

The Early Childhood Program at Kaua'i Pacific School

The pre-k and kindergarten offer a nurturing environment, highlighted by open-ended, hands-on activities promoting creative deep thought and social interaction. The teacher provides guidance, support, and interesting projects. At **Kaua'i Pacific School**, we recognize the importance of play! As children swing, dig, climb, run, and jump, they develop large motor skills. Children exercise their muscles in increasingly sophisticated ways by jumping rope, throwing and bouncing balls, racing, and building forts. Outside is also a glorious place for children to negotiate social relationships as they learn to collaborate, express their own needs, and solve problems.

Beyond the confines of their own classroom and playground, children are encouraged to discover the larger **Kaua'i Pacific School** setting when they are ready. They participate in weekly Aloha Friday assemblies, reading buddies with upper elementary students and have school-wide kokua chores. They also enjoy spending time with the school's special subject teachers in Hawaiian Studies, Creative Dance/Storytelling, Art, Music, and Marine Science. Off-campus field trips further expand the children's world as they visit parks, the beach, nature centers, theater and music shows, the library and local farms.

Students in our 4 & 5 year old program develop a sense of trust and well-being as they learn to share space, materials, friends, and teachers. With teacher guidance, we prepare them to make decisions, settle disagreements, and manage some of their own important needs with increasing skill and independence. Pre-k students benefit from spending their day with the kindergarten students who can show them the ropes. Kindergarten students benefit from their previous experience and shine in the mentor role they occupy within their classroom community.

Together, our students explore & experiment, create & pretend, and play with possibilities. Each day is filled with wonder, risk-taking and challenges. We encourage our students to ask questions based on their personal life experiences. We encourage guided inquiry and sophisticated work and play. Areas of learning connect to others, and themes of interest are organized into structured study units that last for many weeks. Math, science, social studies, language, and the arts are integrated during the units of discovery. Student interests are sparked by the familiar and the exotic: transportation, rainbows, shadows and reflections, celebrations, sand, water, wood, their five senses and baby animals. Hands-on experiences are the heart of all learning, and our curriculum evolves from children's places in their own development. Small groups provide the security and stimulation to help children learn to share, make choices, solve problems, resolve differences, build skills, and experience success.

Pre-k children dictate group stories about shared experiences, play organized math games, work in the class garden, act out favorite stories, and explore geometric shapes and symmetry using manipulatives.

As students mature in our two year program, they continue to enjoy regular opportunities for exploring and experimenting with a vast variety of interesting and challenging materials. Children's increasing independence and responsibility are encouraged. During

kindergarten, teachers help them refine their concentration and ability to follow through on commitments. Above all, we recognize and nurture their love of learning.

The kindergarten provides rich, stimulating language & math experiences! Phonemic awareness skills are introduced and explored; children dictate and write their own imaginative signs and stories in their journals. Teacher and students read constantly to each other. Group times provide opportunities for children to share their stories, practice their listening skills and to learn to communicate fairly and effectively with others.

Concrete materials (such as mazes, puzzles, and pattern blocks) invite children to explore logical reasoning, math relationships, and patterns! Kindergarten children graph interesting information about their class group, measure familiar objects and their classroom spaces, and generally learn how math permeates their everyday lives!

The early childhood program is the shining star of our school! Exposure to a wide variety of materials and activities engages our youngest students, igniting their curiosity and enabling them to make sense of their world.

Age Guidelines

For our Pre-K and Kindergarten programs we use August 1st as a guideline date. Pre-K students generally turn four by August 1st of the year they will be starting school, and Kindergarten students turn five by that date. Since these dates are used flexibly in our admission process, we look at children with late summer and early fall birthdays on an individual basis. However, we are not able to consider children for these programs whose birthdays fall after October 1st. For students applying to grades one to six, students are admitted to grade levels appropriate for their development. Decisions are based on data from student records, teacher reference forms and their KPS interview.

