



# Giving Guide

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR

Your investment in this playground isn't just a donation; it's a commitment to providing comprehensive education for every child. Your support extends far beyond our school, shaping our students' lives profoundly now and in the future. Please help us realize this vision. Thank you for considering a contribution to this impactful project. Together, we can build a place where children thrive.

## OUR MISSION

Founded August 2022

The STEAM Academy Preschool is fiscally sponsored by the Museum at Prairiefire, registered in the state of Kansas as a 501(c)3 organization and as a charitable non-profit.

Our mission is to provide children with the tools for a successful future by inspiring and empowering them to contribute, collaborate, and innovate in order to persevere through challenges and thrive.

### MUSEUM AT PRAIRIEFIRE BOARD MEMBERS

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3

Hours class time currently available for families per day

8

Hours of class time available for families per day with the playground addition

3-5

The age of children we serve in our community



# Build a Playground, Leave a Legacy

OUR GOAL

\$75,000

HELP US GET THERE

## THE BIG PICTURE: WHY BUILD A PLAYGROUND?

**Our curriculum takes a whole-child approach, addressing all areas of child development.** We recognize along with Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math the importance of cognitive, social, emotional, physical, and creative development. Through a variety of activities and experiences, we foster growth in all of these areas. Our students develop inner resources to respond to life's challenges with the Scientific Process —and a nature play playground is the perfect companion to our curriculum.

### HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT

A playground complements our whole-child approach, fostering growth in cognitive, social, emotional, physical, and creative areas of development.

### OUTDOOR EXPLORATION

Outdoor play provides opportunities for hands-on exploration, sparking curiosity and promoting a deeper understanding of the natural world.

### SOCIAL INTERACTION

The playground serves as a space for children to engage in cooperative play, develop social skills, and build friendships, essential for their emotional and social development.

### APPLICATION OF LEARNING

The playground serves as a real-world learning environment where children can apply concepts learned in the classroom, fostering a deeper understanding through hands-on exploration.

### PHYSICAL HEALTH

Active play on the playground promotes physical fitness, coordination, and gross motor skills, contributing to overall health and well-being.

### EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

Outdoor play encourages children to express themselves freely, reducing stress and promoting emotional resilience as they navigate various play experiences.

## THE IMPACT

# Building Our Playground

Together, we can create a haven where every child's potential is nurtured, laying the groundwork for a brighter future for generations to come. Join us in building the foundation for lifelong success and happiness for our children.



## MORE THAN A PLACE TO PLAY

Nature play playgrounds offer more than just swings and slides; they provide children with immersive experiences in the great outdoors, fostering a deep connection with nature while promoting physical, social, and cognitive development. These playgrounds feature natural elements like logs, rocks, and plants, encouraging imaginative and unstructured play that stimulates creativity and problem-solving skills.

## MEETING THE REQUIREMENT FOR FULL-TIME

In accordance with our Kansas State Licensing, **we are required to have a dedicated playground in order to operate a full-time preschool.** Outdoor play is critical to the development of gross motor skills during these developmental years. There is a clear need in our community for full-time preschool. Here are a few reasons:

- Support early childhood development in our community
- Support working families with safe, reliable child services
- Build a hub for community engagement and support

\$75,000

The cost of building a playground

450

The number of children in our community we can serve over just 3 years

1,500

The number of hours of outdoor enjoyment and play to be had over 5 years

MAKE A CONTRIBUTION





# Hear From Families

SUPPORT OUR MISSION

“The STEAM Academy has been **a dream come true for our family**. Our four year old is thriving in this unique, challenging, supportive environment with amazing teachers who give their all to each child.

**No day is the same and the curriculum is far beyond what I ever could have imagined.** Our daughter is learning to be a scientist, explorer, and learner in a safe and very fun environment.

RACHAEL L.

“My daughter has been attending The STEAM Academy at the Museum at Prairiefire since August. The teachers are incredibly welcoming, kind and engaging.

The classrooms are out of this world - natural sunlight beaming in through the windows; different hands-on stations set up throughout. **My daughter has learned so much in her short time at The STEAM Academy and looks forward to going to school every day!**”

KELLI

“We just love The STEAM Academy. My 4 year-old Ruby has been in the T-Rex Room for about two months, and **she has already learned so much and improved so many skills.**

The resources afforded by the museum are incredible; **the kids are having so many more unique experiences than they would at a traditional day-care or preschool.**

I really appreciate that the teachers are building strong relationships with the kids; Ruby is comfortable with and excited to see them every day, which makes drop-off easier for both of us.”

