



Gingerbread Preschool Classroom Guide

Gingersnaps



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Welcome to the Gingersnaps Class!



We are excited that you have chosen the Gingersnaps class for your child's first preschool experience.

We are looking forward to what this school year holds for all of us, as we get to know your child and family. It is a privilege to share this unique time in your child's life with you.

The second year of a child's life is magical! Toddlers are eager to discover the world around them and experience everything with great joy and enthusiasm! It will also bring rapid growth and changes in your child's development. As the school year progresses you will see your child reach great milestones! We are here to celebrate and support you and your child through these changes.

At Gingerbread Preschool, we believe that children learn through play and hands-on exploration. We also believe that children must have a loving and warm environment to be able to learn. The Gingersnaps staff will provide your child with love and encouragement as they begin to explore the new world of preschool.

Here's to a wonderful year!

To contact Ms. Jamie you may call (925) 931-3430
or e-mail jkuhns@ci.pleasanton.ca.us

Our Preschool Classroom

Our curriculum and classroom routine have been carefully designed to help facilitate your child's social, emotional, physical, communication and language development. The Gingersnaps curriculum is presented through hands-on exploration. A classroom routine helps children gain skills in a variety of areas. Each child in THEIR own time will find success in these areas throughout the school year. Our primary goal for all children who attend Gingerbread is that they gain a love of learning.

The Gingersnaps class follows a developmentally appropriate play-based daily routine, designed to be flexible and responsive to the needs of the children. The classroom structure is created on relationship-based principles providing children with quality one-on-one adult/child interactions. Each child is assigned a primary caregiver resulting in close individual attention and learning support. The staff provide guidance, support and encouragement to the children, building their self-esteem and confidence as they participate in a group setting.

The day is divided into small and large group activities, hands on experiences, outdoor play time and snack time. The flow of the day is not set by the clock, but instead by the routine and needs of the group. Children in the Gingersnaps class will develop and grow while they learn routines, social skills and a wealth of knowledge through new experiences and hands-on open ended activities.

This classroom experience may be the first time your child has participated in an activity independent of you. We believe participation in our program will allow your child to successfully adjust to this newfound independence without being overwhelmed.

Dress Code

Gingerbread Preschool provides HANDS ON learning experiences and your child will come home DIRTY! Children will be using expressive materials including paint (which may not wash out), water, mud, etc. You may want to bring an extra set of clothing if you plan to go somewhere immediately after preschool.

In addition the Gingersnaps will be involved in climbing and running activities. Children are required to wear closed-toed, rubber soled shoes. Children should wear PLAY CLOTHES. Recommended clothing includes: clothes that your child can easily manipulate themselves such as pants with an elastic waist band, jeans, sweats, shorts, t-shirt, sweatshirt, sweater or jacket.

Each child should have at least one change of clothing, appropriate diapers and wipes as well as any other necessary diapering supplies, placed in the large Ziploc bag provided by the Gingersnaps staff.

Coming To/Leaving School

To drop-off your child, wait in the lobby until called by staff. Once you have been called, escort your child into their classroom, have child place any personal items in their cubby and assist your child as needed to settle into the classroom. Once you have left, please do not return to the classroom as this often causes more separation issues than necessary. You are welcome to call the school at any time to check on your child.

The staff will take attendance during the first ten minutes of class. If you arrive late, please enter the classroom quietly and speak to your child's primary care giver to let them know your child has arrived.

In order to support a smooth transition, drop off time will be a relaxed, slow paced time. Parents are encouraged to join their child in the classroom and assist them in selecting from the free choice activities provided. Be sure to say "good-bye" to your child and reassure them you will be back after they have fun playing. It is suggested that your child bring a 'transitional object', such as a small blankie or stuffed animal as needed. Gingersnaps staff are available to discuss your child's separation and develop individualized transition strategies as appropriate.



Coming To/Leaving School continued...

To pick up your child, collect your child's file folder from the wall pocket located in the lobby. The file folder is green to match the classroom color. Once you have found your child's file folder, sign-out your child and wait to be called into the classroom. Once you have been called, proceed to the classroom with the file folder, hand the file folder to your child's primary care giver. **Once a parent has given the folder to staff, it is the parent's responsibility to safely monitor and escort their child out of the classroom, through the gate and into the parking lot.**

Learning Activities

During classtime your child will be engaging in a variety of play which we call learning activities. Children explore different areas of the room, at their own pace and direction. Typically there is at least one learning activity at a table in which staff is assisting the children, such as science, puzzles, arts and crafts, etc. The following are some of the activities your child will be learning from.

