The University of Chicago

Laboratory Schools

Lab

“Education is not preparation for life;

education is life itself.”

—John Dewey, educator and Laboratory Schools founder

LAB'S MISSION

The Laboratory Schools are home to the youngest members of the University of Chicago's academic community. We ignite and nurture an enduring spirit of scholarship, curiosity, creativity, and confidence. We value learning experientially, exhibiting kindness, and honoring diversity.

Give your child an education built on

more than a century of experience

In 1896, just two years after the University of Chicago was founded, Professor John Dewey—now known the world over as one of the great minds in education—established the Laboratory Schools as a place to explore and implement his theories on childhood education. Within a few years of starting the school, Dewey outlined the beliefs that continue to guide the Schools:

>Students benefit from an environment where teachers and students learn from each other.

>Students learn best through experimentation, reflecting on the conditions and consequences of action.

>By contributing to others, students develop their individuality and unique capacities to add to the common good.

>At its best, a school exemplifies a purer form of our society's democratic principles so that students grow into adults who improve their world.

Just as they did when Lab started with only 16 students, these values still resonate and shape what we do for the more than 1,850 students, age 3 to 18, who come here to learn and be inspired every day.

The greatest testament to the power of a Laboratory Schools education has been our graduates. They remind us regularly that the precollegiate life they experienced at the Laboratory Schools contributed to their achievements as adults. Lab alumni have a knack for making a difference in the world as professionals, academicians, artists, educators, researchers, public servants, and more.

Lab facts at a glance

Average composite ACT: **31.5**

Average SAT: **686** critical reading **686** math **674** writing

20 U-High Advanced Placement and Advanced Topic classes

35 High School sports teams **16** Middle School teams

Average class size Middle and High School: **16**

Average class size grades N–5: **23**

Fully wireless campus

10:1 student/teacher ratio

2,051 students in **15** grades

412 Nursery and Kindergarten students

282 Primary School students

25,000 volumes in the Lim Family Library, serving N–2

more than **1,500** desktop and laptop computers and iPads available for in-school use

421 Lower School students

405 Middle School students

531 High School students

students of color: more than 50%

257 teachers of whom **80% hold advanced degrees**

150 classes offered each year in U-High

Computers in **100%** of classrooms

48% male; **52%** female

More than **40** languages spoken in student homes

29,400 volumes in Knes Family Library, serving grades 3–5

30,000 volumes in Pritzker Traubert Family Library, serving grades 9–12

15,000 volumes in Rowley Library, serving grades 6–8

60% of families associated with the University of Chicago

52% of students live outside the Hyde Park/Kenwood community

Alumni of note

Edward H. Levi, '28, PHB'32, JD'35, former United States attorney general

Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens, '37, AB'41 (also a Presidential Medal of Freedom winner)

Ned Rorem, '40, Pulitzer Prize-winning composer

Janet Rowley, '42, PHB'45, SB'46, MD'48, winner of the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the Lasker Award, and the National Medal of Science

Former Connecticut congresswoman **Nancy Johnson, '51**

Dr. Diane Meier, '69, palliative care pioneer and MacArthur "genius" award winner

Christopher Wool, '72, one of the most important abstract painters of his generation

Linda Johnson Rice, '75, chairman of Johnson Publishing, which owns *Ebony* and *Jet* magazines, as well as Fashion Fair Cosmetics

John W. Rogers, Jr., '76, founder and chief executive officer of Ariel Capital Investments, one of the nation's top black-owned businesses

Daniel Clowes, '79, Eisner Award-winning cartoonist and Academy Award-nominated screenwriter

Chicago Alderman **Leslie Hairston, '79**

Garrick Utley, '56, the first NBC reporter to cover the Vietnam war from Saigon

Illinois State Representative **Barbara Flynn Currie, '58, AB'68, AM'73**

Paul Butterfield, '60, blues musician and bandleader

Denise Jefferson, '61, former director of the school of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater

Sherry Lansing, '62, former chairman of Paramount Pictures and first woman president of a major Hollywood studio

Kennette Benedict, '65, executive director of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists—keepers of the "doomsday clock"

Former United States Secretary of Education **Arne Duncan, '82**

Illinois State Senator **Kwame Raoul, '82**

Andrea Ghez, '83, astrophysicist and Crafoord Prize and MacArthur "genius" award winner

W. Kamau Bell, '90, comedian

Sam Kass, '98, AB'04, Former Senior White House Food Policy Adviser

Scores of individuals who have devoted their lives to education—from nursery school teachers to university presidents

Dozens of individuals committed to social and public service

a university-inspired environment like no other in Chicago

A great school is one thing. But a great school that is also part of a world-class research university? Now that is something entirely different.

Because the Laboratory Schools are part of the world-renowned University of Chicago, the importance of intellectual life—of thought and exploration—infuses everything we do across all aspects of our curriculum.

Families who choose to send their children to Lab care deeply about curiosity, inquiry, and education. All are attracted to this environment that creates and nurtures the hallmark habits of expansive thinking and complex problem-solving:

Intellectual curiosity comes naturally to all children, and Lab fosters that curiosity by encouraging each child to seek paths of inquiry and interest.

Open-mindedness is a tool that allows students to be flexible when solving problems and to accept differing points of view as viable solutions. This could not be more important given the increasingly global world facing our children.

Critical thinking and analysis are taught at every age level. At the Laboratory Schools, we want each child to ask not just *why* but also *what if.*

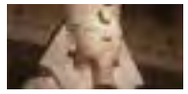
A respect for evidence is found throughout the Laboratory Schools, from the physics lab to the humanities class. Students learn to shape their own opinions and then fully leverage evidence to reshape their ideas.

We wouldn't expect anything less from a school that exists in the heart of a research-based university.

And our graduates tell us that these habits, shaped at Lab and U-High, made them independent thinkers in college and have helped them to be successful throughout their lives.

UChicago's people and resources

enhance every student's experience



Lab students of every age benefit from the University's outstanding academicians and access to unmatched resources:

>Students across the school have **special access** to the Oriental Institute, Smart Museum of Art, Court Theater, science laboratories, and sports and other University facilities.

>Nursery Schoolers learned from **UChicago physicians** who shared a specialized cell microscope and a preserved human brain.