PRE KINDERGARTEN & KINDERGARTEN

LANGUAGE ARTS (Pre - Kindergarten)

- **Reading:** Spoken – printed word correspondence, letter-word orientation on page, compare sounds, produce basic rhymes, segment simple syllable, recognize all letters by sight, letter-sound correspondence introduced. Retell information from familiar oral or printed text. Retell familiar stories.
- **Writing:** Letter and Number Formation, Describe familiar topics and convey thoughts, ideas, and basic information using pictures. Write upper-and lower-case letters. Use correct spelling for own name, Add detail to drawings and other products.
- **Listening:** Following instructions & active listening in small groups. Use basic social conventions in conversations, Ask and respond appropriately to basic questions.
- **Speaking:** Sharing Information & Asking Questions, Retelling Stories, Share Thoughts, Ideas and Feelings, Role Play, Sing Songs, Simple Skits, and Choral Reading. Use basic social conventions in conversations. Follow simple oral directions. Use personal experiences as a topic when speaking.
- **The Arts:** Traditional Art, Music and Dance from the Various Cultures Represented in Class

LANGUAGE ARTS (Kindergarten)

- **Reading:** Segment and blend syllables, Recognize all letters by sight and recall the basic sound attributed to each letter, Identify basic high-frequency words, Decode one-syllable words, Use pictures and titles to make predictions about a text, Retell familiar stories, using beginning, middle, and ending, Identify characters and setting in a story read aloud. Parts of a Book & Non-Fiction vs. Fiction, Family Stories & Fairy Tales, Dictionary Introduction
- **Writing:** Letter formation & simple sentences, High Frequency Words, Lists, Describe familiar topics and convey thoughts, ideas, and basic information using pictures and phonetically spelled words, Write upper-and lower-case letters independently, attending to form and spatial alignment, Use phonetic spelling to write new words, Use correct spelling for own name, commonly used high-frequency words, and words in environmental print, Use spacing and appropriate sizes of letters, words, titles, and pictures to show a rudimentary sense of form.
- **Listening:** Follow instructions & active listening in small and large groups, Use basic social conventions in greetings, in introductions, and in conversations, Ask and respond appropriately to basic questions, Follow simple oral directions, instructions, and explanations.
- **Speaking:** Share information & ask questions, Retell stories, Give instructions, Share thoughts, ideas and feelings, Role play, Sing songs, Simple skits, Choral reading , Use basic social conventions in greetings, in introductions, and in conversations, Ask and respond appropriately to basic questions, Follow simple oral directions, instructions, and explanations, Use appropriate volume when speaking in various situations, Use eye contact as a listening and speaking skill to focus attention on the speaker or connect with listener(s), Use personal experiences as a topic when speaking, Present events in chronological order, Use appropriate words when speaking.
- **The Arts:** Traditional Art, Music and Dance from the Various Cultures Represented in Class

MATHEMATICS (Pre - Kindergarten)

- **Number & Numeration:** Verbally count in sequence to 10 and beyond, count objects with one to one correspondence, develop awareness of numbers and their uses, compare and order groups of objects using more, fewer, less, same.
- **Operations & Computation:** Solve and create number stories using concrete modeling, explore part-whole relationships
- **Geometry:** Recognize and describe basic 2 dimensional geometric shapes, Introduction to 3-dimensional shapes, recognize and describe position and location of objects, use spatial reasoning in concrete tasks with puzzles, collages and block structures.
- **Patterns, Function and Algebra:** Recognize and match attributes of objects, such as size, shape, and color; use rules to sort objects; use rules to create and extend repeating patterns.
- **Measurement:** Distinguish and describe size attributes, compare objects according to size attributes, become familiar with standard measuring tools, sequence familiar events in time
- **Data and Chance:** Tally, Graphing, pictograph

MATHEMATICS (Kindergarten)

- **Number & Numeration:** Count on by 1's to 100, count on by 2's, 5's and 10's, count back by 1's, count 20 or more objects, estimate number of objects, model number with manipulatives, compare and order whole numbers up to 20, use manipulatives and numerical expressions involving addition and subtraction of 1-digit numbers up to 20.
- **Operations & Computation:** Use manipulatives, number lines, and mental math to solve problems involving addition and subtraction of single digit whole numbers, identify join and take – away situations.
- **Geometry:** Identify and describe plane and solid figures such as circles, triangles, squares, rectangles, spheres, and cubes,. Identify shapes having line symmetry.
- **Patterns, Function and Algebra:** Extend, describe and create visual, rhythmic and movement patters; use rules, which lead to functions, to sort and make patterns. Read and write expressions and number sentences using symbols +,-,=.
- **Measurement:** Estimate and compare weight and length, identify standard measuring tools, identify coins, describe temperature and identify thermometer as a tool for measuring temperature. Describe and use measures of time periods relative to a day and week; identify tools that measure time.
- **Data and Chance:** Collect and organize to create tally charts, tables and bar graphs, describe events using basic probability terms (certain, possible, impossible)

