

MULBERRY SCHOOL

A PARENT PARTICIPATION PRESCHOOL AND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

PLAY BASED ASSESSMENT DAY

We believe that a play-based assessment is a more effective way to appropriately place students in Junior Kindergarten and Kindergarten. At Mulberry, building social and emotional skills are a large part of our curriculum, and by observing a child complete different activities and interact with adults and other children, we can more accurately place a child in the class where they fit developmentally.

The assessment team is made up of Mulberry's Director of Education and Director of Admissions; our preschool, junior kindergarten, and kindergarten teachers; and 2 early childhood educators who are familiar with Mulberry School.

Each session is structured such that our team can observe the readiness of each child for Mulberry's multi-sensory, hands-on classrooms. Through careful observation followed by thoughtful discussion of each child, our team is able to balance the learning dynamic of each prospective class as a group of learners.

The best way to prepare your child for the assessment is to tell them they will be coming to Mulberry to meet some of the teachers and to play. Our hope is that children (and parents!) will come relaxed, ready to play and have fun.

Here is a brief glimpse of what will occur at the play-based assessment along with an idea about what we are observing. First, a member of the team will greet your child, help them say good-bye to mom or dad (*ability to separate from parents*), take their picture and engage them in a hands-on activity while other children are arriving. When it is time to begin, a teacher will invite all the children to sit on the rug for group-time. The teacher will lead a song or some finger plays (*designed to watch for attention, ability to coordinate words with actions, listening and speaking, cross midline, participation styles*). She will explain to the children how the session will work. Children will be encouraged to try each activity and learning center at least once. The centers will be:

- Play dough (*small motor coordination, ability to share, problem solving*)
- Self portrait drawing and name writing (*pencil grip, dominant hand, coordination, following directions, fine motor control, name writing*)
- Obstacle course: steggle climber, trampoline, spinner, beanbags (*large motor skills, risk taking, task completion, balance, turn-taking, body space awareness, cooperation/assertion, following directions, crossing mid-line*)
- Messy, sensory activity (*tactile sensitivity, small motor coordination*)
- Collage making (*cutting, gluing, using materials*)
- Imaginary play (*ability to share, work out conflict, language and vocabulary*)
- Cooking snack (*follow directions, complete task, self help*)
- Pattern blocks (*visual/spatial perception, patterning, one-to-one correlation*)
- Snap blocks (*hand strength, small motor skills*)

Finally, all the children will return to the classroom for a closing group time (*transitioning style, auditory discrimination, participation in large group*) where they will have an opportunity to share their thoughts about the day.

After the session, the teachers and Directors of Education and Operation who had observed the children met to discuss their observations and suggest appropriate placement for each child.

Since human beings are often unpredictable and ever-changing, we realize that no assessment can be perfect. With that in mind, it is our expectation that parents fully share with us any previous assessments or evaluation reports about your child done by outside professionals *prior to the assessment day*. In some cases, we may need additional information and may do further assessment such as the Gesell Developmental Assessment or shadow days in the classroom.