>The University's Anthropology Department brought Jean Clottes, the curator of the **Lascaux Cave paintings**, to speak to a mesmerized group of Lab art students and teachers.

>Fourth graders worked with paleontologist and Professor Paul Sereno—**Chicago's own "Indiana Jones"**—and members of his UChicago Fossil Lab to build "flesh models" from a resin replica of a *Rajasaurus* skull.

>**A UChicago composer** visited an eighth-grade music class weekly to give students a more hands-on approach to music. Projects included a "sound walk," where the students visited sites—Rockefeller Chapel or the corner of 58th and Kimbark—to listen for the sounds at each location.

>High Schoolers have full access to and are taught how to use the University's **vast library resources**. They also receive classroom visits from University faculty—statisticians, public policy and legal experts, historians, and humanities specialists.

>Lab's **unique Summer Link program** places qualified U-Highers in paid internships with University scientists and professors and businesses across the University and around the city.

>Each year, at no additional expense, more than 20 U-Highers take **courses at the University**.

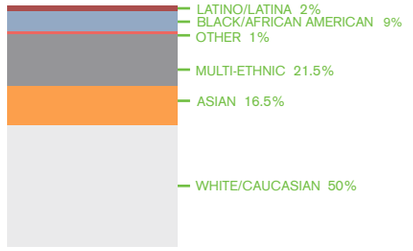
Harnessing the power of diversity

Lab recognizes that diversity also registers in economic variances. To ensure that the best students are able to benefit from, and enhance, the Lab experience regardless of their ability to pay, Lab provides need-based financial aid at all grade levels and scholarships based on need and merit at the high school level.

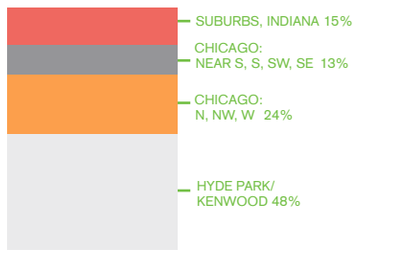
Because multiculturalism and diversity are essential to academic excellence, the Schools work to assemble a student body that reflects the many differences that shape our world—a major reason many families choose Lab.

Lab families identify themselves as having 59 different nationalities and speaking more than 40 languages. What better testament to the rich array of cultures and ideas that our families bring to this learning environment? We are proud of our breadth and depth of diversity, knowing that it breeds openness and understanding, both of which, we believe, are essential for people in our greater society.

Lab draws a diverse group...



...from all around the city



NOTE: MOST RECENT DATA AT TIME OF PUBLICATION

a community of individuals

Teaching that allows individuals to flourish and embrace learning as a lifelong experience

At every age, the Laboratory Schools prepare children to be independent thinkers and creative problem-solvers. At the same time, teachers cultivate an environment where children are collaborative and supportive of one another, love learning, and see it as an integral part of who they are.

Some very clear tenets ground everything we do:

Education starts with the child

Because each child thinks and learns differently, Lab teachers develop curricula and activities that address the needs, interests, and styles of the specific students in their classroom.

We support all aspects of a young person's development

Teaching and education must address all the developmental needs of the child—academic and cognitive, social and emotional—so that children think and work to their fullest potential at any given stage.

Student and teacher learn from each other

Lab teachers never underestimate the knowledge a child, no matter how young, brings to class. Valuing each person's contribution allows a trusting dialogue and an exchange of ideas to develop between teacher and learner. Students grow to have confidence, respectfully query others, and express their own ideas.

Authenticity and meaningful experiences are critical

Once a concept has been introduced, Lab teachers make it that much more meaningful by bridging disciplines to reinforce an idea, bringing the real world into the classroom or taking the class into the real world. By taking children to a working drawbridge or inviting an engineer to share actual plans, Lab allows children to see concepts in action.

Learning differences...
tailoring teaching to the child

Even within a challenging environment like Lab's, it's important to recognize that children learn in different ways and that even bright children may need tailored support. The Schools work to respond to the needs of each child while maintaining academic and evaluative standards.

>Teachers work to differentiate instruction in order to accommodate a variety of learning styles.

>Learning coordinators are available to work with teachers and families to assess and manage learning differences, and in rare instances may conduct screenings for younger children.

>Academic specialists work in the Primary and Lower Schools where skills can vary widely and added support has proven to have the greatest benefit.

>At every age, counselors are available to work with students, faculty, and parents, as needed.

Kids at Lab often say
it's okay to be smart here

Lab students take pride in effort and like the thrill of having worked hard at something interesting and meaningful.

Fourth graders participate in a teacher-initiated Global Reading Challenge. The whole grade reads ten books that bring universal themes to life through stories about different cultures. They break into teams to answer quiz-bowl questions about the books—but in this competition, everyone wins.

Students as
real-world literary and art critics

A favorite Lab activity that lets our child-centered approach shine is the annual Sutherland Award for Excellence in Children's Literature. Created and funded in honor of Zena Sutherland (a former UChicago faculty member and still considered among the world's most influential scholars of young people's literature), the award is one of the only kid-selected book awards in the United States. Here's why it's so special:

It's student led, with adults providing structure
Lab librarians review new children's books and narrow the group to 20, from which sixth-grade students choose five finalists based on criteria they help shape.

It integrates critical thinking and analysis
Sixth graders work from November to March negotiating the finalists and then promote each book, writing and giving persuasive presentations in support of their "candidate."

It's predicated on cross-grade collaboration
Older children take leadership positions, but the younger ones are also empowered as third, fourth, and fifth graders vote on best illustration, best text, and best overall.

Each year, Lab brings the previous year's award-winning author to the school. Kids host the award ceremony, introducing the authors and announcing the newest winner to an impassioned crowd of cheering children.

teachers with experience, insight, passion

Lab teachers, some of the best in the nation, keep classrooms dynamic and students inspired

The University of Chicago Laboratory Schools make a commitment to hire best-in-class teachers, who possess the background and skills to inspire and engage students. Faculty are chosen for their experience with students at a specific grade level, and as children make their way through the learning and growing process, Lab teachers serve as mentors and guides. They bring to their classes an excitement about learning that is contagious.

Lab teachers see learning as a two-way street—not only imparting information to students but creating an exchange between adult and child, child and peer, to question and explore.

