

# EARLY CHILDHOOD COURSE CATALOG

23-24 School Year



Divine Savior Academy  
DORAL

course catalog

# EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION COURSE CATALOG

The purpose of this course catalog is to provide parents and students with information regarding school course offerings and the overall progression of classes within the Divine Savior Academy early childhood education curriculum.

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The early childhood program at Divine Savior Academy is founded on research-based, developmentally appropriate practices. This means that all aspects of the program are:

- Age Appropriate
- Culturally Appropriate
- Individually Appropriate

Each child is unique and is individually guided on their educational path. Instruction is tailored to what each child needs to support them as they climb further up the ladder of development. Due to this child-centered and developmental approach to early childhood education, the curriculum framework is appropriate for both PreK-3 and PreK-4 levels.

### **Educating the Whole Child**

Divine Savior Academy's early childhood program is committed to fostering each student's development in every domain: spiritual, social, emotional, cognitive, and physical. This balanced approach to children's growth ensures a strong foundation for future success in life, rooted in the building blocks of development.

### **HighScope Approach to Early Childhood Education**

Divine Savior Academy's early childhood program follows the HighScope approach, which is centered around active learning. Children are guided by supportive teachers as they actively participate in intentional learning experiences. Children's play is highly valued and is viewed as the vehicle through which they implement, practice, and extend their learning.

## **KEY DEVELOPMENTAL INDICATORS:**

### **Spiritual Foundation**

The children will...

- Participate in a weekly chapel service.
- Learn and perform songs for Divine Savior Church services.
- Listen to Bible stories.
- Participate in retelling familiar Bible stories.
- Apply Bible stories to their everyday life.
- Share Bible stories with others.
- Sing songs connected with Bible stories.
- Become familiar with short Bible Memory Treasures.

Sample Application: Children learn one Bible story each week. Using story pictures and props, students retell the story. They also sing songs and learn Bible passages based on the Bible story. Finally, the children learn how they can apply the lessons from the story in their own prayers.

## Approaches to Learning

The children will...

- Demonstrate initiative as they explore their world.
- Make plans and follow through on their intentions.
- Focus and become engaged in activities that interest them.
- Solve problems.
- Gather information and formulate ideas about their world.
- Reflect on their experiences.

Sample Application: Each day, children participate in the Plan-Do-Review process. They have an opportunity to make and verbalize their plans for where they will play and what they will choose to do during their work time in the classroom. They then carry out their plans and demonstrate focus and engagement while they play. At the conclusion of their play, children reflect on their play plans and verbally recall what they accomplished.

## Social and Emotional Development

The children will...

- Develop a positive self-identity.
- Develop a sense of competence in their abilities.
- Recognize and regulate their emotions.
- Demonstrate empathy toward others.
- Participate in the classroom community.
- Build relationships with other children and adults.
- Engage in cooperative play.
- Develop an internal sense of right and wrong.
- Resolve social conflicts.

Sample Application: Children continually interact with their peers and teachers during their play and active learning experiences. To help children develop social-emotional skills, teachers include children in the problem-solving process. When a social issue (like a conflict with sharing a toy) arises, teachers support children as they share their perspectives, listen to one another, brainstorm possible solutions, and decide on a course of action together.

## Physical Development and Health

The children will...

- Demonstrate gross motor skills in strength, flexibility, balance, and timing.
- Demonstrate dexterity and hand-eye coordination in their fine motor skills.
- Learn about their bodies and how to navigate them in a space.
- Carry out personal care routines on their own.
- Engage in healthy practices.

Sample Application: Children are engaged in active learning experiences that support their physical development in both gross and fine motor categories. Movement lessons and activities such as building an obstacle course allow children to develop body coordination and strength (gross motor) as they jump, run, climb, and play with a variety of equipment. Fine motor skills practice such as moving objects with tongs, tweezers, sponges, and other objects help prepare children for the skill of handwriting.

## Language, Literacy, and Communication

The children will...

- Comprehend language.
- Express themselves verbally using language.
- Understand and use a variety of vocabulary words and phrases.
- Identify distinct sounds in spoken language. (phonological awareness)
- Identify letter names and their sounds. (alphabetical knowledge)
- Look at books and tell stories for pleasure and information.
- Demonstrate knowledge about print in their environment.
- Demonstrate knowledge about books and how they are used.
- Explore writing using a variety of tools.

