

PALOS VERDES PENINSULA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

MIRALESTE EARLY LEARNING ACADEMY (MELA)

PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

The Miraleste Early Learning Academy (MELA) places emphasis on the emotional, cognitive, physical and social growth of each child. Overall child development follows a predictable path; however each child develops at his or her own pace. A child develops when he or she is in an environment that promotes a positive self-image and is exposed to experiences that are matched to his or her developmental level so natural learning occurs.

Some adults may pressure very young children to learn faster. Research has shown that learning cannot be accelerated by memorization. Rather, children learn best through hands-on experiences.

Through research on developmental learning in the past 50 years, educators know activities such as sand and water play, block play, cooking, drawing, painting, reading, and creative dramatics provide experiences rich in developmental potential. Conversely, activities such as worksheets and flash cards do little to promote the development of children who are confident, problem solvers, with desire to be life-long learners.

The teacher in the interactive model of early learning is unlike teachers we may remember from our own childhood, who stood before the class to dispense information. The role of the teacher in the MELA classrooms is to plan and prepare an environment in which children are challenged to learn through active exploration and interaction. Teachers provide a variety of challenging project choices for children based on their interests and then facilitate the learning process by helping children get involved in the activities they select.

Teachers extend children's learning by asking questions, making suggestions, or adding more complex materials to the situation. A teacher's thoughtful input at the right moment challenges children's thinking and advances children's competencies.