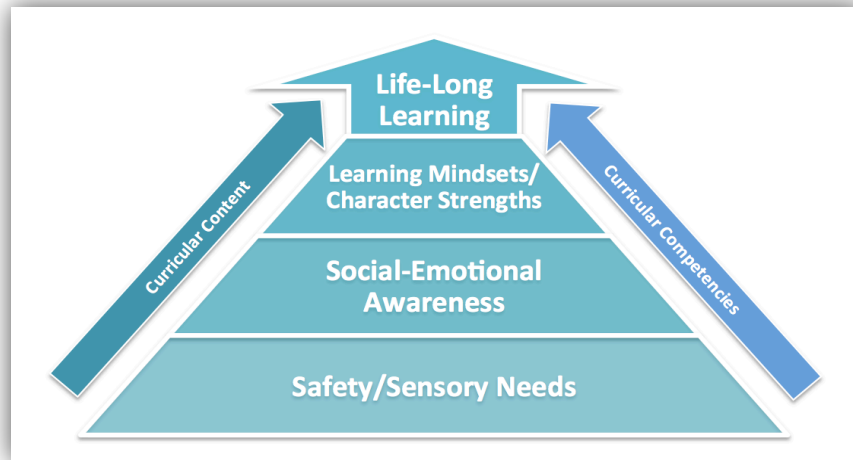


Academics at Eaton Arrowsmith

The **academic program** at Eaton Arrowsmith is designed to **complement** the cognitive program and strengthen connections between previously learned skills and concepts while **building the capacity for future, life-long learning**.



Teachers aim to **differentiate** instruction based on student needs so that each student is challenged at the appropriate level. Each student deserves an **enriching** learning environment where he/she is encouraged to explore the breadth and depth of learning concepts. This better enables students to make stronger connections to what they are learning.

Teachers aim to provide students with a safe and caring environment where they are encouraged to utilize the motivating power of both success and failure.

Developing as a Learner

The aim of the academic program is to **prepare students for a successful transition and instill life-long learning skills and mindsets**. What does a successful transition look like? On the surface, this question seems simple. Students need to have a firm grasp of grade-level curriculum. However, when examining the factors that make a successful student, academic proficiency is just the tip of the iceberg.

In the academic classroom, students are invited to **apply and connect their developing cognitive capacities to learning situations**. Furthermore, students are encouraged to **develop habits and mindsets of successful learners**, thus further **increasing their capacity to engage in new and challenging content**.

Some students may come to us with habits and mindsets that are a barrier to successful learning. For example, some students may fixate on their mistakes and disengage in tasks when there's a risk of making an error. Hence, they may never fully engage in material that will bring them to a higher level of understanding.

We have identified three foundations for successful, life long learning: **safety-sensory needs, social-emotional awareness, and learning mindsets/character strengths**.

Safety-Sensory Needs

First and foremost, students need to feel physically and emotionally safe, accepted, and loved. Depending on need, this may take time.

Building on the notion of **attachment** (Neufeld), our role as your child's teachers, is to **create a warm and stimulating learning environment where each child feels "at rest" and physically and emotionally safe**.

Modelling the language of **Non Violent Communication** (Rosenberg), **we aim to create a classroom environment where students can express their feelings and needs in a caring and constructive manner.**

Through the practice of **mindfulness**, **students are encouraged to develop an awareness of their feelings and provide a method of self-regulation.**

Social-Emotional Awareness

Our aim is provide children with the vocabulary and awareness needed to actively engage and effectively communicate in their social worlds.

Social Thinking (Winner) refers to **the ability to consider your own and other's thoughts, emotions, beliefs, intentions, and knowledge to help interpret and respond to information in social interactions.**

Through social thinking, **students are encouraged to become more self aware while developing problem-solving skills that will help them to become more adaptable and flexible thinkers.**

Mindset and Character Strengths

With an eye towards transition, mindset and character strengths lay the foundation for personal growth and learning.

At Eaton Arrowsmith, we believe in the incredible power of the brain to change, adapt and “rewire” itself (Ricci, 2013). **Neuroplasticity** has changed how we think about the brain, teaching, and learning. Closely related to neuroplasticity is the notion of **growth mindset**, ***“a belief system that suggests that one's intelligence can be grown or developed with persistence, effort and focus on learning”*** (Ricci, 2013, p. 3).

Students with a growth mindset are not immune to failure – they are, however, better equipped to redirect their thinking after making a mistake (Moser et. al., 2011).

In his 2013 book *How Children Succeed: Grit, Curiosity, and the Hidden Power of Character*, Paul Tough outlines seven traits that predict future success. **Grit, curiosity, self-control, social intelligence, zest, optimism, and gratitude are better predictors of successful future learning than IQ and cognitive ability alone.**

Curricular Content

As students increase their cognitive capacities and develop stronger learning skills, they are more receptive to engage in curricular content.

The aim of the academic classroom teacher is to identify content areas to be strengthened and facilitate sustained growth. Our aim is to meet the students at their current level of understanding and lead them along a **learning path** to an area of **deeper, wider, and more connected understanding.**

Curricular Competencies

Curricular competencies include meta-cognitive strategies that encourage students to think about their own thinking and learning.

The aim of teaching curricular competencies is to **“develop a common language of thinking”** (Gear, 2006), **enhance understanding of curricular content**, and help students become more **thoughtful and meaningful learners.**

Curricular competencies include **communication, creative and critical thinking, and personal development.**

It draws on the Reading Powers as outlined by Adrienne Gear: **the power to connect, the power to question, the power to infer, the power to visualize, and the power to transform.**