



Curriculum Guide

*“Do not train children to learning by force and harshness,
but direct them to it by what amuses their minds,
so that you may be better able to discover with accuracy
the peculiar bent of the genius of each.”*

- Plato

How We Teach at HLA

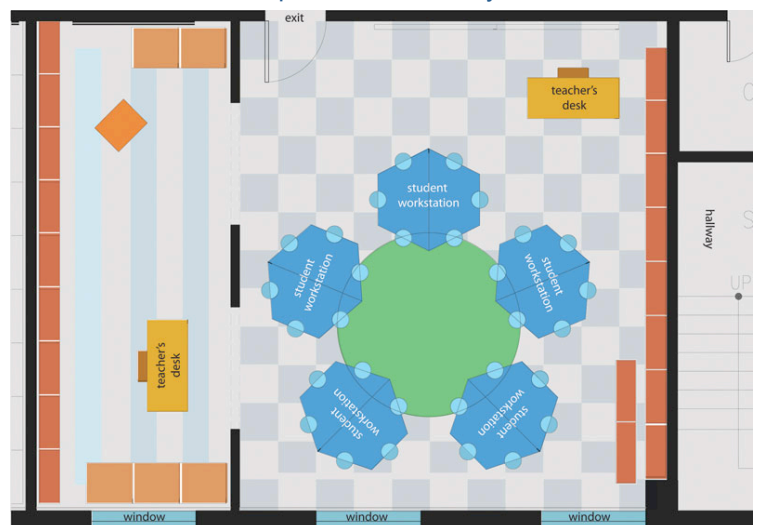
At HLA, we believe that the child must be the center of all learning. What this means for us as educators is that we have to give up traditional instructional models such as lecturing and skill drilling. Instead, our teachers use the “workshop model” in order to make sure that each and every student is highly engaged and working on materials appropriate to their specific proficiency level. HLA teachers also practice “differentiated instruction,” which means they customize their instructional approaches for each student based on the student’s skills and needs.

Workshop Model

Over the past decade, the workshop model has been documented as one of the most effective instructional models. For our kindergarten and first grade students, this approach begins with the design of our classrooms: no desks in rows facing a blackboard! Instead, you will find a series of small tables with 4 to 6 students at each, and the teachers circulate throughout the room to work with students in these small groups and individually. The workshop model is designed to access the range of ways that children learn and acquire knowledge—from listening to the teacher model a skill to hands-on learning opportunities. It is a rigorous and challenging, yet affirming, educational model that generally consists of the following components:

- Teacher leads a mini-lesson in which s/he models the skill or strategy that is being taught.
- Students practice the skill or strategy together with the teacher.
- Students break out into groups that are formed based on similar needs as identified by teacher observation and assessment. The teacher works with each group in guided instruction, addressing their needs.
- Students work independently or collaboratively on a project/assignment that allows them to employ and develop the particular skill or strategy.
- Students have an opportunity to share their work with the class and teacher and engage in class-wide discussion.

Sample Classroom Layout



Differentiated Instruction

The workshop model only works well if the teacher fully understands and meets the needs of every student. In traditional educational models, students are assessed at the end of units and their overall score or grade indicates their “skill level.” This big picture approach does not help the student or teacher to improve student learning. Instead, HLA uses ongoing assessments to identify precisely how our students are performing. Think of it this way. In the past, at the end of a math unit on addition, “Johnny” scores a 60% on the test, indicating that he mastered 60% of the unit. “Johnny” is behind, but all we can tell him is to “work harder.” At HLA, teachers review student work daily to identify what the challenges are for students as they work to master skills and strategies. During a workshop, the teacher may observe that “Johnny” is able to count to 20 and add single digit numbers with great mastery but has trouble adding double-digit numbers. The teacher can focus Johnny’s work on mastering the double-digit addition instead of repeating work in the area he has already mastered. We call this approach “differentiated instruction” because the teacher provides different—targeted—instruction to each student based on the student’s skills and needs.



Dual Language Instruction – Partial Immersion

At the heart of our school's mission is to provide an innovative dual-language program that supports students to become proficient in Modern Hebrew. We support this mission through a partial-immersion environment in which we use the Hebrew language in various aspects of the school program and curriculum in addition to a daily period of formal Hebrew instruction. Selected subjects, such as art, music, social studies and physical education are conducted in Hebrew and English through a co-teaching model with both an English-speaking instructor and a Hebrew-speaking instructor. All formal and informal communication between students and the Hebrew instructor are exclusively in Hebrew. For example, all meals at HLA (breakfast and lunch) are seen as instructional opportunities and are conducted in Hebrew.

