Mini Masters Program and Curriculum

Children at Mini Masters learn and explore through circle time, learning stations, table time, story time, snack time, art projects, guest visitors, museum walks, music, and movement activities. Verbal and artistic expression, problem solving, sharing, compassion, and being able to work in a group are key concepts integrated into our daily interactions and activities with the children.

Mixed-Age Classroom: In addition to offering the benefits of the Museum's unique learning environment, our physical space is self-contained and all children learn together as a "family." The children's social, developmental and academic growth are enhanced by our multi-age classroom make-up of 2, 3 and 4-year-olds.

Activities and art projects are planned with learning in mind to offer specific learning opportunities for each child. We individualize the activities based on the child's developmental readiness and interest. A 2-year-old may be stringing beads, which helps to develop fine motor control, while a 4-year-old may be stringing beads with the goal of learning about patterning. A 2- or 3-year-old might be feeling textured letters or numbers hidden in a sensory bin, whereas a 4-year-old may be writing their letters or numbers in sand, shaving cream or on paper.

Art: Mini Masters is a program of the Academy Art Museum and the children are continually surrounded by art. They regularly visit the Museum’s galleries on “museum walks.” We talk about the art we see as it relates to our curriculum themes or as it relates to the process through which the art was created. The children see the diversity of people and things in their world through the artwork they view, and they enjoy discovering how aspects in each piece may relate to their own lives. The process by which children create art is equally as important as the product. The children not only enjoy experimenting with art processes, but they also feel a sense of pride and accomplishment in their artwork. In addition to viewing exhibitions and creating art in our classroom, our children often visit Museum artists at work in their studios. These artists will, in turn, visit our classroom to do a project with the children. Mini Masters seeks to provide an early enrichment experience in the arts, an appreciation for art, and an experience in the varied processes of creating art.

Movement & Music: Our movement and music classes take place in our Performing Arts (PA) room or in the classroom. Music class is held twice per week with Academy Art Museum music teachers. Music and movement are a regular part of our day and include dance, parachute, scarf and ball games, listening games, and singing. Circle time also offers a daily opportunity to sing and move. Once a month, the children will have the chance to listen to classical or jazz musicians during rehearsals for the Museum’s “Music at Noon” program. The children have the opportunity for playtime, nature collecting, picnics, and enjoying the fresh air outside in the Museum's yard and courtyard.
**Language & Numbers:** Language and the alphabet are introduced by emphasizing the phoneme or "sound" that a letter makes. In this approach, the alphabet is not taught in ABC order. Instead, we introduce easiest sounds first and work up to more complex sounds. This phonemic introduction to letters is an excellent way to ensure reading readiness. We work on number and language concepts using hands-on, sensory-rich activities, such as tracing letters in sand, singing number and alphabet songs, and counting items around the room. Every task in which a child engages has an intentional learning goal for that child’s developmental readiness.

**Museum Magic Curriculum Themes:**

- **September:** Me, Myself and I
- **October:** Real & Pretend (Halloween)
- **November:** Things That Change (Fall & Thanksgiving)
- **December:** Winter & the Holidays
- **January:** Let’s Explore Winter
- **February:** Communication & Friendship (Valentine’s Day)
- **March:** Transportation & Spring (Easter)
- **April/May:** Ecology (Earth Day)

**Daily Schedule:**

8:45 Arrival & Free Play
9:30 Circle Time
9:50 Bathroom Break & Snack
10:15 Museum Walk / Project
11:00 Movement / Music
11:30 Learning Stations - Developmentally Appropriate
11:50 Clean-up / Story
12:00 Dismissal

For Afternoon Enrichment:
12:15 Lunch
12:40 Project
1:10 Rest
1:30 Free Play / Movement
2:00 Dismissal

**For All Children and Their Families:** In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), we accept children and their families with special needs into our program. During enrollment, families must complete a Request for Accommodation Form and provide a copy of the child’s IEP or ISFP. We will determine if reasonable accommodations can be made for the child and if our program can serve the best interest of the child with special needs.