Lab believes it is important to have practiced teachers

All educators come to the Schools with at least several years of teaching experience, and eight out of ten Lab faculty have, at minimum, a master's degree and often more. And the school is deeply committed to ensuring that the faculty reflects the same multicultural diversity found in our student body.

Teachers routinely take part in professional development activities so that they may infuse each child's class with new ideas, energy, and creativity. The effort reflects our strong belief in lifelong learning—to the great benefit of the students.

Teaching that keeps adapting and evolving

Nursery, Kindergarten, and Primary teachers have attended highly specialized sessions on early childhood teaching methods. In the Middle and High Schools, faculty are using a teaching structure, the "Harkness Discussion," imported from the Exeter Humanities Institute. In these classes, there's no need to raise hands—students share the responsibility to work as a community and carry on a respectful but challenging discussion of the material at hand. Several student observers take notes and then bring their reflections and leadership into the debate.

Lab teachers are recognized by our community—and nation— as leaders in their field

>Nine Lab teachers have won **Chicago's prestigious Golden Apple Award** for Excellence in Teaching—more than any other school in the city. Others have received the **Kohl McCormick Early Childhood Teaching Award**.

>A **MacArthur "genius" award** and the **Erikson Institute Award for Service to Children** are among the achievements of author/teacher Vivian Paley, who spent most of her career at Lab. (Lessons from her acclaimed book *You Can't Say You Can't Play* shape Lab's approach.)

>Having taught for decades at U-High, Wayne Brasler won the **Missouri Honor Medal for Distinguished Service in Journalism**, one of the industry's highest honors, joining the likes of Tom Brokaw, Sir Winston Churchill, and Gloria Steinem.

>Lab teachers contributed to the **University of Chicago Mathematics Project**, the largest university-based mathematics curriculum project in the country. Their results included the nationally acclaimed *Everyday Mathematics* texts for elementary school students and *Transition Mathematics*, a middle school pre-algebra text.

>**Blue Balliett**, world-renowned author of *Chasing Vermeer*, *The Wright Three*, and *The Calder Game*, based the acclaimed children's mysteries on her experiences teaching students at Lab. (Read one to get a great sense of life around Lab.)

>**Lab classrooms are routinely visited** by teachers and administrators from around the world who wish to experience firsthand the way Lab teachers integrate Dewey's philosophy into their classroom experience.

Nursery/Kindergarten

Academic Life

Walk into a nursery or kindergarten classroom at Earl Shapiro Hall (ESH) and you'll notice how many different activities are going on at one time.
This is the "negotiated curriculum" in action: teachers prepare an environment filled with possibilities and encourage choice, initiative, exploration, and collaboration. Behind it all is the teacher's belief in the child's capacity and motivation to figure out the world and the desire to represent his or her ideas. Children arrive at Lab's doorstep eager to get involved. Teachers respond with programs that support this drive for understanding, autonomy, and competence.

Each N/K class opens directly to an outdoor play area, seamlessly connecting indoor and outdoor learning and bringing nature, weather, and science directly into the learning experience. Those same outdoor play areas connect neighboring N/K classrooms—all of which are on the first floor—building a child's sense of community and encouraging teacher collaboration.

Classrooms at ESH are designed so that a child can function as independently as possible, helping the child experience confidence and competence as he or she chooses what to do.
Once the child has learned the routines and how the room works, the child is free to be in charge of time within those constructs. It is the child's world in which to enjoy, explore, think, and play. In kindergarten the scope widens to include leaving the classroom for library, music, and physical education taught by specialists.

Whether acting out stories they've dictated, listening at story time, writing their own stories using invented spelling, talking at "show and tell," or writing a note to ask a friend to lunch, children are immersed in language and its many uses. In the same way, days are filled with mathematical thinking as children figure out how many days they've been in school or how to follow a recipe. Projects link language, science, and art media—paint, pastels, clay, construction, music, movement—adding depth and breadth to a young mind's understanding.

Community Life

Children in nursery and kindergarten are ready to begin cultivating their sense of place in the greater world.
In making the transition from home to school, they are ready to learn to listen actively to others, to accept differences, and to care about each other. They are learning about point of view—how to express theirs and how to respect another's. Teachers use a child's natural desire for fairness as the beginning of a school-wide curriculum that highlights equity and justice. Within the caring community of Lab, children learn to be caring citizens of the world.

Parents are encouraged to spend time in the classroom. Through their volunteer efforts, nursery and kindergarteners are exposed to families' many cultures and traditions, unique areas of interest, and skill. Most importantly, they see that one's enthusiasm for learning goes beyond school years.

Buddies broaden community

Lower and Middle School "buddies" join our N/K students on a regular basis. The kids love being together, and the partnership puts the idea of community into action.

>The activities allow older children to model excitement about learning and to serve in a leadership role.

>All the children experience Lab's community of learners in a new way, collaborating among a larger group of peers.

>Connecting with older students allows our youngest ones to feel a part of the greater school, expanding their world beyond the classroom.

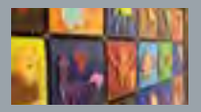
Children's interests drive projects that develop in partnership with teachers

Kids have passions, which teachers help them follow. Activities like these help our youngest students explore, make connections, and feel the excitement of learning:

>A tree stump—sawed by the city and wagoned home from Jackson Park—allows children to talk about how a tree's rings show its age and to reimagine nature as they "landscape" the patio outside their classroom.

>Children exclaim, "Let's paint the rain!" while witnessing the approach of a thunderstorm through the floor-to-ceiling windows in their ESH classroom, and teachers set up easels for an impromptu art experience.

>Young children work to understand Martin Luther King Jr.'s famous words "content of character" by listening to Louis Armstrong's music or exploring the art of Betye Saar, whose work began with found objects arranged in boxes and reflected her mixed ancestry.



>Proof that the youngest mind is capable of developing ideas, working creatively, collaboratively experimenting, nursery schoolers, with their fifth grade "buddies," closely studied the features of a chosen animal: the lines of the body, the texture of the skin. They researched habitats and ultimately shaped, "bisqued" (in a 1,900°F kiln), and glazed ceramic replicas and habitats. The project linked art, science, technology—and friendship.