Service Learning

HLA seeks to infuse our students with values of understanding and respect for others—an important component of our mission. HLA brings these values to life through a service-learning curriculum that promotes social responsibility. As students learn in social studies about their places in their larger communities—with their view of community expanding from that of their smaller local community to that of the larger world community—they have age-appropriate opportunities to perform community service that draws upon and further develops their understanding of themselves and the world. Service learning is integrated across the curriculum so that HLA students learn the values of understanding and respect for others in multiple contexts and communities.

Goals for our Students

HLA's mission is to provide a nurturing yet rigorous dual language program committed to fostering academic excellence and a high degree of Hebrew language proficiency.

HLA's Learning Environments

When we discuss education at HLA, we use the phrase “learning environment” to describe the physical, cultural, social and emotional elements that turn classrooms into vibrant educational spaces. While our overall goal is to create dynamic and supportive learning environments throughout the school, each grade level is characterized by particular elements that we believe are crucial for learning at each development stage:

- **Kindergarten Learning Environment** - Kindergarten is a place for children to blossom and grow both socially and academically, where they learn how to be productive members of the class while maintaining their individuality. Developmentally appropriate activities enrich the social, emotional, physical, and cognitive growth of each child. Creative work, art, and singing are as important as learning the ABC's and 1-2-3's. Self-confidence and self-esteem are strengthened in a nurturing environment where children can discover, explore, and grow.
- **First Grade Learning Environment** - First Graders begin their journey toward academic achievement and excellence by increasing their fluency in written and spoken language and by developing good study habits. The positive self-image developed in Kindergarten is nurtured, as is each child's eagerness to learn. Students participate in integrated units of study intended to stimulate their curiosities and interests. Strong relationships with peers and teachers are encouraged through positive interactions that also foster a sense of community with the entire school.

Student “Outcome” Goals

When we wrote the charter application for HLA, we set very specific and measurable “outcome” goals for students at each grade level and in each of the core subject areas. What do we mean by “outcome?” These are the skills that we expect students to master by the end of the year. In this Curriculum Guide, we present the minimum expected outcomes for students. Your child may far exceed these outcome goals or your child may struggle to meet several in one area but exceed expectations in another area. Throughout the year, we regularly measure each student's progress towards meeting these outcome goals and modify our instruction to help advance those who struggle and further challenge those who quickly master the skills. “Tests” and “assessments” for children in Kindergarten and 1st grade are strictly used for the purposes of improving instructional practices. If at any time you have concerns about your child's progress towards meeting these outcome goals, please call his or her teacher to discuss what you can do at home to support your child's individual growth!

Hebrew

HLA's dual language program is based on the "proficiency approach" to learning a foreign language that helps students learn Hebrew at their own pace. We set the bar high for our young learners but recognize that language skills, particularly in a foreign language, develop at different rates and in different ways for each child. For example, a child may be able to understand full conversations in Hebrew but have difficulty speaking or writing the language. With the proficiency approach, we pay close attention to how each child is learning Hebrew and customize our curriculum and instructional approach to help them make the next step on their unique path to becoming bilingual. For some of our students who have grown up in homes that speak Hebrew, the proficiency approach helps them move beyond language acquisition and into the more subtle but critical aspects of communicating in another language: they learn how to interpret meanings, practice using the language in various interpersonal situations, and are given opportunities to make presentations in Hebrew, thus allowing them to learn the nuances of language use.

Kindergarten Outcome Goals

At the end of June, we expect our students (at the minimum) to be able to accomplish the following in Hebrew:

- Write their name.
- Respond to simple commands or questions.
- Match short oral phrases with the appropriate pictures.
- Act out or draw a picture to illustrate words, phrases, or simple memorized sentences.
- Memorize key phrases from authentic Israeli children's stories to retell some parts of the plot.
- Respond to classroom instruction.
- Play or lead a game of "Simon says."
- Respond reactively to who, what, where, when, and why questions about a passage on a familiar topic, using learned words and phrases.
- List their family members.
- Use common words and phrases such as "My name is..." or "I was born on..." in a short monologue or dialogue.
- Report on the daily weather.
- Use memorized phrases when playing board games.
- Use cultural greetings appropriately.
- Name major cities in Israel.
- Name 4-5 national symbols.
- Recognize 5-6 songs and 3-4 stories that are part of the Israeli classical canon.
- Match a picture of a place or of a symbol to a written or spoken word or phrase.
- Correctly use greetings related to welcoming, leaving and special occasions related to the Israeli culture.