GRACE S.

“We just moved here to the USA, Overland Park, to be exact and my son barely speaks English at all, and is adjusting to the whole new place and culture, so I decided to enroll him in the STEAM Academy for him to learn and socialize.

**I was just so amazed and at the same time ecstatic for what he learned in just a year.** He is happy and very well taken care of. I can definitely say this place is good for kids for them to grow and explore their curious minds. **1000/1000** ”

DREI



## OUR EVIDENCE-BASED APPROACH TO LEARNING

# The Spiral Curriculum

We utilize a Spiral Curriculum method in which core ideas are repeatedly presented throughout the curriculum, but with deepening levels of difficulty. The spiral approach allows an earlier introduction of complicated ideas traditionally reserved for later stages of the learning process. We offer an enriched preschool curriculum that goes above and beyond traditional learning. Our curriculum is carefully designed to provide a comprehensive educational experience for our young learners. Here are some benefits to this method:

### Reinforcement of Core Concepts

Spiral curriculum ensures fundamental ideas are revisited regularly, allowing preschoolers to deepen their understanding through varied activities like sorting shapes initially, then building with blocks or drawing later.

### Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving

By encountering familiar concepts in different situations, preschoolers are prompted to creatively apply their knowledge, honing critical thinking and problem-solving skills, such as designing new animal habitats.

### Supporting Different Learning Styles

Spiral curriculum accommodates diverse learning styles by presenting information in various formats with flexibility ensuring all children, individually and as a group, can engage effectively, whether through hands-on activities or visual cues.

### Building Confidence and Mastery

Regular exposure to topics boosts mastery, fostering confidence as children apply their knowledge in new contexts, supporting cognitive growth and eagerness for new challenges.

### Promoting Long-Term Retention

Repeated exposure to concepts enhances long-term memory, solidifying understanding and laying a strong foundation for future learning, ensuring success as children progress.

### Fostering Curiosity and Inquiry

The spiral approach nurtures curiosity by presenting concepts in open-ended ways, encouraging preschoolers to ask questions, make connections, and explore their interests, laying the groundwork for a lifelong love of learning.

## RESOURCES

# Scientific Literature

Studies indicate that the presence of a playground at our preschool significantly enhances children's holistic development.

### MAKE A GIFT

1

Singer, D., Golinkoff, R. M., & Hirsh-Pasek, K. (2006). *Play = Learning: How Play Motivates and Enhances Children's Cognitive and Social-Emotional Growth*. Oxford University Press.

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Lusebrink, V. B. (2004). Art therapy and the brain: An attempt to understand the underlying processes of art expression in therapy. *Art Therapy*, 21(3), 125-135.

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STEAM Academy Preschool. (2021). *Spring 2021 Preschool Learning Activities Survey*.

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Brouillette, L., & Graham, N. J. (2016). Using arts integration to make science learning memorable in the upper elementary grades: A quasi-experimental study. *ArtsEdSearch*.

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Inoa, R., Weltsek, G., & Tabone, C. (2014). A study on the relationship between theater arts and student literacy and mathematics achievement. *ArtsEdSearch*.

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Harris, A., & de Bruin, L. R. (2018). Inter-, trans- and cross-disciplinary learning in secondary schools: A systematic review.

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Cunnington, M., Kantrowitz, A., Harnett, S., & Hill-Ries, A. (2014). Cultivating common ground: Integrating standards-based visual arts, math, and literacy in high-poverty urban classrooms. *ArtsEdSearch*.

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Bratman, G. N., Hamilton, J. P., & Daily, G. C. (2012). The impacts of nature experience on human cognitive function and mental health. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1249(1), 118-136.

*Journal of Educational Change*, 19(4), 397-427.



**A PLAYGROUND ISN'T JUST A STRUCTURE; IT'S A GATEWAY TO BOUNDLESS IMAGINATION. YOUR SUPPORT ISN'T JUST ABOUT BUILDING EQUIPMENT; IT'S ABOUT LIFELONG LEARNING FOR GENERATIONS OF CHILDREN TO COME.**





# We couldn't do this without your generous *support.*

Thank you to all of our  
supporters, donors, and  
volunteers —

**BECAUSE EDUCATION IS A  
COLLECTIVE ENDEAVOR.**

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**DONATE**

