



**The goals established by the Center are:**

- 1. To provide a safe, intimate, consistent and enriched environment where developmentally appropriate activities encourage exploration and “hands on” learning experiences.*
- 2. To enhance the sense of dignity and self worth within the child and his/her family.*
- 3. To encourage spontaneity, curiosity and self-discipline.*
- 4. To enhance the child’s mental processes by building confidence and self-esteem.*
- 5. A rich, innovative curriculum to stimulate children’s intellectual, emotional, creative, and physical development.*
- 5. To enhance patterns and expectations of success for the individual child.*
- 6. To provide consistently high quality care by continuously evaluating Center operations.*
- 7. To maintain the lowest possible staff to child ratios.*
- 8. To constantly encourage parent visitation, input, and participation.*

First Environments Early Learning Center is a home away from home, in the true sense of the phrase. What we know, is that the most important part of a young child’s life is to feel safe, loved, and nurtured in an environment that meets his/her individual needs. In order to do this, FEELC sets the stage for families to bond with their teachers and feel comfortable sharing daily information about both their child (ren) and family. There are many strategies that come into place in effectively creating a home for staff, children, and families. One of the most important is to retain professionals who are passionate and dedicated to the mission of FEELC. Our school serves a diverse population with families of many nationalities and cultural backgrounds. FEELC has programs in place to support language barriers and invite families to share their stories with us. FEELC celebrates a wide range of holidays where children and their families embrace the diversity of our community.

The curriculum is determined by the needs of the individual child and the developmental goals of that child. Children are naturally curious and teachers are inspired by each child’s curiosities; this is where activities and projects are drawn from. Our curriculum is immersed in the arts and nature. We offer a wide range of arts programs with specialists in areas that include music, theater, puppetry, and onsite studio artists who work in various mediums. FEELC children spend a great deal of time outside exploring, gardening, and observing the seasons. With the help of our onsite master gardener, children grow approximately 700 pounds of food each year and feast on a variety of greens, beets, carrots, asparagus, many colors of potatoes, squash, and their all time favorite, cherry tomatoes. Eating healthy and staying active is a huge part of our curriculum. We have an onsite science teacher who works closely with all of our classrooms bringing children outside to enjoy the fruits of each season and nature inside for children to explore, discover, and enjoy. These enrichment programs, guided by our staff, create inspirational experiences through which children develop their cognitive, social, physical and emotional abilities to their fullest.

First Environments Early Learning Center recognizes the importance that the environment has on our community and that relationships are the foundation for giving each child the opportunity to reach his/her potential. Our school is surrounded by beautiful gardens with pathways leading from garden to garden, playground-to-playground and even woods to a lake. Teachers, children and their families often explore the campus together and the variety of wildlife that inhabits our grounds. Through these adventures we all build loving relationships with each other. The importance of this environment is directly connected to the development of the whole child.

A school day typically includes a rich combination of indoor and outdoor activities. These activities include:

Art, sand and water play, science, language and literature, math, music and movement, dramatic play, block building, large motor play, and self-help and care activities, including lunch, snacks, and nap. Children spend time in both group and individual activities.

### **Curriculum**

FEELC provides a blended emergent curriculum with each approach scaffolding off one another. FEELC's curriculum builds upon the interest of the children. Teachers work together to formulate hypotheses about the direction of the projects and themes, collect the materials needed, and possible parent and/or community support and involvement.

**Individualized** – lesson plans are developed for each child based on individual needs and goals.

**Theme Based** –A theme is an idea or topic that a teacher and children can explore together. Teachers can integrate literacy, social studies, math, music and art. In younger classrooms the teacher may determine the content and as the children get older the content will be more child initiated and learning experiences integrated over a broad topic. Teacher directed inquiry with the teacher directing in-depth research and exploration by children.

**Project Based** – In depth investigations that may be child or teacher initiated. Research is focused on finding answers to the child's questions and the direction follows the child's interest. Specific topics are explored with the idea of finding out more through exploration rather than to have answers provided by the teacher.

[http://www2.ku.edu/~kskits/ta/Packets/RoleOfCurriculum/4\\_EarlyChildhoodCurriculum/4\\_1EarlyChildhoodCurriculum.pdf](http://www2.ku.edu/~kskits/ta/Packets/RoleOfCurriculum/4_EarlyChildhoodCurriculum/4_1EarlyChildhoodCurriculum.pdf)

FEELC curriculum is guided by each child's individual needs and goals. We loosely group our children into two developmental age groups with curriculums that meet the needs of the child.

### **Infants-Toddler**

Our infant curriculum emphasizes caregiving routines and building relationships. Teachers use the guiding principles set forth in the North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development that recognize the 5 domains in development and learning:

Emotional and Social Development  
Health and Physical Development  
Approaches to Learning  
Language Development and Communication  
Cognitive Development

Examples of Lessons Plans are on our website

## **Preschool**

Preschool curriculum encourages children to think and reflect through investigations. Children's inquiries spark projects leading children to investigate how things work and why, and to explore the world around them looking closely and collaborating together. Some projects might last a month others carry on for several months. Some projects are completely child initiated, some teacher initiated, and others are a combination of both. Teachers use the guiding principles set forth in the North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development recognizing the 5 domains in development and learning:

Emotional and Social Development  
Health and Physical Development  
Approaches to Learning  
Language Development and Communication  
Cognitive Development

For more information on The Project Approach

<http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/Publications/Young%20Investigators%20chapter%201.pdf>

Examples of Lesson Plans are on our website

### **Curriculum Resources:**

First Environments strives for innovation and keeps current with research in early childhood education. Our curriculum goals are aligned with the North Carolina Foundations for Early Learning and Development.

<http://www.ncpublicschools.org/earlylearning>

### **Assessments:**

Children's development and interests vary. In order for our staff to keep track of each child's development and individual needs, FEELC uses the following assessments tools both formal and informal. The formal assessments are:

**Infants to 3 years - Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ – 3) and  
Ages and Stages Questionnaire: Social-Emotional**

**3 to 5 years –Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum Assessment**

Through play, teachers have the opportunity to observe and informally assess each child's development every day. These methods may include anecdotal notes, checklists, and observations. These observations and assessments are tools teachers use to help each child reach their maximum potential. Please review the Assessment section in the FEELC Parent Handbook for more detailed information regarding the assessment process for all our age groups.