First Grade Outcome Goals

At the end of June, we expect our students (at the minimum) to be able accomplish the following in Hebrew:

- Greet friends and family using every day greetings and greetings for special occasions.
- Tell their age, and their place of living using phrases such as "my name is..." or "I live in..."
- List the subjects they learn in school.
- List what they ate for breakfast and lunch.
- Tell how they get ready to go to school.
- Count from 1 – 100.
- Create a simple dialogue "in the store."
- Tell what day of the week it is, how is the weather, and what is the season.
- Do simple math problems in Hebrew (plus and minus of one digit numbers).
- Comprehend language consisting of simple vocabulary and structures in face-to-face conversation with peers and familiar adults.
- Act out or draw a picture to illustrate words, phrases, or a song that has simple sentences.
- Recognize and understand at least 7 authentic Israeli children songs.
- Be familiar with at least 6 authentic Israeli children stories.
- Use some key cultural traits in which the target language is spoken.
- Correctly use and interpret cultural manifestations, such as gestures accompanying greeting and leaving and the appropriate distance to maintain between people.

English Language Arts

The HLA English language arts curriculum helps students develop the necessary skills for effectively communicating their ideas, opinions, and experiences in oral and written form, and for appreciating the oral and written expression of others. The development of literacy is a primary goal, and our students learn to use language to gain information and develop critical thinking and comprehension skills. Our early learners focus not only on the mechanics of reading (learning to identify sounds and letters) but also on understanding story structure (plot, characters, problem and solution), thereby ensuring comprehension. Students give expression to their ideas, thoughts and feelings through different formats such as handmade books that contain their original drawings and written descriptions of experiences, feelings and ideas that are important to them.

Teachers regularly assess each student's progression in reading, writing and comprehension in order to make sure that their instructional strategies match and support each student's learning style. These "assessments" are ongoing and informal—students have fun testing out what they've learned—so that our youngest learners are able to enjoy and embrace English language arts.

Kindergarten Outcome Goals

At the end of June, we expect our students (at the minimum) to be able to:

- Engage in pre-reading and reading activities to make predictions, re-tell a story in sequence, and make connections between the events in a story and the events in their own lives.
- Track print by pointing to written words when texts are read aloud by self or others.
- Create a story with a beginning, middle, and end, using pictures and some words.
- Know the difference between real stories (nonfiction text, such as "all about" books) and imaginary stories (fictional text, such as fairy tales).
- Identify and use spoken words that rhyme, recognize the same sounds in different words, and know that letters have individual sounds.
- Read automatically a small set of high-frequency sight words (for example, "a," "the," "my," "is," "are").
- Write, using letters and drawings, to label and communicate for different purposes (such as to tell stories, communicate feelings, and provide information).
- Use the basic conventions of reading: left-to-right; top-to-bottom; know the difference between letters and words; know the difference between print and pictures.
- Explain and discuss new information; ask questions; express ideas, thoughts, and feelings; and engage in imaginative dialogues and social interaction.
- Learn and use new words in context.

First Grade Outcome Goals

At the end of June, we expect our students (at the minimum) to be able to:

- Use their knowledge of root words, compound words, prefixes, suffixes, and plurals to decode grade-level words.
- Read common word families ("sat," "cat," "mat," etc.).
- Read grade-level texts with appropriate speed, accuracy, and expression.
- Study antonyms, synonyms, and homonyms, as well as categories of words (such as animals and place names) to learn new grade-level vocabulary.
- Write about what they have read in different ways: describe the characters, setting, or events; list a sequence of events in a story; re-tell a story using words that they know; identify a problem and solution in a simple story.
- Use punctuation marks, such as commas, question marks, and periods as clues to help express the meaning of sentences when reading. For example, know that a period means to stop and an exclamation point means to read with extra energy.
- Write or draw pictures to capture important understandings (share what they have learned about a topic, respond to an experience).
- Use comprehension strategies (such as predict/confirm, re-read, self-correct, ask questions) to clarify the meaning of what they have read.
- Speak for different purposes and vary language (formal or informal) according to the purpose of communication (to inform, to entertain, etc.).
- Identify and produce letter-sound correspondences, including consonants and short and long vowels, such as knowing the difference between the "a" in "mat" and the "a" in "mate."
- Discuss stories and themes or topics in small or large group settings.

