FROM YOUR HOUSE TO OURS …

Every day the Hill House is filled with a great amount of activity, lots of laughter, lively conversations — and even a few tears.

Welcome to Stage I: Hill House, where the youngest Roeper students live. Ranging in age from 2½ to 5, these children are at school for either a half- or full-day. Both options afford this special bunch participation in lots of hands-on learning activities. What is most important for this group of young, gifted children is to remember what their developmental, emotional and social needs are. Those needs are balanced with their curiosity, thirst for new information and blossoming academic growth. While this is a challenge and juggling act for both students and teachers, it is also lots of fun and greatly fulfilling for everyone involved.

Each day affords students opportunities for social and emotional growth. We want our students to feel comfortable with themselves and their peers. We work hard to build relationships between students and adults, but especially relationships with one another. We hope to help these young children problem solve, negotiate and compromise with each other. Not only are these skills needed now, but also throughout the years. We help our children begin on the path toward becoming autonomous and self-confident individuals. As we watch them develop more compassion, respect and understanding of others, we are continually amazed and proud of the hard work they do!

Growing up is hard work: learning to be part of a group that expects you to listen, share, wait, take turns and get along isn’t easy. But every day, these youngest of students do it with joy and openness to all around them. As they struggle into jackets, put on their own mittens for the first time, help cook or clean up, the smiles of delight as they discover what they are capable of are pure magic. We constantly celebrate what may seem like small steps to adults but are giant victories for young children. And as we recognize the strengths in each child, we nurture the areas in which help is needed. Working with these students at their pace — not ours — guarantees their success and develops their desire to meet new challenges. They are sure they will be helped over each bump, not pushed or asked to do something for which they are not yet ready.

The Hill House was once home to our founders — Annemarie and George Roeper. Their vision about education permeates the building, and we feel touched by them each day. The Roepers’ understanding of how children learn shapes what we do. We appreciate how strongly they believed in the young children’s being allowed to move at their own pace, how they recognized the asynchronous behavior of the gifted child, and how the joy and innocence of every young child should be respected, protected and celebrated.

Please drop in and help us celebrate each day as we discover each other and the world!
KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

The Stage I children are presented with materials that cover a wide range of skill levels. Through play-based and hands-on activities along with project-based learning, the areas of math, language arts, social studies, art, music and science are addressed. The children learn through play as well as through specific, concrete, guided lessons. There is an emphasis on helping the child gain listening skills as well as communicative skills in all the above areas. The children are encouraged to ask and answer questions, participate in discussions and to solve problems.

The cognitive skills which are addressed within our lessons and projects are too interrelated at this developmental level to be accurately divided into subject areas. Correspondence, for example, is reinforced by math lessons, yet it is a necessary skill for reading readiness. The awareness of symbolic expression fostered by writing is just as important to their work in art.

Curriculum and content choices are not limited by a prescribed format or program. Current events, resource opportunities, student interests, teacher expertise and celebrations become part of ongoing and varied curriculum development. Often, lessons are “open-ended,” permitting individuals to participate and improve at a variety of skill levels.

Individualization of instruction within the general format is crucial to providing challenge and stimulation to gifted learners with a wide range of skills.

Students’ progress via the social/emotional curriculum happens constantly. Each child is learning to adapt to all the other children in the group so that successful play, group work, and friendships may occur. The child is also adapting to a new type of adults — teachers. Social and emotional success in school, then, is extremely complex. To make this adaptation happen as easily and quickly as possible requires careful supervision of the children by teachers. It is important that teachers are very consistent, clear and definite in communicating expectations for social and emotional growth.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL GROWTH

To develop socially and emotionally, children first need to feel safe, secure, loved and respected. We continually work to refine social skills through one-on-one interactions, small and large group exchanges, and relationships between students and their peers along with students’ relationships with adults. We create an atmosphere that encourages children to become contributing, collaborative, problem-solving members of the group. We help children come to understand others’ feelings and rights, assume responsibility for one’s own behavior, and begin to understand compromise, negotiation and problem-solving.
LITERACY AND LANGUAGE ARTS

Our language arts program is a whole language approach in which reading, pre-reading, writing, speaking and listening are integrated. The program is literature-based using the children's writing and ideas as well as the writing of published authors. The environment we provide for children is rich in language. The children are developing communication skills through daily correspondence with others, word of the day, creative oral expression, games and songs. They are also broadening their frame of reference and appreciation for literature and art.

