

# EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

## PREAMBLE

The following principles provide common ground for interaction between independent school professionals and their many constituents (parents, students, colleagues at other schools, and the public). The NAIS Principles of Good Practice for member schools define high standards and ethical behavior in key areas of school operations to guide schools in becoming the best education communities they can be, to embed the expectation of professionalism, and to further our sector's core values of transparency, excellence, and inclusivity. Accordingly, membership in NAIS is contingent upon agreement to abide by the spirit of the PGPs.

## OVERVIEW

Early childhood education emphasizes the development of the whole child, providing for each child's social, emotional, physical, and intellectual needs. Early childhood programs are developmentally appropriate in that they are based on an understanding of general patterns of growth in the early years as well as children's individual development.

- 1 Early childhood educators and all personnel who interact with young children have appropriate training, understanding, and knowledge regarding the developmental characteristics of this age group.
- 2 Early childhood educators recognize that play is the work of young children.
- 3 Early childhood educators build on children's natural curiosity to promote a love of learning.
- 4 Early childhood educators prepare the environment so that children learn through active exploration and discovery.
- 5 Early childhood educators recognize the importance of outdoor play and provide appropriate time and equipment.
- 6 Early childhood educators design programs that develop the large and small motor skills of young children.
- 7 Early childhood educators engage parents as partners in understanding the unique characteristics and needs of young children.
- 8 Early childhood educators, in observing and interpreting children's behavior, use bias-free assessment tools based on developmental norms.
- 9 Early childhood educators promote equity and justice by creating a community that fosters respect, understanding, and an appreciation of differences.