Math

At HLA, our goal is for all students to understand and enjoy mathematics and help them recognize its value in our world. We want our students to become active problem solvers and to develop increasing confidence in their abilities to reason and communicate mathematically. To help them build this foundation, we use a grounded and structured approach to mathematics where concepts are presented in a logical fashion and incremental steps that build upon each other and allow for the development of a solid base. It is for this reason that we use the EnVision math program at HLA. EnVision allows students to rely on their senses in order to understand math. This means using pictures, activities, songs and other visual methods to count, add and problem-solve. Learning by doing helps children reach their full potential by moving through the math program in their own way and at their own pace.

HLA teachers are also able to challenge every child at his or her math level by using SRA/McGraw-Hill kits for individualized learning. The kits are large boxes filled with color-coded cardboard sheets that include math exercises for students. As the student successfully completes each series of color-coded (leveled) math exercises, he or she then advances to the next color—the next level in difficulty.

Kindergarten Outcome Goals

At the end of June, we expect our students (at the minimum) to be able to:

- Count aloud by ones from 1 to a minimum of 20 or as high as they can (some even attempt to count to infinity!).
- Use the number line to perform tasks such as counting backward from 10 to 1.
- Use ordinal numbers to describe an item's place in a sequence from 1 to 10. For example, first, second, third, fourth—all the way to tenth.
- Compare two groups and determine which is more, which is less, or if they are the same.
- Sort groups of items by size—from smallest to largest and from largest to smallest.
- Recognize basic shapes in the environment such as the circular face of a clock, a rectangular door, and a square floor tile.
- Understand and use words such as "over," "under," "above," "below," "next to," and "between."
- Know words that relate to a time of day, such as "morning," "noon," and "evening." Know which activities often happen during each period, such as eating breakfast in the morning, eating lunch at noon, and so on.
- Recognize, describe, and create patterns of colors, sizes, and shapes. For example, what comes next in this pattern?
- Make informed predictions and estimations.

First Grade Outcome Goals

At the end of June, we expect our students (at the minimum) to be able to:

- Write and count aloud to 100 by ones (1, 2, 3...) and by tens (10, 20, 30...). Also count to 50 by fives (5, 10, 15...) and to 20 by twos (2, 4, 6...).
- Count backward from 20 by ones (20, 19, 18...).
- Develop an initial understanding of the base-ten system (10 ones = 1 ten, 10 tens = 1 hundred).
- Add numbers with sums up to 10.
- Use drawings or pictures to explain a math problem or problem-solving process. For example, show that three balloons plus four balloons plus one balloon equals eight balloons.
- Subtract one-digit numbers. For example, $7 - 4 = 3$.
- Recognize geometric shapes and structures in the environment. For example, recognize a triangle in a Yield street sign.
- Use objects such as paper clips or the length of your child's foot to determine the length of a space or object. For example, count the number of paces from one side of a room to the other.
- Identify and discuss patterns in arithmetic (what comes next in a repeating pattern, using numbers or objects).
- Collect and record data for a question, such as, "What is today's temperature?"

Science

HLA's science curriculum encourages students to work as young scientists. Students engage in active collaborative investigation to foster analytical thinking. They learn that they are capable of designing and implementing experiments to investigate how their world works. The children learn how to manipulate scientific tools as they expand their science vocabulary. We aim to help even our youngest students make connections between science, technology and societal impacts. The students will better understand such topics as community health, population, natural resources, environmental quality, natural and human-induced hazards, and other global challenges.

Kindergarten Outcome Goals

At the end of June, we expect our students (at the minimum) to be able to:

- Use their senses, such as sight and touch, to observe and describe different objects. For example, they should be able to tell that a basketball looks round, that the surface is covered with little rubber dots and feels rough, and that it makes a sound when it bounces on the ground.
- Observe a number of objects and decide whether they are alike or different.
- Use tools to describe and compare the physical properties of objects. For example, use a balance scale to see which of two objects weighs more, or use a thermometer to find out which of several glasses of water contains the warmest water.
- Observe, describe, and recognize the properties of materials such as wood, plastic, or metal. For example, recognize the grains of wood or the shiny surface of polished metals.
- Sort objects according to their physical properties, such as color, shape, or texture.
- Observe and describe how plants change from season to season.
- Observe how plants and animals grow and change.
- Identify what plants and animals need to live, such as air, water, and light.
- Observe and compare the parts of a plant—such as roots, leaves, stems, and flowers—that enable different plants to live.
- Understand that living things have offspring and that offspring closely resemble their parents.