>When three-year-olds created buildings out of wooden blocks, teachers furthered the exploration through books and discussions. Together the class built a Willis Tower replica, leveraging many skills: spatial relations (arranging rectangles to make the tower), measuring (creating beaded borders), art technique (painting a canvas), and collaboration (deciding how to do all of the above, together).

>Students dictate stories (which volunteer parents patiently transcribe) that the class will later act out. It's a technique pioneered by Lab teacher, author, and MacArthur "genius" award winner Vivian Paley. It strengthens language development and creativity and helps children prepare for abstract thinking.

Primary School

Academic Life

As children move into the Primary School (grades one and two) there is a natural segue
from an environment where the child is the curriculum to one in which the curriculum is more constructed and guides learning down specific paths. New skills and challenges are added in developmentally appropriate ways, and learning is structured to support the purposeful freedom we value and to provide each child with opportunities to move about, investigate, inquire, experiment, and exchange ideas. Teachers present children with real cognitive challenges while creating space for each to absorb and construct new ideas.

A great deal of careful and thoughtful planning goes into creating differentiated classroom environments that capture children's imagination and curiosity and help them experience joy in learning. Students are encouraged to write frequently, and as independently as they are able—both fiction and non-fiction. In the process of writing children incorporate both invented and conventional spelling as they generate topics, research, revise, and even "publish." Relatedly, small group instruction, partner reading, and individual reading are part of everyday routines.

During the Primary years, math concepts become more sophisticated:
students may use graphing skills in a social studies or a science project, or students might measure time on clocks marked at five-minute intervals and count money using nickels. These varied experiences help students develop mathematical reasoning and scientific inquiry as they make conjectures, gather evidence, and build supporting arguments.

Children leave the classroom for formal art instruction starting in first grade, and computer classes are added in second. Through art, music, and physical education, Primary School children use all manner of media to express themselves and their creativity and are encouraged to view themselves as instruments to see, hear, and feel the world around them. The computer curriculum provides students with foundation skills that will be transferable as technology changes.

Community Life

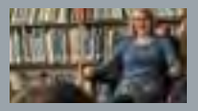
Life requires that children learn respect for others and a sense of personal and social responsibility.
In Primary School, as in every grade, preparing children to become responsible adults involves the entire community—students, parents, teachers, and staff.

An important part of this is "class meeting" time. Part of a pedagogy known as the "Responsive Classroom," the meetings are used to practice academic and social skills as the class discusses the upcoming day's schedule, problem solves, shares experiences, and plans class activities. Children learn to express ideas and opinions, and to listen to, and have respect for, other points of view.

Our goal is to create an environment in which children have the opportunity and confidence to take risks as they share things of importance by speaking and listening to one another.

Storytelling

a unique element of Lab's thoughtful library curriculum



When librarians sit kindergarteners, first, and second graders down to hear a story, they are executing a core element of Lab's library curriculum.

Storytelling has a long history at Lab—the librarians have records of every story told each week since 1954, and they almost never repeat a story to the same children as they grow from kindergarten through second grade. The librarian tells each story from memory, in the oral tradition. It's not just for fun; storytelling enhances a child's:

>Imagination, visualization, and memory

>Appreciation of rhythm and pattern of language

>Speaking and listening skills

>Critical and creative thinking and problem-solving skills

>Understanding of cultural heritage, his/her own and that of others

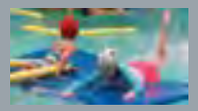
Hands-on projects allow students to learn the importance of cooperation and ignite interest and respect for each individual's ideas

> UChicago Professor Neil Shubin describes showing the 375-million-year-old "fishapod," *Tiktaalik*, to first graders: "One kid said, 'It's a crocodile.' Another kid said, 'It's a fish.' And then another kid said, 'Maybe it's a walking fish.' *Exactly.* I wanted to underscore the fact that the fossil was so straightforward, even a six-year-old could interpret it."

> Blending science, math, and art, second graders make virtual snowflakes using computer apps, explore symmetry, and practice reading a thermometer. Watching a small snowman melt, shrink, and shift throughout the day, and then disappear in a frying pan, gives kids a practical understanding of states of matter—solid, liquid, and gas.

> Kids tweet with *The Dot* author Peter Reynolds, draw dots using traditional supplies like watercolors and techy iPad art tools, and take pictures of circles throughout Earl Shapiro Hall: globes, clocks, a fish bowl, wheels, rolls of tape.

> Children get a sense for the scale of Greek architecture working in pairs to draw and watercolor-wash six-foot-tall drawings of Greek columns. In a spectacular show of "monumental," the 72 columns line the lobby at Earl Shapiro Hall for all to see.



> A visit to the school swimming pool allows children to act out the penguin behaviors they've studied over a month-long project: they porpoise off "icebergs," pretend to dive for fish, and then return to their nests (a.k.a. the side of the pool).

> First graders, inspired by a visit to a Chicago theater, study fairy tales and then write their own, make puppets, and give performances for one another.

Lower School

Academic Life

Developmentally, Lower School children (third through fifth grades) hit an important "aha!" moment when disparate learning, garnered in younger years, coalesces into more sophisticated thinking and peer relationships. They move from grade to grade with increasing confidence in their ability to tackle questions and make sense of multiple ideas.

Lower School children make an important leap when they go from learning to read to reading to learn. With this skill comes the ability to acquire and master new intellectual challenges, making it the right time to start additional specialist-taught classes, starting in third grade: science and world languages with a choice of French, German, Mandarin Chinese, or Spanish. (Lower Schoolers, of course, continue with specialist-taught classes introduced in earlier grades: art, computer science, library, music, and PE.)

Collaborative activities with common goals teach the importance of cooperation, responsibility, and a continuing and more sophisticated respect for each individual's ideas. Using strategies such as tiered assignments, flexible grouping, and integrated curricula, teachers make skillful adjustments for each student's capacity for independence and complexity. And careful thought and planning goes into creating classroom environments that foster—and sustain—the intellectual curiosity children bring to learning. Teachers encourage students' imagination and initiative even while guiding them in productive ways.

Community Life

The Schools have shaped programs for each Lower School grade that address a broad range of social and emotional development. These programs allow children to have many shared experiences and expectations but recognize the differences in how each child learns.

