

# Our Philosophy

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At St. David's Center, we know early childhood education lays the foundation for a lifelong love of learning. Because every child brings unique contributions and qualities to the classroom, we believe learning should be guided collaboratively by children, teachers and environments that promote social and cognitive development through play. We focus on the important relationships in a child's life and invite parents to be involved in their children's early learning through open communication and thoughtful collaboration.

**Our philosophy is informed by the following core beliefs:**

**1. Early education lays the foundation for lifelong educational curiosity.**

Young children have an innate desire to learn. Early positive experiences encourage this desire, laying the foundation for future capable, competent learning. Together parents and teachers can nurture curiosity and exploration to promote early learning and development that builds confidence for lifelong learning.

**2. Relationships affect all aspects of a young child's development.**

Strong positive relationships provide the foundation for a child's long-term social, emotional and cognitive health. A child's most important relationships begin with her/his family. Healthy, responsive relationships with teachers and caregivers also play an important role in the lives of young children.

**3. The teacher's role is to partner with, nurture and guide children in all areas of development.**

As a partner and guide, the teacher supports students with different learning styles, respecting each child's unique contributions and abilities. The teacher encourages discovery and learning through creating thoughtful environments and supplying material and activities that nurture social, emotional, cognitive and physical development.

**4. Social-emotional development is the foundation for all other areas of learning.**

Through play, children learn to relate to others and their world socially and emotionally. When children engage in developmentally-appropriate play, lifelong skills such as problem solving, relating to others and effective communication lay a strong foundation for emerging cognitive abilities.

**5. Indoor and outdoor environments serve as the "third educator" in collaboration with teachers and children.**

The classroom environment is a powerful teaching tool that can open the door to social interaction, dramatic play and problem solving. A successful environment will engage children on their own terms, furthering their exploration and understanding of the world.

**6. Children will be most successful when parents and teachers work together.**

Parents know their children best. When a parent and teacher collaborate successfully, modeling a meaningful and respectful relationship, the child knows he/she can trust the teacher. Through frequent communication and thoughtful documentation, both parent and teacher gain a better understanding of the child's development and learning.

**7. A child's overall "wellness" begins with healthy relationships, healthy environments and a healthy body.**

Consistent and nurturing relationships, safe and supportive environments, and healthy nutrition and self-care habits at a young age promote lifelong wellness. Parents and teachers are responsible for providing a healthy foundation on which to build.

**8. An integrated and collaborative approach supports teachers and benefits children with varying needs.**

When teachers collaborate with and learn from child development experts in various fields, they are more equipped to identify and respond to the needs of the children in their classrooms. Additionally, inviting experts into the classroom to observe and treat the needs of a child helps him/her build skills in a less restrictive environment alongside peers.