

## EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

I believe in children. I believe that inside all children are basically good. Their outside shells have been shaped by the environment in which they have lived. All children can learn, however, all children will not learn. Their success will be largely influenced by their home situations and by the quality of their educational experiences. This applies to children of every race and socioeconomic background. Although children from typical "at risk populations", those living with poverty and abuse, may have more obvious strikes against them; children from middle and upper class environments have their own special needs. Their needs may be more obscure and indeed more difficult to deal with.

My beliefs are heavily based on the humanistic philosophy which looks at students as individuals. As a teacher my top priority, before I would even begin to teach subject matter, is to know my students, their situation in life, and their academic successes and failures. I would accomplish this by spending time with each child, by observing their interactions with other students, by making early and regular contact with their caregivers, and by reviewing their academic records. Essentialism influences my teaching goals to a certain extent.

There are two basic skills a child absolutely must learn. The most important skill every child needs to learn is to read. Without the ability to read, a child's options in life and exposure to the world are extremely limited. The love of reading and excitement about reading must be instilled in the very early grades. In addition to reading, a child needs a strong mathematical foundation in the early grades. It is essential that this foundation is in place, to be built on as the child progresses to more difficult mathematical concepts. Once these two basic concepts are achieved other instruction should be varied to expose the child to many different ideas.

My major philosophy for teaching is based on Progressivism. I believe education should be child-centered and focused on having students acquire problem solving skills. For a child to have a successful educational experience their curriculum must be individualized to meet their needs and interests. Children should be encouraged to improve, but not pushed to achieve past the level appropriate for them at a particular time. If curriculum is related to life experiences that a child understands, it will be easier for them to comprehend and have more lasting meaning to them.

Children are individuals. They have different strengths and different weaknesses. They come from a multitude of life experiences. They all have needs. My job as a teacher goes far beyond teaching basic skills. School should be an emotionally and physically safe environment for all children. For the time I have with each child, I will see them as the special person they are, guide them toward individual growth and success, and be their strongest advocate.