Where nurture meets nature

“...As an early childhood educator and mom, I searched for a preschool that truly valued the importance of a play-based, process-oriented education. SYC is that school. Each day I am in awe of the creativity and thought put into the activities, the value on the importance of exploring nature, and the genuine dedication to supporting the emotional and social growth of every single student. I smile when I drop my daughters off because I know their hearts and minds are better for being students at SYC.”

- Meredith Magee, School for Young Children parent

A History of Excellence

Founded in 1936 by Sister Mary deLourdes, the School for Young Children (SYC) was designed with a simple but lasting intent: to nurture the individuality of every child. A leader in the field of early childhood education both then and now, SYC was one of the first laboratory sites in the nation designed for preschool teacher training.

Today, it continues to model best teaching practices to the students of the University of Saint Joseph and early childhood educators throughout the region. The host of the annual Keefe-Bruyette Symposium for educators, SYC promotes, guides, and inspires excellence through quality programming and professional development opportunities.
Our Philosophy

The School for Young Children maintains a set of core values about how young children learn and how they deserve to be treated. We understand that children view the world very differently from adults. Our staff and teachers embrace and nurture children’s unique perspectives of the world around them. Our values state that:

- Children are treated with respect and the understanding that they are capable decision-makers.
- Their ideas are taken seriously, and teachers support children as they work through problems, projects, and conflicts independently.
- SYC teachers help children learn responsibility and self-control in the classroom, including respect for teachers, peers, and materials.
- We recognize that families serve as the primary influence in children’s lives.
- We strive to develop collaborative partnerships with families that enable us to work together to support the individual development of each child.

A Curriculum Based on the Power of Play

SYC teachers value the learning process and see it as key to engaging young students in a quality education. Having the time to try out ideas, talk about experiences, and make choices is a fundamental part of learning. Process-oriented experiences allow children to use materials creatively with self-direction.

Teachers use their knowledge of children’s needs and interests to develop the curriculum. The daily schedule includes a wide range of child-initiated and teacher-facilitated activities. Teachers at the School for Young Children believe children acquire new knowledge and skills best within a play-based environment. The outdoor space serves as an extension of the classroom and provides children with hands-on opportunities to explore nature.

An Environment Conducive to Learning

The School for Young Children is located on a five-acre nature preserve consisting of a large backyard playground, a developed nature trail, and a protected field. Each week, classroom groups walk on the nature trail to engage with nature and learn about the immediate environment.

The School resides in the former Beach Park School in West Hartford. The building is graced with beautiful architectural features: large windows allow natural light to flow into the classrooms; hardwood floors, wooden furniture, and warm neutral colors create a home-like environment.

A Dedicated and Educated Staff

SYC maintains a highly educated and dedicated staff. The teacher in each classroom holds a bachelor’s or master’s degree in Early Childhood Education. The teacher assistant has, at minimum, an associate degree in Early Childhood Education. University students support the program as well, by assisting staff and engaging with the children in the classroom.

SYC teachers are respected for their expertise throughout the early childhood education community. They participate in professional development opportunities and present their expertise at conferences in Connecticut and beyond.

Our Programs – Find the Perfect Fit

SYC offers a variety of programs to meet each family’s needs:

- Mixed age classrooms for 3-to 5-year-olds
- 2-day, 3-day, 4-day, and 5-day programs
- Half-day and full-day options
- School year program with summer camp available
- Adventure Time afternoon enrichment program (90 minutes once a week)
- Together Time for children 2-3 years old and an accompanying adult (90 minutes once a week)

Enroll Now

Enrollment is open throughout the year. Call today for a tour and come see for yourself what makes SYC stand out! Visit our website for an application and program information.

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www.usj.edu/syc
www.facebook.com/schoolforyoungchildren

As part of the University of Saint Joseph campus, SYC students interact with various resources such as the Art Gallery, the Gengras Center, the grounds, and other amenities.