MATHEMATICS

Our mathematics program is designed to help each child learn to value mathematics and to become mathematically literate. The classroom environment and program invite children to explore, develop, test, discuss and apply ideas. Through extensive interaction with a wide variety of physical materials and supplies, participation in group and individual activities and discussions, children are assisted in gaining confidence in their ability to problem solve and reason mathematically.

SOCIAL STUDIES

Our emphasis in Social Studies helps children's discovering and valuing their own uniqueness, as well as fostering an appreciation for the diversity in our community and in our world. Conflict resolution, cooperation and leadership are the basis for our classroom discussions and activities. The children will learn to reflect upon the nature and quality of their thinking. Respect and appreciation of nature and the environment are also stressed. Understanding what others have done and how it affects us will also be an emphasis.
IMPORTANT INFORMATION

DISCIPLINE POLICY

No form of corporal punishment is ever used. All methods of discipline are positive with the emphasis on finding out what caused the problem and allowing children to use words to work out difficulties. Ongoing problems will be discussed with the parents as we strive for consistency between school and home. Discussions between teacher and child occur about the nature of the problem and why a particular behavior is unacceptable. This process is ongoing daily both with individuals and as a group.

FOOD & SNACKS

Snacks are provided once per day by the families on a rotating basis. We ask for healthy snacks, including fresh fruits and vegetables. Water is always available to the children, and 100% juice and milk are served for some special occasions.

Lunch provided by parents must be sent in an insulated lunch box with a cooler pack inside.

When bringing in special treats or snacks, please refer to the Roeper Handbook Community Guidelines for allergy procedures.

PARENT-TEACHER COMMUNICATION

We encourage parents to keep up informal communication with the teachers. Do not wait until a scheduled conference to ask a question, make a comment, or raise a concern. Feel free to ask about your child, procedures or anything! Email is always a great way to reach us.

Evaluation is a constant process of observation of the children, their work and interactions. No formal instruments are used. This places an extra burden of attentiveness on the teacher, but also frees the teacher to examine the whole child. Constant interaction between student and teacher provides ongoing feedback regarding progress.

Ongoing evaluation of each child is recorded and presented to parents through written statements of progress at mid-year and end-of-year reports. Constant communication between staff members who have contact with the children provides information concerning their progress. Communication with parents, both informally and at scheduled conferences, provides additional important information. Communication with some parents occurs daily.

Parent/Teacher Conferences occur three times a year — October, January and March.
Advancement to Stage II is determined by the teachers, based on consideration of the whole child. Factors include academic skill level, IQ test scores in the gifted range, age, and social and, most importantly, emotional maturity.

Two-and-a-half-year-olds who begin in Stage I may need to spend three years in Stage I. Teachers and parents will collaborate to decide what level is the most appropriate when that time arises.

ENROLLMENT/TUITION/WITHDRAWAL POLICY

Our program runs from September through June on a regular school calendar. We assume that children will be with us for the whole year. As stated in The Roeper School Enrollment Contract, parental obligation to pay the fees for the full academic year is unconditional, and no portion of such fees paid or outstanding will be refunded or cancelled in the event of absence, withdrawal or dismissal from the School.

In view of this obligation, parents are offered the option to participate in the Tuition Refund Plan. This program will provide an opportunity to insure fees (prepaid and due) in the event of separation according to the terms of the policy.