SOCIAL STUDIES (Prekindergarten and Kindergarten)

- **World Cultures: Celebrations** - We all celebrate important personal and cultural events through celebrations and traditions.
- **History: Our Family Stories** - Family histories provide an insight into our culture, our history, the family and the individual.
- **Geography: Where Are We?** - We can show where we are on the Earth using maps and globes.
- **Community: Family Roles** - Families exist in various forms and teach us how to interact and live with others.
- **Economy: From Field to Table** - Most of the food products we eat go through several stages from their origin to their consumption.

SCIENCE/HEALTH (Prekindergarten and Kindergarten)

- **Living Things: Animals and Their Babies** - In the life cycles of many animals, adults care for their young.
- **Living Things: Class Pets and Plants** - Plants and animals in our homes and classrooms have certain requirements in order to grow and stay healthy.
- **Earth and Space: What on Earth?** - Earth is a distinct planet with specific features that work together to sustain life.
- **Materials and Matter: Exploring Materials (Sand, Fabric, Wood)** - We can do things with materials to find out how they behave, what they can be used for and how they can be changed.
- **Forces and Energy: Shadows and Reflections** - Light creates shadows and reflections.
- **Environmental Studies: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle: Trash** - Our personal choices can impact our health and change our environment.
- **Health & Life Skills: My Senses and Emotions** - Our senses help us discover and express our nature, ideas, feelings, beliefs and values.

UNITS OF DISCOVERY

Theme: My Family, Your Family

Essential Understanding: Families exist in various forms and understanding our family histories and traditions can help us better understand who we are.

Essential Questions

- What do we mean by the word 'Ohana'?
- Why do we have families?
- What are the different types of families?
- What is my family history?
- How do families create and share their culture through celebrations?

Theme: Mother Earth

Essential Understanding: Earth is a unique planet with specific geographical features that must stay in balance to sustain life.

Essential Questions:

- What is the Earth made of?
- How did the Earth form?
- Where is the Earth in relation to other planets?
- How can we use maps and globes to help us learn more about the earth's unique features?
- What happens if the earth is not in balance?
- How can we take care of the life on earth so animals do not become extinct?

Theme: Exploring Materials Using My Senses and Emotions

Essential Understanding: People use their senses to explore different materials to help them express their feelings and ideas creatively.

Essential Questions:

- What are our senses?
- How do humans use their sense to understand the world?
- How do we express our feelings and emotions?

- What are the properties of sand, wood and fabric?
- What can we make with sand, wood and fabric?
- In what ways can we creatively use natural materials to express our creativity, emotions and feelings?

Theme: Shadows, Reflections & Rainbows

Essential Understanding: Light creates shadows, reflections and rainbows

Essential Questions:

- What is the difference between a shadow, a reflection and a rainbow?
- How do things look when they are reflected in water compared to being reflected by a mirror?
- How does the color and direction of light change our perception of objects?
- How do things look when we use various reflective surfaces?
- Why do we have so many rainbows on Kauai?

Theme: From Field to Table

Essential Understanding: Most of the food products we eat go through several stages from their origin to their consumption.

Essential Questions:

- Where does our food come from?
- How is food made?
- What jobs are involved in the process of making food?
- How can we take care of the environment and make sure we have a healthy food supply?

Theme: Caring for Plants and Animals

Essential Understanding: Plants and animals in our homes and classrooms have certain requirements in order to grow and stay healthy.

Essential Questions

- What do plants and animals need to grow and stay healthy?
- How can we best take care of the plants and animals that we choose to bring into our homes and classrooms?
- How should we treat animals and plants?
- Why are animals and plants important to our ecosystem?