Block Play

When children play with blocks, they learn concepts of shape, size, length, and location which are pre-reading and math skills. They also learn to use their imagination and cooperate with others.

Dramatic Play

This is a favorite activity for two year olds. Children dress up and pretend they are learning self-help skills as they manipulate the dress up items as well as learning to use their imaginations and interact with their peers and teachers.

Arts

Children use their imagination, creativity and express feelings during this time. They explore using a variety of paints, glue, shaving cream, crayons and markers. Opportunities are made available to the children to "play" with these materials. The process is the focus, not the end product.

Music Time

During music time, children are exposed to a variety of songs, poems and musical instruments. They learn the principles of music and rhythm.

Story time

During story time children are presented literature in a variety of ways; reading, story telling, felt stories, story props and fingerplays. When being read to, children learn that letters on a page represent words, and pictures represent words and ideas. They learn to listen to spoken language and to follow the development of thoughts and ideas in the plot of a story.

Sensory Activity

During sensory activities children learn new vocabulary, concepts of texture, color, weight and size as well as observing likenesses and differences.

Manipulatives

Manipulative are items such as legos and beads. When playing with manipulatives, children learn hand-eye coordination, symmetry, shapes and order.



Gathering (Circle) Time

The Gingersnaps will gather together on an informal basis on the large classroom rug. Each day, a teacher will provide the children with the opportunity to participate in story time, singing or other interactive activities. Children may choose to participate or not. As the children grow and develop, children will be encouraged to participate in the Gathering Time as individually appropriate.

Outside Play

When outside, your child will be developing their gross motor skills by participating in activities such as: running, jumping, climbing and pedaling. This is very important for their physical development as well as their brain development. Children are also able to use their imagination and learn to cooperate with others when involved in group play. The Gingersnaps children will play outside in their gated play yard for the first few months of school. As the children mature, they will also play on the larger play yard when they have the yard to themselves. In the spring, they may share the larger play yard with another age group.

Snack Time

At snack time your child will practice their self help, social and language skills.

Snack time is an activity that children participate in together as a classroom community. At the table, teachers and children practice sitting at the table, eating, using their words to ask for more and cleaning up after themselves.

Snacks are primarily healthy foods that include a variety of crackers, cheese, oranges, bananas and applesauce. Occasional sweets will be served on special celebrations and if it relates to the curriculum theme. Water is served at each snack time. Snacks are pre-planned, however they are subject to change.

If your child has a food allergy or restriction, please notify staff and we will do our best to find an appropriate substitute snack.

Clean-up Time

Each child is expected to participate in clean-up time. Children learn that they are a member of a classroom community, and as such have a responsibility to participate with the group to accomplish this task. Children learn cooperation as they work together and practice their communications skills as they use their words to ask teachers, "where does this go?" Teaching staff assist children in sorting and classifying items as they put them away.

Diapering and Toilet Training

Children do not need to be toilet trained to participate in the Gingersnaps class. During your child's time in the class, we will work with you and your child to provide him/her the assistance and support they need through various stages of toilet training.

Diapering Procedures

At Gingersnaps, we see diaper changing time as an opportunity for one-on-one focused interactions between child and staff. Staff are trained to engage children and involve them in the process while treating them with the utmost respect.

Children are required to have diapers, wipes and a change of clothes available in the classroom. Please put a clean diaper on your child prior to coming to class, as diapers are changed on an as-needed basis only.



Diapering and Toilet Training continued...

Children wearing diapers will be changed in the classroom at the diaper changing table by their assigned 'primary' staff member only, except in cases of staff member's absence. Children will be treated respectfully and calmly as staff walks them through the following steps:

- * Tell child that it is time for a diaper change; if the child is engaged in an activity, allow child to complete activity before going to the changing table.
- * The child will climb steps on the diaper table with assistance, to the clean diaper changing area.
- * Staff will put on non-latex gloves.
- * Staff will remove child's clothing and diaper.
- * The soiled diaper will be removed and disposed of in a covered container.
- * The child will then be wiped clean using wipes which will then be disposed of in the covered container.
- * Gloves will be removed after cleaning the child but before the staff puts on a clean diaper in order to eliminate cross contamination.
- * The child will then be dressed with a clean diaper and clean clothes, if needed.
- * The child will walk down steps with assistance.
- * Changing table will be disinfected with a bleach solution and covered with a clean paper towel.
- * Both child and staff will wash hands thoroughly.

Toileting-Readiness

Children who are demonstrating developmental readiness for toilet learning, will be guided through the process on an individual basis as determined by the parent and staff together. Children must demonstrate physical, cognitive and emotional readiness to begin the process.