Sample Application: The children are exposed to pieces of high-quality children's literature throughout each week and use props and pictures to retell the stories. They learn the fundamentals of language through these stories. This lays the foundation for children developing letter/sound relationships and other pre-reading essentials.

## Mathematics

The children will...

- Recognize and use number words and symbols.
- Count objects with one-to-one correspondence.
- Combine and separate quantities of objects to make larger or smaller groups.
- Identify, name, and describe shapes.
- Recognize spatial relationships among people and objects.
- Measure to describe, compare, and order objects.
- Understand and use the concept of a unit (a standard or unvarying quantity).
- Identify, describe, complete, and create patterns.
- Use data about quantity to draw conclusions, make decisions, and solve problems.

Sample Application: The children are given a collection of objects, and they sort them based on a characteristic, such as color. They then visually represent the number of objects in their group on a graph. The children engage in a discussion comparing the amounts on the graph. In doing this, students engage in mathematical skills and learn how to apply foundational vocabulary words such as "more," "less," "equal," etc.

## Creative Arts

The children will...

- Express and represent what they observe, think, imagine, and feel through 2D and 3D art.
- Express and represent what they observe, think, imagine, and feel through music.
- Express and represent what they observe, think, imagine, and feel through movement.
- Express and represent what they observe, think, imagine, and feel through pretend play.
- Appreciate the creative arts.

Sample Application: The children create open-ended and unique artwork. They are also regularly engaged in making music with their voices and other tools/instruments. Children express themselves through dance and other body movements.

## Science and Technology

The children will...

- Understand and appreciate all aspects of God's design and creation.
- Observe the materials and processes in their environment.
- Classify materials, actions, people, and events.

# KINDERGARTEN

- Experiment to test their ideas.
- Predict what they expect will happen.
- Draw conclusions based on their experiences and observations.
- Communicate their ideas about the characteristics of things and how they work.
- Gather knowledge about the natural and physical world.
- Explore and use tools and technology.

Sample Application: Children are curious about what happens when objects are placed in water. They are encouraged to answer their own questions by observing, exploring, and interacting with their environment. They predict whether objects will sink or float when they place them in water. The children then test their predictions and discuss their findings.

## Social Studies

The children will...

- Understand that people have diverse characteristics, interests, and abilities.
- Recognize that people have different roles and functions in the community.
- Participate in making classroom decisions.
- Recognize and interpret features and locations in their environment.
- Understand past, present, and future.
- Understand the importance of taking care of their environment.

Sample Application: Children engage in dramatic play and role-play various roles in their family or community. They also actively participate in their classroom and see themselves as a valuable part of this team or group.

## Chapel and Worship

On Friday mornings, students attend a chapel service that is led by a Divine Savior pastor or teacher. Each service features an applicable lesson based on a Bible story, a worship song, and prayer.

Throughout the school year, students learn, prepare, and perform songs at worship services at Divine Savior Church.

We invite all parents to attend the weekly chapel and Divine Savior Church services.

## Word of God: ChristLight

ChristLight is the curriculum used in Word of God classes from preschool through fifth grade. Each week focuses on a specific theme and a Bible lesson. Students use these themes and stories to see how Biblical truths apply to their own lives.

In Kindergarten, students study and learn various foundational Bible stories. Throughout the week, students engage in hands-on exploring (using puppets, story retelling, acting, crafting, and singing songs) to gain a basic understanding of the content of Bible stories. They also discuss important Bible passages that serve as Memory Treasures for the lesson.

## **Mathematics: Illustrative Mathematics**

The Illustrative Mathematics program is a problem-based core curriculum designed to address content and practice standards while fostering learning for all. Students have countless hands-on opportunities to solve math problems and practice math skills in lesson activities and classroom centers. The curriculum places an emphasis on solving math problems in real-world contexts and collaborating with peers while using language to express thoughts and solutions. The Illustrative Mathematics program consists of a coherent progression of learning through units and activities that help children develop a deep understanding of mathematical concepts, build fluency with procedures, and solve mathematical problems occurring in their daily lives. The units cover topics and content such as:

- Math in our world and environment
- Number sense
- Counting and comparing groups of objects/numbers
- Connecting quantities to numbers
- Flat and solid shapes
- Addition and subtraction
- Story problems
- Composing and decomposing numbers

## **English Language Arts: Collaborative Literacy**

The Collaborative Literacy program is a comprehensive English Language Arts curriculum that fosters students' reading, writing, handwriting, speaking, and listening skills through developmentally appropriate methods. This literacy program balances a variety of instructional methods which aim to reach children at their individual developmental levels. Teachers have an opportunity to work with children in small groups, tailoring instruction to their specific needs and supporting their growth at a pace that fits them best. The curriculum consists of 3 components: Being a Reader, Making Meaning, and Being a Writer.

