What Is the Purpose of Nursery School Education?

Some of the purposes of the program are to guide a child in establishing a solid foundation in exploring and learning about materials, the usefulness of language, cause and effect relationships, routines, gaining competence, self expression and having good adult models and guides. In essence, the program is about self-discovery and exploration, and discovery about the things in a child’s world. All of this has to do with the needs of the developing child physically and mentally. The brain is highly active in this stage and a child needs to be involved in all sorts of physical exploration.

Here are some examples:
Adults engage in one-to-one, face-to-face conversations with toddlers. When a child uses some sort of language an adult can respond and expand on the language. The toddler might say, “Mary sock.” The adult could say, “Oh, that’s Mary’s missing sock and you found it.” The adult serves to expand the language through interaction and guidance.

Adults are supportive and help a child perform a task that might be seen as becoming frustrating. The adult helps the child become capable at whatever level is possible at the time.

Adults respond quickly to a child in need and use language to talk in a supportive way about the situation. Something like, “Oh, you wet your pants. That’s OK we can change your pants then you can play. Remember if you feel that you need to pee you can tell me or use the toilet, yourself.”

Adults respect a child’s preferences for familiar objects, foods and people. Adults provide limited options from which children may choose what they prefer to eat or wear.

Adults patiently redirect toddlers to help guide children toward controlling their own impulses and behavior. When children fight over the same toy, the adult provides another like it or removes the toy. If neither of these strategies is effective, the adult may gently remove the toddler and redirect the child’s attention by initiating play in another area. Children are only isolated, not punished, for overtly dangerous behavior like biting or hitting. Language is used to guide the child, “We don’t hit. Tell Jimmy what you want.” “He’ll listen to you.” “Say, Jimmy, I want a turn with the car, please.”
Children need to learn what kind of language to use to meet their basic needs. Language is important so that children can be trusted by one another. This is part of learning how to get along with one another in daily situations. Children begin to see that they can get control of a situation through appropriate ways. They also begin to see that tantrums, crying and physically grabbing or hitting are not going to get them what they want. Language is the key.

Children are praised for their accomplishments and helped to feel increasingly competent and in control of themselves.

Adults recognize that toddlers are constantly testing limits and expressing opposition to adults. Toddlers often say “NO” which is a way of saying I want to be an individual and take care of myself. Adults only say, “No” when a child’s safety is at risk. Otherwise it is best to try and guide the energy in acceptable ways. If a child insists on throwing things, an adult could say, “You seem to want to throw things. We don’t throw things inside. Let’s go outside and throw the balls.”

Adults model the type of interactions with others that they want children to develop. Adults recognize that most of the time when toddlers are aggressive, hurting or biting other children, it is because they lack skills to cope with frustrating situations such as wanting another child’s toy. Adults model for toddlers the words to say, “Susan, I want the jack-in-the-box now” or redirect them to another activity.

The driving force for a toddler’s brain is exploring things. Adults need to provide as much material stimulation as possible. Adults can be involved and model how to play with toys, dolls, puppets and other things. In the drama center the adult could facilitate a “tea party” and get children to play various roles, cooking, serving, setting the table etc. The adult can also model how to behave when eating, drinking and having a good time.

With adult support toddlers will stay involved in an activity for a longer time, Their play becomes more complex. The play moves from the simple awareness and exploration of objects to more complicated play like pretending.

Adults set up the environment to allow for predictability and repetition, as well as events that can be expected and anticipated.
Adults frequently read to children. The best stories are one’s that are simple, capture the children’s imagination and provide language that can be useful in real life. “Go Dog Go” is a good example, so is “Are You My Mother.?

Children are allowed to explore art media in a true exploratory manner. There should never be the expectation of a finished product. Art exploration is a process. Much of the toddler’s life is an exploration of materials.

Children learn the routines like eating, toileting and dressing. These are good opportunities to help children become competent, learn about their world, make choices and regulate their own behavior.

Routines are very good for making children feel in control of their world. They don’t have to do so much testing of the limits to see what is real. Routines provide tangible things that a child can understand. There are certain routines for eating, reading a story, playing on the swings, playing in the sandbox, painting and most things in the nursery program.

Learning situations are set up so that every child can feel success. Some children need to watch or reflect a bit longer and are at the exposure stage. Others are ready to do some exploring. Some more children may be able to expand their learning and explore the situation at a higher level. Each child should be able to feel good about a level of ability. Learning is a process. We want children to feel willing to try new experiences.

The underlying purpose of the nursery program is to provide a stimulating environment for individual learning and brain development, guide children in exploration, provide opportunities for exposure to new materials and experiences and support children in helping them become capable and balanced in their activities. The goal is to have children gain an understanding of their world, achieve enriched development and be eager learners for the rest of their lives.

The Nursery Program is the foundation for the KAS curriculum. It is an important part of a child’s life and learning. Parents and the nursery school program need to work together to provide a consistent learning experience for children. We all need to have an understanding of how the brain develops and the appropriate guidance that is necessary for positive successful development and learning.
An important thing to remember is that

YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

Most of the things that happen in a toddler’s life are normal transitions. They are normal transitions that can be worked through. We are always willing to work with you in the best interest of your child and you.

The Early Childhood Program is here to assist you in any way possible to provide a solid foundation for your child’s life and learning.

If you have doubts about what is going on with your child’s development, please let us know. If you have questions or concerns about the program, please let us know.

It used to be said that this stage was the “terrible twos” but now we know that the two year olds need to have all of the activity to stimulate growth in the brain. We now say that the twos need to do what they need to do. We just have to work to provide the appropriate environment and provide appropriate guidance of their energy.

One last note:
When you have a two year old in the house put your good things away for a year or so. Also put your good plants up high. Two year olds brains drive them to get at things and explore them in anyway possible. In the right environment a child can develop well and a parent won’t have to continually say, “NO, NO, NO.”