A variety of Lower School activities are symbolic of the value Lab places on our broader community. Lower School students are at just the right age to be both "big buddies" and "little buddies." As big buddies, they experience the sense of mastery and pride that comes from reading to younger children, helping them to write a story or carve a pumpkin. As little buddies to our Middle and High Schoolers, they get to work with and learn from older students. About once a month the entire Lower School assembles for events, performances, and presentations that connect the learning in classrooms with the larger community.

Children have a natural inclination to use the advantages they have to help others, and we seek to reinforce these "habits of goodness" in and out of the classroom. Included in this (and in lots of other ways) are our many parents, who are welcomed into the school and who often bring their expertise and culture into our classrooms.

In the heart of a world-class university

Lower Schoolers routinely benefit from UChicago minds and resources:

>Fourth graders visit a UChicago biology lab to see how scientists clone green fluorescent protein (GFP) into mice—which makes them glow—and learn how GFP can be used to tag and track certain genes.

>In a University chemistry hall, a professor demonstrates phases of matter, acid-base, and electrical concepts for fourth graders. She makes it real with liquid nitrogen, polymer slime, imploding tin cans—materials and procedures too costly or (thrillingly) dangerous for the classroom.

>A program at the University's Smart Museum introduces young minds to methods of looking at and communicating about art, and helps them to make connections between what they've learned in the museum and their own lives by experimenting with and expressing themselves through artistic media.

Lending authenticity to the lesson

Getting out into the real world (or bringing it into the classroom) makes lessons more meaningful.

>Chicago Blackhawks fever spurs an integrated learning experience blending math (calculating goals-against average), geography (finding players' hometowns on maps), and composition (writing persuasive letters to teams asking for—and sometimes getting—a program or paraphernalia).

>Lower Schoolers pen (and some publish) their own verse working with a poet-in-residence.

>Fifth graders have a special World Language Day, an immersion experience that might include a Kung Fu workshop in Chinatown, a tango class, learning to bake madeleines, making German crafts, or practicing language skills over a meal in one of Chicago's ethnic neighborhoods.

>Fourth graders study the works of Andy Warhol and Claes Oldenburg before making their own oversized Pop Art sculptures of everyday objects (using repurposed materials—iMac packing crates, anyone?).

>While studying cultures and how they evolve over time, students interviewed Lab alumni and longtime faculty to learn how their very own school traditions evolved over time. They documented their findings in a bound volume of collective history.

Middle School

Academic Life

Children entering the Middle School years (sixth, seventh, and eighth grades) begin an intense period of intellectual, social, emotional, physical, and moral growth.

Lab's Middle School teachers are actively interested in students at this developmental stage, and they create a program that balances independence and challenge with the support Middle Schoolers need. Teachers work to bring authenticity into the learning process by building real-world and cross-disciplinary experiences into the curricula. Because students are becoming more independent, in eighth grade, Lab introduces the opportunity for kids to select arts and other elective courses.

Each week, a Middle School student will connect with almost a dozen teachers specializing in different areas, each with unique interests and styles. It's one way Lab helps prepare young people to learn effectively as they grow into young adulthood. Strong teacher/student relationships give students the confidence to discuss, question, and debate. This confidence translates into creative, expressive, vocal intellects and serves as the foundation for high school.

In Middle School, boundaries expand as the homeroom gives way to an advisory system (a teacher and 12 to 15 students) designed to foster strong relationships between peers and with an additional adult role model. Students meet daily and for longer sessions twice weekly when they address social/emotional topics, set personal goals, or ready themselves for the transition to high school. This system helps children develop important self-advocacy skills and offers an added dimension to their sense of community in Middle School.

Community Life

A range of new opportunities and activities gives Middle School students greater responsibility and independence.

Understanding the diversity of the world we live in and developing an open-mindedness and sense of responsibility to our greater community are lessons that infuse life in the Middle School through activities including:

>The seventh grade humanities curriculum asks students to identify and interview someone from whom they feel different whether because of race, religion, or some other distinction. The activity takes students out of their comfort zones and helps them develop a respect for and an understanding of difference.

>Fridays, every Middle Schooler spends an activity period doing something of their own choosing from an ever-changing list of electives: ice skating, Star Wars Club, basketball, short films, Magic (the card game), or maybe chess.

>On a regular basis kids disperse across the city to help at organizations like the Greater Chicago Food Depository, Ronald McDonald House, Burnham Prairie, or the Kenwood Health Center.

>A Lab tradition of overnight trips (at no additional cost to families) begins with the sixth and seventh grades going camping and putting to work concepts addressed in advisory: teamwork, independence, ingenuity. The eighth grade travels to Washington, DC—a culmination of their humanities curriculum and cap to life in Middle School.

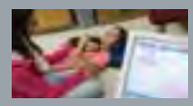
A more sophisticated scope of thinking and learning

>Seventh graders gently tease apart an "owl pellet" (what remains in an owl's throat after a rodent or bird has been digested) and then identify and rebuild a virtually complete animal skeleton of tiny, delicate bones.

>Students conduct primary-source research on an event, historical figure, or institution from Chicago around the turn of the century. After weeks of preparation, including writing a formal research paper, they give poster presentations to family and friends.

>Eighth graders translate the Constitution into everyday language, helping the student-author understand the importance of each article and many of the amendments.

>Starting in seventh grade, students use a method known as a "Harkness Discussion" (imported from Phillips Exeter Academy). No hands are raised. No teacher stands in front. Instead, students speak in turn, creating a debate infused with respect and maturity: the ability to engage in constructive dialogue is a hallmark of a Lab education.



>As part of the Adolescent Substance Abuse Program, UChicago medical students visit Lab toting real-life examples as they discuss anatomy and physiology, and sixth graders get a look at the results of common drugs on human body parts (think nicotine-stained "black lung").

Athletics in the Middle School

Interscholastic sports are an important part of Middle School life. Importantly, Lab encourages participation with an "everyone plays" approach so kids can explore the world of competitive sports without risk of failure.

