Little Thinkers Preschool

Overview & Virtual Tour

Updated July 1, 2021
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Thinkery
Austin, TX

Est. 1983
as Austin Children’s Museum

2013
Opened as Thinkery
New building, new brand
38,000 sq ft
Austin Children’s Museum: Imaginative Play with a sprinkle of STEAM

Thinkery: STEAM with a sprinkle of Imaginative Play
Thinkery’s Mission

To create innovative learning experiences that equip and inspire the next generation of creative problem solvers.

Joyful learning through STEAM-driven play.

- Play-based
- Inquiry-rich

STEAM-focused

(Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts & Math)
Our goals for Little Thinkers Preschool

• Provide a unique active learning environment to support the development of your child’s school readiness skills.

• Nurture a diverse and inclusive generation of young children.

• Utilize research partnerships to ensure that each child benefits from best practices in play-based, STEAM early learning.

• Contribute to and disseminate best practices in play-based STEAM early learning to the broader community through educator professional development and community partnerships
Thinkery’s Educational Approach

• **Play is learning**
  • Thinkery uses the process of inquiry to build STEAM knowledge, promote scientific reasoning to cultivate curiosity.

• **Children learn best alongside caring, responsive adults**
  • We support them through an Emergent Approach and low teacher-student ratios.
  • Safe and open environment to practice and develop social-emotional skills.

• **Engagement and collaboration with our community are vital to our success**
  • Research-based, lab school environment focused on improving kindergarten readiness.

• **We must always approach learning in new and innovative ways.**
  • Iterate learning experiences thought incorporation of research findings and reflective practices.

• **Children deserve stimulating, sophisticated, well-designed spaces and experiences.**
  • Exhibit exploration central to the learning experience.
We believe that play-based, hands-on, STEAM learning experiences through inquiry are a powerful way for children to develop problem-solving skills, critical thinking, and curiosity about the world around them.
**Kindergarten Readiness Skills**

- **Approaches to Learning** i.e. initiative & curiosity, engagement & persistence
- **Cognitive & Math Skills**
- **Language & Literacy Skills**
- **Physical Health & Motor Skills**
- **Social-Emotional Development**
The 6 C's

- Collaboration
- Communication
- Creativity
- Critical Thinking
- Compassion
- Confidence
Emergent Approach

- Informed by educational theorists Dewey, Piaget and Vygotsky.
- Activities are guided by children’s interests, skills, and needs.
- Teachers use reflective practice.
Meet our Partners

**Cristine Legare, PhD**  
Associate Professor and the Director of the Evolution, Variation, and Ontogeny of Learning Laboratory (EVO Learn Lab)  
• Advise on curriculum design  
• Co-create teacher & student assessments  
• Conduct research projects

**Amy Bryan, PhD**  
Director, Priscilla Pond Flawn Child and Family Laboratory, Associate Professor of Practice, Human Development and Family Sciences  
• Advise on curriculum design  
• Co-create teacher & student assessments
Thinkery Connect

Museum-university research partnership to enhance parent-child interaction and promote children’s learning.

Research Formats
- Teacher & Student Assessments
- Observation Studies

Community Dissemination
- Early Childhood Educator Professional Development
- Community Partnerships
  - Success by 6: United Way for Greater Austin
  - E3 Alliance
Little Thinkers Students

Must be:

• Potty trained
• Up to date on vaccines and health screenings

Must be:

• Age 3 or 4 by September 1, 2021
Ratios & Class Sizes

- Maximum of 16 students/classroom with 2 teachers
  - 1 Lead Teacher & 1 Assistant Teacher
- Current Fall enrollment: 42 students in three classrooms
- Additional spaces available through a newly-added fourth classroom (opening August 17)
School Day

