

Core Values

Developed by the Caspar Creek Learning Community Personnel Committee
December, 2013 through March, 2014

1. Curriculum and approach to instruction
 - a. Content is engaging.
 - b. Content is comprehensible to students.
 - c. While taking into account individual developmental readiness, content addresses Common Core standards.
 - d. Priority is given to integrative and project-based approaches.
 - e. Blended model (mixed-age) and small group learning are emphasized.
 - f. Instruction is tailored to individual needs and strengths.
 - g. Teachers are alert to fluctuations in individual students' or groups of students' interest level in--and readiness to delve into--an area of knowledge, and readily adapt to those changes rather than follow a predefined schedule.
 - h. Artistic expression is fostered. Art, music and theater arts are woven throughout the curriculum.
2. Assessment
 - a. Students do not receive grades.
 - b. Teachers assess students' progress primarily through direct observation and collaboration rather than through graded testing.
 - c. State-required standardized tests are approached as a learning experience, not as the "moment of truth."
 - d. Teachers schedule parent/teacher conferences that include the opportunity to review a portfolio of the student's work, and some reflective narrative, at least once per school year.
3. Learning Environment
 - a. While academic growth is important, CCLC emphasizes social and emotional development, including teaching and practicing conflict resolution skills.
 - b. A supportive and nurturing family-like atmosphere is cultivated.
 - c. Individual differences are treated as assets.
 - d. A noncompetitive atmosphere is fostered.
 - i. Teachers encourage students to support each other.
 - ii. Teachers help students to work collaboratively in academic, social and athletic endeavors.
 - iii. Teacher's evaluation of student progress is narrative, individualized and based on multiple measures.
 - iv. Open rankings and comparisons are avoided.
 - v. Teachers model non-competitive behavior.
 - e. Teachers actively support a learning environment where children's primary focus is on the excitement of learning rather than on how well they're doing.
 - f. Teachers support children's academic growth by guiding and mentoring, and focus on process rather than performance.
 - g. Students are not described in terms of their behaviors.
 - h. Teachers interact with and speak about students respectfully.

Core Values, cont'd.

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4. Conflict resolution and social/emotional development support
 - a. The Trust Circle model is used to resolve conflicts.
 - i. Children are given the benefit of the doubt and encouraged to speak their truths; the best possible intentions on the part of all are assumed.
 - ii. Conflicts are treated as a learning opportunity.
 - iii. All emotions and perceptions are accepted as valid.
 - iv. The focus is on validation, empathy, compassion and resolution; on healing rifts, not on righting wrongs or finding blame.
 - v. Underlying emotions that drive behavior are explored.
 - b. Students are encouraged to work out differences through conflict resolution techniques and collaboration.
 - c. Solutions are best when reached collaboratively with students.
 - d. Students are not isolated, shamed, or required to write as forms of punishment.
 - e. Specific behavior management systems are employed only when individually necessary, and only with parent consent.
5. Parent relations
 - a. A team approach is fostered, with parents and teachers working together to create the best possible experience for each child.
 - b. Parent volunteers are welcome and encouraged in the classroom.
 - c. Teachers display empathy toward parents.
 - d. Teachers are approachable, welcome parent input, and are responsive to it.
 - e. Teachers validate and address parent concerns and feelings about their children's development.
 - f. Teachers honor the confidentiality of children by not sharing sensitive personal information, such as abilities, behaviors, and social-emotional matters outside the child's family and/or professional context.
6. Special Needs
 - a. If children demonstrate learning or behavioral struggles, teachers respond to parent's concern or contact parents to implement academic accommodations, behavioral support and/or at-home support options.
 - b. If teacher or parent desires in-depth academic or behavioral support, procedure described in "Special Needs" section of Caspar Creek Learning Community Handbook is followed in a timely manner. Teachers thoughtfully and actively participate in this process.
 - c. If children have an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) :
 - i. Teacher carefully reviews all IEP documents.
 - ii. Teacher respectfully collaborates with the IEP team.
 - iii. Teacher conscientiously follows the IEP.