>Baseball
>Basketball
>Cross Country
>Soccer
>Track & Field
>Volleyball (girls)

A lot happens outside the Middle School classroom

>Ethnic, cultural, and religious student associations

>Diplomacy group

>History and humanities clubs

>Jazz band

>Newspaper and yearbook

>Math teams

>Theater productions (mounted twice a year)

>Student council and, of course, student council–sponsored dances

>Science club

High School

U-High's course offerings
allow for a significant range of choice

>Advanced Placement and Advanced Topic courses in 19 subjects
>Acting Studio
>African American History
>*Anna Karenina*
>Computer Architecture
>Chemistry and Physics
>Digital Music Production and Composition
>Discrete Mathematics and Statistics
>Environmental Science
>Graphic Novels
>The Holocaust
>Human Behavior
>Islam and Modernity
>Literature, Rhetoric, and Morality
>Literary Monsters
>Macro and Micro Economics
>Mixed Media Art
>Newspaper Journalism
>Photography
>Performance and Competition in Ancient Greece
>Word Play: Etymology and Linguistics
>World languages: French, German, Latin, Mandarin Chinese, and Spanish

Academic Life

High expectations go hand in hand with real, personal freedom.

In the High School, also known as University High School or U-High, students become accustomed to a demanding workload and high expectations. Each year students are better able to think for themselves, challenge assumptions, and, most importantly, take on increasing levels of responsibility for their own education.

Lab attracts passionate students who excel academically and are excited by teachers and a curriculum that will help them expand their intellectual comfort zone. They are ready to take advantage of all our school has to offer. Learning to balance it all takes effort, but our students will tell you it's exciting, and our graduates that it was worth it.

The basic curriculum emphasizes analytical reading, writing, research, strong math and science skills, and broad access to the arts. In keeping with independent schools across the country, U-High has started to move away from denoting classes as Advanced Placement, instead offering Advanced Topic courses. In doing so, the school no longer has to follow a curriculum prescribed by an outside testing service, allowing faculty to shape rich and challenging courses. Most students take at least one of the 19 advanced courses offered at Lab and many go on to take related AP exams.

Access to University resources—and teaching—gives students a head start on life after Lab.

Starting in tenth grade, U-Highers have full privileges at the University of Chicago's seven libraries. Students learn from their teachers how to use these world-class resources properly so that they graduate with a head start on college-level research skills and carry forth an enviable resourcefulness.

Qualified juniors and seniors may take courses at the University at no additional cost (and about 20 do so each year). Their choices cover a broad range of interests:

>Honors Calculus and Advanced Algorithms
>Korean, Russian, Polish, and Italian
>Dante and His Rivals
>Race and Migration in Latin America
>Urban Policy Analysis
>Honors Physics and Honors Chemistry
>Power, Identity, and Resistance

U-Highers are on the nation's radar

>U-High's student newspaper and yearbook consistently win state and national awards and are considered to be among the elite student publications in the United States.

>Lab has had four finalists and multiple semi-finalists in the Intel Science Talent Search, as well as a finalist and two semi-finalists in the Siemens Competition in Math, Science & Technology.

>Students routinely get published in newspapers and literary journals, and one reached the finals in the YoungArts competition sponsored by the National Endowment for the Advancement of the Arts.

>The math and science teams have finished in the state's top three for years. Dozens of U-Highers qualified for the American Invitational Mathematics Exam, and at least one has participated in the elite Mathematical Olympiad.

>In recent years, nearly 20 percent of the class became National Merit semi-finalists.

>A Labbie placed in the Senior Jazz Ensemble at the Illinois Music Education Association competition, which requires students to both play challenging excerpts and improvise on the spot.

>Debate team members win at the national level, and the Model UN team perennially ranks in the top five in the nation.

Senior May Project

A U-High tradition since 1969, May Project calls on all the skills and maturity seniors have developed during their time at Lab. It's a chance for students to follow a passion, explore a field of endeavor, or learn something completely new:

> For her six "China sisters," a student creates a mixed media, bilingual book that recounts their shared experiences growing up together after all seven girls were adopted at the same time by Chicago families.

>A boy serves as a "manny" (male nanny) for a ten-month-old as he thinks about whether a life in early childhood development might be his calling.

>A student takes a grueling first responder wilderness training course.

>A girl shadows a University physician who works in a clinic for families receiving federal assistance.

>Other students work in businesses, write blogs, learn musical instruments, compose music, or make art.

And teachers routinely take advantage of UChicago professors and Chicago's many cultural resources to add authenticity to class activities.

Throughout the week, students regularly have free time, and the school works with students to help them learn to balance their workload and social needs. Lab's open campus means that students have the freedom to come and go from school grounds—responsibly—as their class schedule allows. So, by the time students leave U-High, they are equipped with the independence and academic and personal skills they'll use to navigate college and life with confidence and leadership.

The school is large enough to offer enormous academic opportunity and small enough to focus on the individual. Whether it's the open door policy at the Writer's Center (where more than half of all U-Highers get feedback on papers and help with the writing process) or the many hours teachers make themselves available to assist students, U-High is very personal. We offer more than 150 different classes, but because students have powerful and unique interests, at any one time several dozen are working with a faculty mentor in our Independent Study Program:

>Rapid Immunological Method to Study Evolution
>Vergil's *Aeneid*
>Topics in Quantum Mechanics and Advanced Mathematics
>Syria in Crisis

Personal and college counseling are important resources for each child and family.

Each student is assigned a counselor and an advisory for his or her time at U-High. Counselors are successful at connecting with their students—just see how many kids hang out in their counselor's office at lunchtime. In advisory, students are assigned to a faculty advisor and a group of about 15 students, which will stay together all four years. The advisor helps students acclimate to high school and serves as a liaison between school and home, student and teacher. Advisory creates yet another opportunity for kids to feel part of a smaller community and builds social connections between students whose schedules might not otherwise overlap.

During junior year each U-Higher begins working with a college counselor who oversees the college application process. The counselor focuses on helping each student gain acceptance at a college that will fit his or her unique needs, and Lab's counseling program supports families as they

navigate the financial aspects of a college education. It almost goes without saying that virtually every U-Higher graduates from a four-year college, and they attend outstanding colleges around Chicago and the country.

Community Life

U-Highers are an independent group—and that's just how we want them to be.

Students often devote significant time outside of regular school hours to many different extracurricular activities. And the kids who make the most of all U-High has to offer are the ones who seem most excited by what the Laboratory Schools and life are all about.

Sports are a major draw (65 percent of all U-Highers play on at least one team), but among the many offerings are some that attract an especially large or invested group of participants:

>U-High's journalism program is one of the best in the nation and has sent many a student into the world armed with impeccable communications skills whether or not they are drawn to a career in journalism.

