

SPOTLIGHT ON HILLS AND DALES - PRESCHOOL PROGRAM

Hills and Dales Preschool and Hills and Dales Cooperative Preschool are located at Hills and Dales Training Center in Hillsboro, Ohio. The Hills and Dales Preschool governed by Highland County Board of MR/DD and the Hills and Dales Cooperative Preschool governed by Southern Ohio Educational Service Center serve the children of Highland County. The programs follow the Creative Curriculum, the Early Learning Content Standards and the NAEYC (National Association for Education of Young Children) philosophy as guidelines for language arts, mathematics, social studies and science. The program operates Monday through Thursday, 8:40 am - 3:00 pm. The children are assessed for eligibility by their home school districts to qualify for enrollment and related services (speech/hearing, adaptive physical education, physical therapy, occupational therapy, and vision/mobility). Each class consist of eight (8) children identified with special needs and four (4) typical children.

In a preschool classroom you will see a variety of activities. You will see large groups (whole group, class meeting, or circle time), small groups, play/learning centers, and routines of the day. Sometimes you will see teacher guided and/or child guided activities. Play allows the children to develop physical competence and enjoyment of the outdoors so they can understand and make sense of the world. Children develop memory, self-regulation, oral language abilities, and social skills for future school success through play.

Teachers plan and implement new ideas for hands-on learning, because children have a variety of learning styles. Most of the children go on to the local public schools and must be prepared with basic skills, such as knowing their colors and shapes; cutting with scissors; recognizing their name in print; printing some of their name; following directions; developing play to higher levels which includes social skills, expanding their imaginations, and taking turns; participating in predictable/repetitive stories; and recognizing some letters and numbers through literacy activities. Children learn through daily routines such as singing songs, printing their name on artwork, and counting the children that will participate in an activity.

Interaction with families is an important benefit for the teachers working with children. Families have so much to offer and can reinforce learning in the home. Home visits, IEP (Individual Education Plan) meetings, progress reports, communication logs, and phone calls keep the communication lines open between parents and the Preschool staff. The Preschool staff is here for the children and their families.

Preschool gives children the opportunity to develop independence, promote their own style of self-expression, strengthen their large and small muscles through active play, develop their social /peer interactions, learn to problem solve, and think logically and symbolically.