8am-3pm

Extended Care Until 5:30pm

- Optional
- Included with Tuition
Learning Environment

Classrooms

Plus....
Learning Environment

Outdoor Space

Plus….
Outdoor Exhibits & Park
Leadership Team

Maureen Birdsell  
Site Director

Ashley Hill  
Senior Lead Educator
Meet our Lead Preschool Educators

Amarissa Urias
Jenni Cuellar
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 17</td>
<td>First Day of School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 6</td>
<td>Labor Day Holiday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 22 – 26</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Break</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 16</td>
<td>Holiday Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 22 – January 4</td>
<td>Winter Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 17</td>
<td>MLK Jr. Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 21</td>
<td>Staff In-Service Day (Student Holiday)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 14-18</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 15</td>
<td>Staff In-Service Day (Student Holiday)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 26</td>
<td>Graduation Day (Pre-K 4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 27</td>
<td>Last Day of School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 30</td>
<td>Memorial Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 6</td>
<td>First Day of Summer Camps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 4</td>
<td>Independence Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 12</td>
<td>Last Day of Summer Camps</td>
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</table>

*Calendar subject to change*
## Typical Daily Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Routine</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:00 AM</td>
<td>Drop Off, Health Screening, and Greeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:30 AM</td>
<td>Outdoor Play / Gallery Exploration*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30 AM</td>
<td>Handwashing &amp; AM Snack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00 AM</td>
<td>Music (M/W) / Motor Skills (T/TH) / Story Time (F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30 AM</td>
<td>Learning Centers / Small Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:30 AM</td>
<td>Handwashing &amp; Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00 PM</td>
<td>Nap / Rest / Quiet time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30 PM</td>
<td>Staggered wake up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:45 PM</td>
<td>Centers / Small Group / Gallery Exploration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:30 PM</td>
<td>Handwashing &amp; PM Snack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00 PM</td>
<td>End of school day – pick up; Centers for Extended Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00 PM</td>
<td>Outdoor Play / Gallery Exploration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:00 PM</td>
<td>Transition indoors/ Learning Centers / Story Time / Prep for End of Day pick up</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Parents/caregivers provide:

- 2 daily snacks and lunch
- Reusable water bottle
- Bedding for nap
Current 2021-2022 School Year:

• A select number of spaces have been reserved for need-based financial assistance applicants.

• Families who would qualify are encouraged to apply/re-apply for financial assistance each school year.

Future Years:

• Actively seeking support to offer financial subsidies for 50% of our enrollment.
Plan includes additional health and safety protocols

Informed by:
- CDC guidelines
- Direct collaboration with Austin Public Health
- American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations

Updated as conditions change
Drop off / Pick up & Health Screening at Entry

- All student drop off and pick up will take place outside of the museum.
- Daily temperature checks and health screenings for all students, their adults, and Thinkery staff.
- No parents/guardians are permitted in the building. Stop at the building entrance.
- After drop off, any student showing signs of illness will be separated and caregivers will be called for pick up.
Face Masks & Handwashing

- All Thinkery staff will be required to wear face masks.
- Preschool students will be required to wear face masks to the extent possible.
- Handwashing will be required many times throughout the day, including arrival to the classroom, after transitions, bathroom visits, and before/after eating.
• Increased disinfecting of classrooms, nap mats, equipment and surfaces, especially doorknobs, high-touch surfaces, exhibits, and restrooms.

• Nap mat bedding laundered every other day.

• Nightly deep cleaning.

• HVAC system using fresh air circulation.

• Non-consumables (books, tape, crayons, etc…) are separated and quarantined for 72 hours between uses.
**Tuition & Fees**

**Tuition**
- $1,195 per month
- Includes Thinkery Family Membership
- Due 1st of the month
- Auto-charge

**Registration Fee**
- $100
- Nonrefundable

**Enrollment Fee**
- $150
- Nonrefundable

**Supply Fee**
- $100
- Annual
Register: jovial.org/thinkery/register

Website: thinkeryaustin.org/preschool/

Email: preschool@thinkeryaustin.org