>The debate and the Model United Nations teams take their energy and intensity to tournaments across the United States. They return with accolades and friendships from other parts of the country.

>The theater program mounts three performances a year including one fully student-written and student-directed. For all performances, students take part in every aspect, from acting and lighting to costuming and set design.

>Jazz musicians, chamber groups, and singing ensembles perform regularly for fellow students and at gigs around the city. Some groups and individuals venture to competitions and festivals.

The level of commitment students bring to these activities shows just how excited they are by what they're doing—and how much fun they are having.

Value our differences and give back to society.

These concepts are so important at Lab that the Service Learning Program is required of all High School students. During sophomore year, students volunteer at a social service organization or community institution (with which Lab has established a formal relationship). These include:

>Ariel Extended Day
>Blackstone Library
>Casa Aztlán
>Chinese American Service League
>UChicago Comer and La Rabida children's hospitals
>LaSalle Street Tutoring Program
>Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago
>St. Martin de Porres

Students write about their experiences, and ultimately, many build community service into their lives in an ongoing way.

Lab lasts a lifetime.

We're never surprised to hear from a Lab grad that he or she has gone into business with a former Lab classmate, married a fellow "Labbie," or followed an earlier graduate into an amazing career. Lab graduates find each other wherever they go and even stay connected to one another's parents and families. These relationships go beyond close-knit and last for years after graduation.

Annual student retreats

Included in a student's tuition is a class retreat each year. Retreats offer social connections and support students in the context of their roles as class members. An added benefit? They're fun.

>Freshmen: Before school, freshmen go off campus for two days of team-building activities and conversation about what it means to be a student in the U-High community.

>Sophomores: In early fall, a two-night retreat gives kids a chance to do some community service together as they learn more about their service learning requirement.

>Juniors: Over three days and two nights, juniors work in large and small groups to examine their strengths and opportunities in an environment that affirms their abilities and their specialness.

>Seniors: It's January, it's cold, and a little "senioritis" might be hitting. What better way to revive these students than a weekend of skiing, skating, sledding, hanging, and playing with their friends!

Athletics draws hundreds for the love of the game—and to win

U-High fields more than 28 sports teams that compete in the Independent School League and the Illinois High School Association (IHSA). Over the past decade our teams have competed—and won—at high levels of competition, including 48 IHSA regional and sectional championships in 12 different sports.

They achieve this within a "no cut" policy system that encourages students to play (nearly 65 percent of U-Highers play on at least one team) and distinguishes U-High from most athletic programs in the country.

Junior varsity and varsity teams:

>Baseball
>Basketball
>Cross Country
>Fencing
>Golf
>Soccer
>Squash
>Swimming
>Tennis
>Track & Field (indoor and outdoor)
>Volleyball (girls)

And U-High grads go on to compete on NCAA Division 1–3 college sports teams at schools including Johns Hopkins, University of Chicago, Haverford, Illinois State, Emory, MIT, Northwestern, Grinnell, Ripon, Swarthmore, and Wash-U, St. Louis.

Summer Link internship program

Through Summer Link, students have hands-on experiences not normally available to high school students. This unique partnership with the University places qualified U-Highers into paid summer internships with UChicago scientists and professors, or businesses connected to Lab or University alumni:

>Chemistry Professor and Director, Materials Research Science and Engineering Center Ka Yee C. Lee
>The University of Chicago Press
>The Computation Institute, a joint initiative between UChicago and Argonne National Laboratory
>Ariel Investments
>Law School Senior Lecturer and US Appeals Court Judge Richard Posner and Clifton R. Musser Professor Emeritus of Law and Economics William Landes
>William B. Ogden Distinguished Service Professor of Economics (and *Freakanomics* author) Steven D. Levitt
>Morningstar

Lab hosts more than 40 activities, academic teams, and student-run clubs

>Asian, Black, Christian, Jewish, Latino, and Muslim student associations
>Bel Canto choir
>Debate
>Green Team, environmental club
>Jazz band
>Kids Involved in Cure for Cancer
>Language clubs
>Student newspaper
>Model United Nations
>Poetry Slam/Louder than a Bomb
>Quidditch
>*Renaissance* literary magazine and *InFlame* history journal
>Science and Math teams
>Scholastic Bowl
>Spectrum (LGBTQ)
>Student Council and Cultural Union
>*U-Highlights* yearbook

Lab after hours

The Laboratory Schools offer engaging and entertaining opportunities for learning beyond regular school hours and during summer vacation.

Besides being fun, Auxiliary Programs extend the Schools' mission by offering families schedule-simplifying alternatives that increase learning and are always age appropriate. Many activities allow students to experience academic concepts and topics that go beyond Lab's regular curriculum in creative ways.

Complete information about Extended Day and Summer Lab is available on the school website.

Extended Day

Nearly 600 students in nursery through eighth grade participate in Extended Day, at the core of which is a series of daily programs. Up to five days a week, teachers-in-training lead a full afternoon of outdoor recreation and activities mixed with playful academic curriculum or study skills tailored to the child's age. Starting in kindergarten, students may join special activities:

Sports Programs
including basketball, soccer, fencing, and karate

Enrichment Classes
including chess, robot building, and historic games

Music and Arts Programs
including guitar, photography, improv, and drawing

Heritage Language Programs

Swim Programs
including lessons, family swim, and Lab's own competitive youth program, Midway Aquatics

Summer Lab

Our summer program attracts children from around the neighborhood and around the world. From academics to adventure, here's a sample of what happens around campus once summer break hits:

Nursery through Eighth Grade Programs
>Adventure Kids Day Camp
>Drama Dance
>Nature Explorers
>Readers & Writers Workshops
>Lego Robotics
>Pi in the Eye: Visualizing Mathematics
>And nearly a dozen different sports

Middle and High School Programs
>Investigating Chicago: Writer's Workshop
>Improv Fun-damentals
>Summer Lab Journalism
>Summer Lab on Stage
>Sports camps
>Geometry, Latin, computer science, and physical education for U-High credit

Summer Lab Field Study

Often driven by faculty initiative and chaperoned by Lab faculty, Middle and High School students can explore different places and cultures, or offer community service in unique destinations. Recent trips have taken students to Yellowstone and the Grand Tetons, Crow Canyon Archaeology Center, China, Ecuador, Sicily, and Cuba.