The Being a Reader program supports children's reading development through a strategic mix of both whole-class and small group instruction. Children learn to approach reading with motivation and confidence as they grow as readers and critical thinkers. Literacy skills fostered through this program include oral fluency, language development, concepts of print, phonological awareness, phonics, and letter and high-frequency word recognition.

The Making Meaning program fosters children's reading comprehension and the self-monitoring strategies that readers use to make sense of text. Children are engaged in interactive processes that involve thinking, questioning, discussing, rereading, and responding to texts. A variety of children's literature is incorporated to provide children with both fiction and nonfiction texts, which build their vocabulary and background knowledge.

The Being a Writer program uses a workshop approach to provide writing instruction as well as develop children's motivation to write with passion and purpose. Specific English grammar instruction is incorporated throughout the lessons. Children are exposed to texts from a variety of genres and learn to develop their voice



as writers. This program encourages children to write often independently. Teachers confer with each student and provide individual support to help them develop into confident writers.

## **Science: TCI - Bring Science Alive! Exploring Science Practices**

This science curriculum is tied to the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and includes some exciting resources. The course guides young learners to observe ways that plants, animals, and people impact their environments. Students investigate how forces affect the way objects move, and how weather changes over time in recognizable patterns.

### Unit 1 - Plants, Animals, and People

- What do plants need?
- What do animals need?
- What do people need?
- Where are plants and animals found?
- How do plants and animals change Earth?
- How do people change Earth?
- How can people take care of Earth?

### Unit 2 -Movement

- How do things move?
- What do pushes and pulls do?
- How do pushes and pulls move things?
- What happens when objects bump?
- How do people design things that move?

### Unit 3 - Weather

- What is weather?
- When does weather change?
- What keeps Earth warm?
- How can people stay cool in hot weather?
- What makes storms on Earth?
- How can people prepare for storms?

## **Social Studies: TCI - Social Studies Alive! Me and My World**

In kindergarten, students explore relationships in their lives with families, friends, teachers, and neighbors. They gain a better understanding of how people live differently in different places and that they can help care for the

world. Using various reading materials and exploration activities, students explore answers to the following questions:

- Who am I?
- What is a family?
- How do I get along with others?
- How do I make friends?
- How do I solve problems with others?
- How can I be a good helper at school?
- What is in my neighborhood?
- Where am I in the world?
- How do people around the world live?
- What do people need and want?

## ELECTIVE COURSES (SPECIALS)

- How can I help take care of the world?

Kindergarten students participate in elective courses that are designed to enhance their well-rounded education in three key ways: physically, analytically, and creatively. Some of these courses vary their curricula, based on a multi-year cycle.

### Physical Education

DSA's Physical Education program mission is to enrich a child's life with a holistic approach: spiritually, physically, cognitively, and socially in their early years. It empowers children by exposing them to fun and exciting games through fitness. It also teaches our early childhood students basic skills as they enjoy playing a variety of organized sports for years to come. Through these games and activities, we seek to boost a child's brain, power, and physical development. The program covers all the physical fitness components necessary to help develop a fit and healthy young individual including balance, agility, strength, and general body coordination.

### Art

Kindergarten students are taken to the art lab to learn about and practice artistic skills and concepts. The main objectives of the art program are listed below:

- to continually remind students about how art and their individual artistic abilities are a gift and blessing from God

- to learn step-by-step drawing skills using basic shapes as a template
- to understand various types of media in art and how each creates a different artistic effect
- to discover different artists and time periods in art and examine their impact in the art world
- to teach students how to manage time wisely to complete their own projects in class

## Music

Kindergarten Music Skills:

- Explore simple songs, finger-plays, and rhymes to experience connections among music, language and numbers
- Imitate simple rhythm patterns played by a peer or teacher
- Sing or play songs by memory
- Identify singing, speaking and whispering voices
- Identify, visually and aurally, pitched and unpitched classroom instruments
- Respond to music of various sound sources to show awareness of steady beat
- Share opinions about selected pieces of music
- Improvise a response to a musical question sung or played by someone else

Kindergarten students are introduced to music through a variety of songs, finger-plays, and rhythmic activities. Students have opportunities to sing, explore movement and expression while listening to music, and develop an awareness of beat as they engage in creating simple rhythmic patterns.