First Grade Outcome Goals

At the end of June, we expect our students (at the minimum) to be able to:

- Recognize that water evaporates when it is left in an open container. Understand that water as a liquid changes into a gas as it moves into the air.
- Recognize that the material or materials that make up an object determine its properties, such as whether it will sink or float.
- Observe and describe the weather conditions that occur in each season. For example, observe that it snows usually only in winter, but it can rain in any season.
- Compare temperatures in different locations, for example, in the house and outside, in the sun and in the shade.
- Describe how the sun appears to move during the day.
- Know that there is a cycle of day and night every 24 hours.
- Recognize that the sun's energy warms the air.
- Describe how an animal's physical traits, like a giraffe's long neck, a turtle's shell, or a polar bear's heavy fur, help the animal survive.
- Recognize that some traits of living things have been inherited, such as the number of limbs an animal has.
- Communicate what they have observed by speaking and writing.



Social Studies

E Pluribus Unum (“Out of many, one”). No better phrase describes America. Initially used to describe the welding of one federal state from a group of individual colonies, the phrase *e pluribus unum* grew in meaning and depth as our country grew. “Out of many, one” now not only describes our one nation of 50 states, but our one people made up of individuals who have come from every nation in this world, representing every religious group, every race, every walk of life. What binds Americans together despite different heritages, ethnicity, races, religions, and cultures is our belief in the most fundamental concepts of our democracy—our basic rights, responsibilities and freedoms.

HLA’s Social Studies program is designed around these concepts of democracy and diversity. The HLA Social Studies curriculum aims to help students make sense of the world in which they live, make connections between major ideas and their own lives, see themselves as members of the world community, and understand, respect and appreciate the commonalities and differences that give the United States character and identity. In addition, through the thematic study of World Jewish Communities and Israel, students explore the rich cultural and intellectual traditions of particular communities from around the world. Being exposed to a global perspective early in their studies helps students understand how their own community relates to other communities around the world. HLA’s focus on World Jewish communities and Israel is aligned with the Hebrew language instruction, allowing students to understand that history, culture and language are deeply intertwined in the particular communities studied as well as all communities around the world.

Kindergarten Outcome Goals

At the end of June, we expect our students (at the minimum) to be able to:

- Appreciate uniqueness, diversity, similarities and differences of children, families, schools and communities.
- Recognize their identity as a member of a family, classroom, school, neighborhood and community.
- In relation to the World Map: identify water and land masses, the USA, Israel and other countries of family origin.
- Understand the needs and wants of families and how services and businesses in the community meet these needs: post office, hospital, supermarkets and farmer’s markets.
- Understand monetary concepts of earning, saving, spending and keeping money.
- Recognize symbols of citizenship such as flags and emblems of the USA, Israel and other countries.
- Understand rules and law making in the classroom, school, community and country.
- Recognize national holidays and major current events, such as an election in the USA or Israel.
- Exhibit respect for others, caring and conflict resolution.
- Respect values, ideas and traditions of diverse cultures through customs and stories.
- Engage in study of individuals, families, neighborhoods, businesses and services in Israel and the USA.
- Understand their own country of origin and family backgrounds.

First Grade Outcome Goals

At the end of June, we expect our students (at the minimum) to be able to:

- Identify uniqueness, diversity, similarities and differences among children, families, schools and communities.
- Celebrate the cultural heritage of their own families and those of families studied in Israel.
- Understand the concepts of neighborhood, city, state and country.
- Recognize the map of the USA and its States.
- Use and make local maps of the neighborhood and a neighborhood in Israel.
- Recognize currency and banks in the USA and Israel.
- Recognize and reproduce symbols of citizenship such as flags and emblems of the USA, Israel and other countries.
- Understand roles, rights and responsibilities of citizens in homes, classrooms, schools, community and country.
- Understand traditions of diverse cultures and be able to describe other cultures’ customs and stories.
- Compare individuals, families, neighborhoods, businesses and services in Israel and the USA to recognize similarities and differences.
- Describe their own country of origin and family backgrounds.