Admissions

From Executive Director of Admissions & Financial Aid Irene M. Reed, '92

Thank you so much for your interest in Lab!

We hope this information has given you a good introduction to our school. Our goal is to welcome you to the Lab community, and help you learn about our unique culture and academic program. We believe each child is an individual who possesses special qualities that cannot always be captured by test scores and applications alone. We seek to learn more about our applicants through playgroups, classroom visits, interviews, student shadow days, and tours. Every family who applies will have an opportunity to visit the Schools and meet personally with an admissions representative.

If you feel that Lab might be a fit for your child, we invite you to learn more about our admissions process.

Admissions Fast Facts

>Lab's application process includes: an online application; fee; a school tour or open house; a playgroup, class visit or shadow day; student and parent interviews; current and prior grade reports; and teacher and/or principal school recommendations (all grade specific).

>The formal application process typically takes place one year in advance of enrollment.

>Most children enter Lab at Nursery 3 (three-year-olds) or ninth grade. Space availability at other grade levels varies year to year.

>Families should apply for Nursery 3 when their child is two years old. Applicants must turn three before September 1 of their enrollment year.

>Prior to application, prospective high school students are encouraged to attend the annual U-High Open House, which takes place each year in October or November.

>Ninth grade applicants must be in eighth grade (or its equivalent) at the time of application and must take the Independent School Entrance Exam (ISEE).

>Tours of the Laboratory Schools are generally available only to families who have submitted a formal application.

>Each year, Lab provides financial assistance to help meet the needs of students and their families. Lab does not have a specific income limit for financial aid. Rather, the Financial Aid Committee examines a family's entire financial picture, including income, expenses, and other circumstances.

Learn More About Lab

Go online: www.ucls.uchicago.edu/admission

Speak to an admission officer: 773-702-9451

Email us: admissions@ucls.uchicago.edu

Getting to Lab

The Laboratory Schools are situated on the University of Chicago campus in Chicago's historic Hyde Park/Kenwood community, which lies a few miles south of the Loop. Just west of the Museum of Science and Industry, the Laboratory Schools are easily accessible by car, CTA, and Metra. The Schools operate bus services to Chicago's North Side, Bucktown, Wicker Park, Ukrainian Village, and South Loop neighborhoods, and families routinely arrange carpools.

a campus within a campus

Located on Stony Island Avenue, the newly built Earl Shapiro Hall is home to Lab's Nursery/Kindergarten and Primary School (grades 1–2.) This light-filled building is designed to maximize the independence a child feels during the school day and to seamlessly connect indoor and outdoor learning.

Three blocks to the west is Lab's Historic Campus. Covering two city blocks, it is home to Lab's Lower School (grades 3–5), Middle School (grades 6–8), and High School (grades 9–12). The architecturally impressive buildings date from the early 1900s and are currently undergoing a once-in-a-lifetime restoration and renovation.

Within our 615,000 square feet of space (that's about 11 football fields of indoor space), students take full advantage of facilities, which include:

- On the Historic Campus, 100 classrooms located throughout five distinct (but connected) three- and four-story buildings and a gym complex
- At Earl Shapiro Hall, 35 classrooms and a gymnasium
- 13 wet science labs, renovated and wired for media presentations
- Full wireless capability and 14 servers linked to 1,250 regularly upgraded desk and laptop computers and iPads for in-school use
- Four computer labs
- Four libraries with more than 100,000 volumes
- State-of-the-art digital language lab with 32 stations

Historic Campus

footprint of Historic Campus
2 city blocks

8 new/remodeled Lower and Middle School science labs

8 gargoyles

4 art studios (all with north light)

700 seats in the new community assembly hall

100+ theater lighting instruments

94,167 Arts Hall sq. ft.

The Gordon Parks Arts Hall

The most dramatic change to the Historic Campus is the new Gordon Parks Arts Hall. With 94,000 square feet on three stories, Lab now has arts spaces that match the talent of the students and teachers who will use them:

- The 250-seat Sherry Lansing Theater
- A 150-seat drama studio
- A 700-seat assembly hall (large enough to house an entire division)
- Spaces for music practice and performance
- Four art studios
- Scene and costume shops
- A kiln
- Photography and digital media facilities
- Gallery and display spaces

Earl Shapiro Hall

Earl Shapiro Hall interior space
130,601 sq. ft.

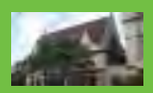
Earl Shapiro Hall outdoor space
46,700 square feet

6 outdoor play spaces and Jackson Park

48 deciduous trees, 16 evergreen trees, 61 shrubs, and almost 30,000 ground cover, vine, and perennial plants

A Century of Education

1903 Blaine Hall



1904 Belfield Hall

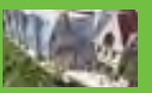
1929 Sunny Gym

1960 High School

1993 Middle School

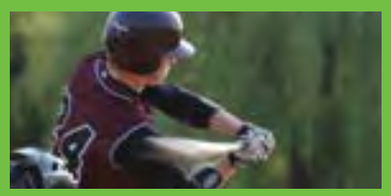
2000 Kovler Gym

2013 Earl Shapiro Hall



2015 Gordon Parks Arts Hall

Physical Education and Athletic Facilities



Lab's sports facilities are among the best in the city, and among private schools throughout the country:

- Five gyms
- Dance studio
- Fully equipped training room
- Fully equipped gymnastics room
- Indoor five-lane swimming pool
- Five tennis courts
- Playing fields
- State-of-the-art fitness center (TriFIT system, treadmills, ellipticals, rowing machines, free weights)
- Ability to compete and train at University of Chicago facilities, most notably the award-winning Ratner Center for swimming and the Henry Crown Field House for track

This text was conceived and written by Catherine Yachnin Braendel '81, and refined by key members of the Laboratory Schools community. We are grateful to everyone who contributed to this process. Photography by Chris Kirzeder and Marc Monaghan. Design by Janice Clark.

PHOTO: DAVID RHIND

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO | Laboratory Schools

Admissions Office
1362 East 59th Street
Chicago, Illinois 60637

Go online: www.ucls.uchicago.edu
Speak to an admissions officer: 773-702-9451
E-mail us: admissions@ucls.uchicago.edu