



Cherry Blossom First and Second Grade Pod Curriculum Description

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2023-2024 Homeschool Learning Pod

I will run a homeschool coop pod for first and second grade for the 2023-24 school year, based out of my home. We will be taking inspiration from a wide variety of teaching styles, curricula and best practices. I have discovered that my daughter is a social learner, and I am hoping to build a small cohort to both give her a group to learn with, and to share my teaching experience with a small community of other families.

We will have both a daily and weekly rhythm to cultivate predictability and structure, while still having ample time for the children to do the open-ended play that is so necessary to this age group. If all goes well, I hope to continue this group into the future.

I am aiming to have four to five children in our group, including my daughter. We will work on social skills, academic skills, fine and gross motor, and life skills. My mother, Nancy Rosen, who is a retired speech therapist and teacher, will be coming in to assist with the reading and phonics work. I will use a mix of Walford-inspired activities, published curricula, and integrated project-based learning.

This program is a continuation of our “Strawberry Kindergarten” in 2022-23 which has been wonderfully successful. The children have learned from and supported each other throughout the year socially and academically. We have introduced and practiced concepts in mathematics, literacy, science, and fiction writing! Please see the end of this document for some of the pages from our main lesson books this year.

Since most of the children in this pod will be 6 or older at the start of the school year, I will observe and take notes on their academic progress throughout the year, and will be able to easily write their end of year evaluations based on those observations. I will offer parent-teacher conferences mid-year, and write up a qualitative assessment at the end of the year for your records.

I have learned from experience that I would like to have another adult available as an assistant each day. Even with only four or five little ones, it is very helpful to have someone to help with setup, potty, and all of the other little moments that small children need help with. I hope to have many of the other families come in at least once per month to serve as an assistant to the class, as a “coop” style program. If you, your spouse, or local grandparents have any special skills



(speaking a language, music, etc), I would love to feature that skillset in our program. Coming in to assist will give the parents a hands-on experience of the class, and also reduce the cost for families. I may also have one of my teen students coming in to assist regularly.

I also teach small groups of homeschooled teens in the afternoons, and am actively looking for extended playdates for my daughter during some of the afternoons. If your family would like to pick her up and care for her one afternoon per week, (12:30-5) I would happily trade a significant amount of tuition for that help.



Logistical details:

Timing:

We will meet Tuesday and Thursday from 9-12, with an option to stay for lunch until 12:30. Please try to come as close to 9:00 as you can, so that we can start promptly.

Children will have snack during the morning after our circle and bookwork.

Tuition:

This program is set up as a year-long tuition-based program. The tuition has been divided into 9 equal, monthly payments which take into account breaks, irregular months, and planning time. The monthly tuition payment does not directly reflect how many sessions occur during that specific month.

- Standard Tuition: \$216/month
- Coop assisting once per month: \$186/month
- Coop assisting twice per month: \$156/month
- I am open to trades, or other arrangements as needed.
- If you have an older child that is enrolled in my teen classes, I offer \$75 off per month from your total tuition for a sibling discount.

**Curriculum:**

I will continue to develop this over the summer, based on the needs and desires of our group. I send out a full block plan at the beginning of each month that includes all of our stories, songs, and activities for each day. If you would like to see any of our block plans from our Kindergarten year, please let me know, and I will happily send one to you.

English:

—Continuing work in reading, letter formation, spelling and grammar. I would like to help each student become a more proficient reader by the end of the year than from wherever they start the year. I plan to add weekly one-on-one reading sessions with either myself or our helper to continue to develop fluency, techniques, and courage around reading and spelling.

Together, we will work on additional phonics rules, sight words, handwriting, literature studies, and a variety of other topics in literacy. Nancy will also come in to teach phonics and help with the one-on-one reading sessions.

Math:

—We will continue our work with the four operations (adding, subtracting, multiplying, and dividing), as well as skip counting patterns, and becoming fluent with combinations of 10 (such as 4+6). We will also introduce the ideas around place value, money, and time.

We will use a combination of Jamie York's "Making Math Meaningful" curriculum, and other 1st and second grade math curricula, gross-motor games, and fine-motor manipulative work.

Science:

The students will have ample time to do nature study, and also indoor science experiments. I have a particular interest in engineering and divergent thinking, so we will have many chances to creatively solve problems.

Art:

We will do a wide variety of seasonal art projects throughout the year, as well as wet-on-wet watercolor painting, clay modeling, sewing, beading, and "junk box" inventions.

Music:

We will have a daily circle, in which the children will sing, move, and do rhythmic games together. This year, we may introduce some more complicated rhythmic exercises with rhythm sticks, and bouncing balls.

Languages:

I don't speak a second language, but we are wanting to teach my daughter French. I am in conversation with a former homeschool mom that I know, who is a professional French teacher.



If you are interested in forming a small group to learn French on a different day (She is busy Tues/Thurs), please let me know, and we will work that out.

Life Skills:

We will engage in a variety of projects throughout the week and the school year to teach cooking, baking, sewing, folding, cleaning, and other life skills.

Social:

We will work on developing the students tools to interact socially and develop emotional regulation. In addition to specific skills taught during the day, we will have significant time each day for free play both inside and outside. I will work with the children on social engagement as things come up. We will also have specific opportunities to build vocabulary and tools around emotional intelligence, social interactions, and strategies to regulate.



Daily and Weekly Rhythms:

Daily Rhythm:

Each day we will have a predictable, rhythmic schedule. This allows for the children to relax and know what is coming next. This is our general schedule from this current year. It will likely evolve and change during the first/second grade year:

8:45-9:10— Arrival/Free play

9:10-9:30— Circle and group lesson

9:30-10:00— Main Lesson work

10:00-10:15— Snack

10:15-11:15— Free Play

11:15-11:45— Project

11:45-12:00— Story

12:00- Pickup

12:00-12:30— Optional stay for lunch, additional free play

Weekly Rhythm:

This past year, many children were only coming once per week, while some came both days, which made having a consistent weekly rhythm difficult. With the move to a twice weekly program, I anticipate having a different flow during the week than we did this year. I would like to incorporate some rhythmic stations or activities that are offered on certain days. It is possible that we will do longer term projects that can be started on a Tuesday and finished up on the Thursday. I would like to incorporate some one-on-one reading time this year in addition to our other activities. This will continue to evolve, and I am excited to see what is possible.

Block Rhythm:

We will continue to use a Waldorf-style block plan for the year. This means we will spend roughly a month focused deeply on a topic, and then let it “sleep” for a month while we focus on something else. This allows the child time for new information to integrate and be practiced before additional information is piled on top. During Kindergarten, we alternated language arts/phonics blocks with math blocks. We will likely keep this same rhythm, and I may insert a science block, or a cultural study block in as well. While each block will have a specific focus, students will always be practicing their reading, math, art, and critical thinking skills while we discuss and explore our current unit of study.