognize letters and words, and begin writing for a purpose.



**At Margaret's House**, we are proud to offer a curriculum that encourages children to investigate and learn from everyday items while ensuring whole-child development. We create joyful, inspired learning experiences for every child, every day, building a strong foundation for success now and throughout their lives.