The Arts - Visual Arts, Dance, Music & Theatre

The Arts are incorporated as discrete subjects as well as integrated into other curricular areas. For example, designated Music classes are taught regularly by a specialist and songs are used to help students learn basic language and math skills. Another example of integrated study of the arts is the use of Visual Arts in ELA curriculum such as development of picture books, creation of mobiles and montages, and decoration of “word walls”. The Arts also provides HLA with opportunities to integrate cultural aspects related to the study of Hebrew, Israel and the history of world Jewish communities into the school’s curriculum.

HLA offers four discrete and embedded programs in:

- **Visual Art** - Students construct meanings about the world through art making; build upon experiences to express a personal vision; develop a global perspective and recognize the power of art to communicate beliefs and values.
- **Dance** - Students develop physical, social, cognitive, aesthetic, and meta-cognitive skills and understandings in “dance literacy” and “dance making.”
- **Music** - Students develop musical skills, express themselves as thinking, feeling musicians, apply and utilize the elements of music, and use music to facilitate expression.
- **Theatre** - Students engage as writers, actors, designers, directors and technicians. Students learn to use their minds, bodies, voices, emotions and sense of artistry to examine the world and its meaning.

Physical Education

HLA is committed to ensuring that our students develop sound bodies as well as sound minds. Our goal is to present a wide-ranging, fitness-based program that brings together all of their academic subject areas into their physical activities. For example, we use scoring to reinforce math rather than competition. Questions are constantly being asked like, "How many did you get?" or "Did you beat your own score?" No team wins or loses by scoring the most points. Rather, individuals "win" by working to improve each day. Also, we reinforce the study of Hebrew language and culture by using Hebrew words and phrases during activities and exercises.

Since we are a fitness-based program, the students are introduced to the idea of "heart rate" right away. In grades K-1, they are taught how to feel their heart beat through their chest. They are taught how to count their heart rate to see if they get their heart rate going fast enough, or not. This simple skill helps them make informed choices regarding their own activity levels. They develop a beginning understanding of what makes an activity "good for your heart" and that physical activity can be both beneficial and enjoyable.

In addition to contributing to students’ physical health, the physical education program at HLA helps students make friends, have fun, learn to play as a member of a team, excel on an individual level, learn the rules of playing fair and good sportsmanship and improve self-esteem.

Health

Every day, young students make decisions affecting their health and well-being, from what they wear to what they eat and how they play. HLA’s health education program helps students understand the connections between these daily life activities and their personal health, as well as that of their surrounding society. We empower our students to meet the challenges of growing up by helping them learn to recognize the causes of ill health and understand the benefits of prevention, good hygiene, and appropriate medical care. HLA uses the Michigan Model for Comprehensive School Health Education, which is a “building block” curriculum that runs from kindergarten through 8th grade. As students advance through grade levels, they are able to add to their prior knowledge base to understand more complex health issues. Beginning with kindergarten, basics for healthy life-styles are introduced in ten topic areas: Safety and First Aid, Nutrition, Family Health, Consumer Health, Community Health, Growth and Development, Substance Use and Abuse, Personal Health Practices, Emotional and Mental Health, and Disease Prevention and Control.



Technology

Our students are growing up in the Information Age. This means that just as HLA helps them gain literacy in English and Hebrew, we also help them achieve literacy in technology so that they can fully participate in contemporary society. Starting in kindergarten, students use computers and appropriate software as part of their learning environment. As such, HLA uses a “mini-lab” structure in the classroom that accommodates one-quarter to one-third of the class on computers while the remaining students work in small groups on related curriculum projects. With “mini labs,” teachers have an easy-to-manage way to provide every child with frequent access to technology and intensive small-group instruction in core curriculum areas. The educational software that HLA uses in the classrooms directly connects computer activities with subject specific learning standards.

Career Development and Occupational Studies

Children do better in school when they can see how education is connected to a successful future. For our youngest learners, this doesn't mean that the kindergartner has to choose his or her career at age 5! Rather, they learn that education leads to “real world” occupations. For example, a veterinarian uses math skills to calculate the amount of medicine a cat will need. At HLA, we help our students:

- Discover the variety of jobs available to them.
- Connect what they are learning in school to real-world situations.
- Begin viewing themselves in occupations.
- Develop work-readiness skills such as working in teams, making decisions, solving problems and being a leader.