## Spanish as a Heritage Language

The DSA Spanish program focuses on a variety of curricular areas: reading, writing, oral communication, and listening. Basically, the learning of Spanish means to understand and follow the Spanish instructions, read and speak fluently, acquire the skills to write correctly (in both grammar and orthography), and develop communication and presentation skills. The main objective is that each student enjoys learning the Spanish

# EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT PROGRAMS

language and can be proficient in the different areas related to language acquisition.

## Spanish as a Second Language

These courses are intended for students with limited exposure to the Spanish language. Students will be introduced to the sound system and grammatical structure of Spanish. They will mainly focus on developing skills in the areas of listening, speaking, basic reading, and writing. Additionally, students will acquire a knowledge of the geography, culture, and people of the regions in the world where Spanish is spoken.

## School Counselor Initiatives

The school counseling program is an integral component of the school's mission by following the American School Counseling Association national model (ASCA). The ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors are organized in the following way:

#### Category 1: Mindset Standards

Includes standards related to the psycho-social attitudes or beliefs students have about themselves in relation to academic work. These make up the students' belief system as exhibited in behaviors. The main focus is the belief in the development of the whole self, including a healthy balance of mental, spiritual, social/emotional, and physical well-being.

#### Category 2: Behavior Standards

These standards include behaviors commonly associated with being a successful student. These behaviors are visible, outward signs that a student is engaged and putting forth effort to learn. The behaviors are grouped into three subcategories.

- Learning Strategies: Processes and tactics students employ to aid in the cognitive work of thinking, remembering, or learning.
- Self-management Skills: Continued focus on a goal despite obstacles (grit or persistence) and avoidance of distractions or temptations to prioritize higher pursuits over lower pleasures (delayed gratification, self-discipline, self-control).
- Social Skills: Acceptable behaviors that improve social interactions, such as those between peers or between students and adults.

The K-8th school counseling curriculum integrates a Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Program that is deeply influenced by Biblical teachings. This program is based on the 7 Ways of Living Generously Framework, which encourages generous actions in various aspects of life, including time, words, attention, influence, thoughts, money, and belongings. These Seven Ways are taught through captivating stories and activities, encouraging personal reflection, making meaningful connections to Scripture, and providing practical tips and skills for students to incorporate into their lives. Simultaneously, the curriculum addresses all five SEL competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, responsible decision-making, and relationship skills which are essential for children's character development.

## **SIPPS Academic Intervention**

SIPPS (Systematic Instruction in Phonological Awareness, Phonics, and Sight Words) is a research-based foundational skills program proven to help both new and struggling readers in grades K–12 build skills and confidence for fluent, independent reading.

The SIPPS program provides a structured literacy approach to foundational skills instruction through explicit instructional routines focused on phonological awareness, spelling-sounds, and sight words, with immediate application to reading connected text and to spelling.

The SIPPS program allows students to:

- Respond orally during the foundational skills routines and receive immediate, strategic feedback.
- Demonstrate mastery of learning at regular intervals through criterion-referenced tests.
- Read controlled-vocabulary text to practice the words and concepts taught.
- Engage with books at appropriate levels to build fluency and increase confidence.

## *Our Philosophy of Education*

We believe every child should know the love of Christ.  
Sharing His love with children is the reason we exist.

Education gives our children a foundation for life.  
They are future explorers and creators,  
innovators and leaders, neighbors and parents.

We are a community of families, students, educators,  
and friends who are dedicated to working together to  
help our children thrive. That's why we call ourselves  
*"The Divine Savior Family."*

We believe our mission has an eternal impact and  
that education can change the world.  
Because we believe this, we strive to give our children  
excellence in all we do.



*a family of four academies*

DORAL CAMPUS | DELRAY BEACH CAMPUS  
SANTA RITA RANCH CAMPUS | SIENNA CAMPUS