EMBER & ROOT
ENRICHMENT LEARNING COMMUNITY

Homeschool Enrichment Program

Program Overview

Our Homeschool Enrichment program is STEAM focused with Project based studio time. It is a mixed-age, project-based learning time that brings together science, engineering, art, and teamwork lessons and activities through interest led hands-on experiences and shared exploration.

Our goal is to spark curiosity in the context of community. Students learn alongside peers of different ages, share ideas, try new things, and have opportunities to follow their own interests. Each session has a predictable structure, but there is flexibility within that structure. Students are given a shared theme and whole-group lessons before moving into hands-on guided workshops, collaborative activities, and Choice Project Time.

The course is designed around the idea of freedom within structure: students know what to expect, while still having meaningful choices about how they participate and what they work on.

Our Learning Focus

During each session, students may experience:

- A whole-group activity, discussion, demonstration, or introduction to the day's idea
- A hands-on art experience
- A science, technology, or engineering experience
- A collaborative challenge or activity
- Choice Project Time
- Opportunities to share ideas, discoveries, and creations with the group

Class Agreements

Care for yourself
Respect others
Take care of materials and space
Use your freedoms kindly

What it's modeled after

Ember & Root brings together parts of a GT classroom, STEAM lab, and resource room in one mixed-age learning community.

Like a GT classroom, we spark curiosity, encourage students to ask questions, explore interests, and make connections.

Like a STEAM lab or makerspace, students learn by doing—building, creating, experimenting, designing, and solving problems.

Like a resource room, students have flexibility and support to engage with learning in ways that work for them.

Our themes provide the shared academic structure, while projects and Choice Project Time give students room to follow their own interests. Students may be working on very different things while learning together, sharing ideas, and contributing to the same community.

Assessment Plan

PROGRESS REPORTS: Directors meet with parents 1:1 to discuss progress each semester

Student Progress is measured by:
anecdotal notes
student projects
end of theme presentations
Student reflections

Attendance

RECORDS: Students are recorded as present or absent each week

REPORT: Attendance reports are available by request.

How it works

What learning looks like	Each program cycle has an overarching theme that gives students a common starting point for learning. Themes might include building, nature, inventions, the human body, art and technology, or other questions that invite students to wonder and explore. During each session, students may experience: A whole-group activity, discussion, demonstration, or introduction to the day's idea A hands-on art experience A science, technology, or engineering experience A collaborative challenge or activity
Intention setting and choice project time	A portion of each session is dedicated to Choice Project Time. During this time, students can work on something that interests them. They might continue something they started in a workshop, build something, make art, investigate a question, research a topic, work with a friend, or start a project of their own. The goal is not for every student to complete a specific project. The goal is to give students time to wonder, explore, create, practice, and follow an interest. Facilitators are available to help students find ideas, gather materials, work through challenges, and connect what they are interested in to STEAM concepts and skills.
Mixed age cohorts	Ember & Root intentionally brings learners of different ages together. Mixed-age learning gives students opportunities to learn with and from one another. Older learners may share skills or ideas with younger learners, while younger learners often bring fresh questions and perspectives to the group. Students may work on different levels of the same activity, approach a challenge in different ways, or collaborate on a shared project. The emphasis is on participation, curiosity, and contribution, rather than everyone working at exactly the same level or pace.

Sample Theme Overview: Me, Myself & Eyes

Theme Focus: The human eye, identity, self-expression, creativity, and communication

Theme Overview

In Me, Myself & Eyes, students explore the science of the human eye while also exploring the ways people express themselves.

Through hands-on activities, art, writing, theater, conversation, and student-directed projects, learners will choose how to investigate how the eye works and use what they discover as inspiration for creative self-expression.

The theme combines science, art, language arts, communication, and collaboration and gives students opportunities to explore their own interests within a shared community experience.

Academic Objectives

During this theme, students will have opportunities to:

Science

- Identify the major parts of the human eye.
- Learn the basic function of each part of the eye.
- Explore how the eye receives and processes light.
- Learn about vision and how people see the world around them.

Art

- Learn about artists and different approaches to creating self-portraits.
- Explore how artists use line, shape, color, texture, and proportion to represent people.
- Create self-portraits using different artistic mediums.
- Experiment with different ways to represent identity and personality through art.

Language Arts

- Explore poetry using the acrostic poem format.
- Apply parts of speech through creative writing activities such as Mad Libs.
- Use descriptive language to communicate ideas about themselves and others.

Theater & Communication

- Participate in theater games and exercises.
- Practice using voice, movement, expression, and body language.
- Explore how people communicate ideas and emotions in different ways.
- Build confidence sharing ideas and creative work with others.

Collaboration & Community

- Participate in group activities and discussions.
- Share ideas and materials with peers.
- Work together on pieces of the culminating theme project.
- Practice listening to and celebrating the ideas and creations of others.

Students might choose to:
Create additional self-portraits
Explore a different artistic medium
Research something about the eye or vision
Write additional poetry
Create a character or performance
Build or design something related to vision
Investigate how animals see
Explore optical illusions
Develop an individual piece for the final exhibition
Work collaboratively with another learner
Projects may look different depending on the student's age, interests, and goals.

Culminating Experience: The Self Exhibition
The theme will culminate in The Self, a community exhibition where students share pieces of their learning and creative work.
Each learner will have the opportunity to create a personalized exhibit that reflects something about themselves and what they explored during the theme.
Exhibits may include self-portraits, poetry, writing, artwork, research, models, performances, demonstrations, or other student-created work.
Students will help prepare the space and may choose how they want to present their work.
The exhibition provides an authentic opportunity for students to share what they have learned, and experience the work of their peers.