*“Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for children play is serious learning. Play is really the work of childhood.”*

*-*[*Fred Rogers*](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/f/fred_rogers.html)

**Dramatic Play:** Offers children the opportunity to experiment with a variety of roles and social situations. Children practice skills such as cooperation, negotiation and mobility of thought while using more elaborate language. You will see the themes in our dramatic play change throughout the year.

**Building with Blocks & Lego Bricks:** Allows children the opportunity to experiment with concepts of physics, mathematics and geometry. They create a mental plan and problem solve to create with the materials they have available to them. Unit blocks are the starting foundation of math understanding as they expose children to fractions.

**Painting & Art Projects:** Either in a structured activity or a self-selected activity, painting provides a multitude of benefits to children's development including sensory experiences, fine motor development, developing self-concept and confidence.

**Small and Large Group Activities:** Foster listening skills, following direction, cooperation and attention. These are important skills for kindergarten readiness. Groups can include listening to stories, discussions, music, games or group tasks.

**Science:** Children are born natural scientists. They explore and experiment with their environment with curiosity. Children explore objects and make generalizations and classifications about the properties. They make predictions, test them and make notes about results.

**Writing and Drawing:** Help to develop muscles used for handwriting, develops hand-eye coordination, organizing and conceptualizing ideas. Children have a variety of writing materials and tools to use during their writing. As children progress through preschool the teachers incorporate more letter and number recognition into the daily activities.

**Gross Motor and Outdoor Exploration:** Are needed for all children to develop into healthy and happy children. Children learn by moving and doing. Research supports that, children that when the body is active, so is the mind. Children benefit from physical activity both in health and cognition.

**"Curriculum is what happens in the educational environment – not what is planned to happen – but what actually takes place when all players are present. Learning is not imposed on the child, rather, it is what takes place naturally in an environment that offers a choice of activities created with children’s needs in mind." *- NIU Campus Child Care***