



Raphael Academy is enrolling a new mixed-aged early childhood/grades classroom for children 5-8 years of age (kindergarten through second grade) for the 2018-19 school year. Children in this class may have Down syndrome, Autism Spectrum Disorder or other intellectual disabilities. The class will be offered if we have six confirmed children enrolled by the spring of 2018.

The class will follow a typical schedule of morning movement, songs, and circle time at the beginning of each day, followed by cooking/baking, crafts, and storytelling. ***Older students, grouped by ability, will receive daily instruction framed by a typical First and Second grade Waldorf curriculum (math, reading, writing, form drawing, handwork and music).***

The purpose of this mixed-aged Waldorf-inspired early years classroom, is to provide a nurturing educational setting where the special needs child may feel safe and secure in exploring their environment with a sense of wonder and curiosity while they move towards a more structured learning environment.

Because young children learn through imitation, teachers and their assistants, create a 'homelike' setting where activities such as cooking, gardening, laundry, sewing, caring for the immediate environment, and taking care of the bodily needs of the children are ongoing experiences of the developing child. (Please know that children must be independently toilet trained to be enrolled in the program).

As children develop past the early childhood years, typically around the age of 7, the creation of a rich language environment draws the students forward to the unfolding of reading and writing skills. In early lessons the vitality of language is preserved through the recitation of playful verses and seasonal poetry. Writing down well-loved stories addresses the students' need to be active in the learning process. Consequently, reading follows naturally when the content is already intimately connected to the students. Learning is less stressful, and all levels of literacy are addressed. Additionally, movement and math go hand in hand as students step and clap rhythmically through the times tables. Numbers likewise begin with the children's immediate experience and are made concrete by counting shells or beans kept in a special hand-made pouch.

This mixed-aged classroom will incorporate daily and weekly rhythms which are a critical part of a special needs child's daily life. Knowing what is coming next and what they can look forward to, helps a child engage deeply and freely within every task. These rhythms are interwoven with seasonal celebrations that support the children as they move wholeheartedly into play and learning. Crafts, handwork, games, and regular outdoor play encourage the healthy growth of the child's body and abilities. Natural toys, art materials, and classroom aesthetics work to encourage the development of a young child's imagination while at the same time serve to stimulate and engage the child's sensory system.

Please join us for a school tour on the first Tuesday of the month from 9:00 -10:00 am at Raphael Academy, 500 Soraparu Street, New Orleans, LA 70130. Telephone: 504-524-5955. Email: info@raphaelacademy.org. Web site: www.raphaelacademy.org.