Children who are toilet training are to wear underwear or pull ups under their clothing. Each child will be escorted by a staff person whenever there is a need to use the toilet. They will not be left alone in the children's bathroom at any time.

Please discuss your child's toileting-readiness with his/her primary staff member. And be sure to bring an extra set of clothes to keep on hand in the classroom. Accidents do happen!

Participant Behavior

Biting

Biting is a common behavior for two year olds. There are many reasons for biting: teething, attention-seeking, power/aggression, territorial/defense, frustration/stress. When a child bites or is bitten, a strong emotional response is sure to follow. Children and adults alike may experience overwhelming feelings of fear, anger, frustration, and guilt. Biting by a child of any age cannot be tolerated. It is not safe, socially acceptable, or helpful in creating a positive environment for children.



Biting continued...

Most biting occurs among toddlers who have limited language skills or ways to express their feelings. They also may bite when they have become so frustrated or overly tired that they have lost all control. Pressures to keep pace with a hurried adult world can be very stressful for young children. Children often need more time than adults allow to move from one activity or setting to another: home to preschool, dinnertime to bedtime.

When a child bites, staff will intervene quickly, calmly and firmly. Most often, a child bites because they are out of control, which is very frightening to them. Staff will reassure both the child who bit and the victim. The child who was bit will be comforted and have the bitten area washed with warm soapy water.

Once the child who bit calms down, staff will make sure that the child understands that biting cannot be allowed and that staff will stop it every time. Staff will encourage the child to comfort the victim with words, hugs, or pats. Staff will demonstrate the gentleness and kindness expected.

Staff will assess what led to the biting, evaluate the classroom environment and teach the children alternative actions. Staff will give children words they can use to ask to have a turn with a toy and also suggest acceptable ways a child might express their anger or frustration.

Both children's families will be notified of a biting incident. If a child continues to bite, staff will work with the child and family to ensure the behavior stops. This may include removal from the classroom.

As children turn three, biting is no longer "age appropriate". When a child bites, they will be removed from the classroom and the parent will be called to pick up the child. This is to send a very clear message to the child that they will not be welcome in the classroom if they bite.

Visiting Your Child's Class

Parents are welcome to visit their child's class. The purpose of a classroom visit is to observe your child in the classroom setting. We ask that visits be kept to an appropriate length, so as not to interfere with your child's participation. Classroom visits will not be allowed until all the children in the classroom have settled into the classroom routine. Parents may schedule a visit with Ms. Jamie.

Volunteering in Your Child's Class

Parents are invited to volunteer as a visiting reader beginning in February. It is our hope through your experience you will gain a better understanding of how your child participates in the classroom and provide you with an opportunity to ask more specific questions of your child about their day. Ms. Jamie will make a sign-up sheet available in January.

Parent/Teacher Communication

Keeping an open line of communication between the classroom and home is one way to insure the success of your child in the Gingersnaps class. The staff is always willing to discuss any concerns or comments you may have about your child in the program. Since we follow the primary caregiver system, not everyone will talk with the teacher on a daily basis, but this does not mean that you cannot approach her to discuss an issue.



Child Growth and Development for 18 months to 3-year-olds

This information has been paraphrased from the National Association for the Education of Young Children's, Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs. Each child has their own timetable for growth and development. Not all children behave alike, nor do they all reach the customary stages of development at the same time.

Interest in others

- * Shows increased awareness of being seen and evaluated by others.
- * Sees others as a barrier to immediate gratification.
- * Begins to realize others have rights and privileges.
- * Gains greater enjoyment from peer play and joint exploration.
- * Begins to see benefits of cooperation.
- * Is more aware of feelings of others.
- * Exhibits more impulse control and self-regulation in relation to others.
- * Enjoys small group activities.

Self Awareness

- * Shows strong sense of self as an individual, as evidenced by "no" to adult requests.
- * Experiences self as powerful, potent, creative doer. Explores everything.
- * Becomes capable of self evaluation and has beginning notions of self (good, bad etc.)
- * Uses names of self and others.

Physical development

- * Scribbles with marker or crayon.
- * Walks up and down stairs. Can jump off one step.
- * Kicks a ball.
- * Draws a circle.
- * Stands and walks on tiptoes.

Language development/communication

- * Combines words.
- * Listens to stories for a short while.
- * Has a speaking vocabulary that may reach 200 words.
- * Develops fantasy in language. Begins to play pretend games.
- * Defines use of many household items.
- * Uses compound sentences.
- * Uses adjectives and adverbs. Recounts events of the day.

Physical, spatial and temporal awareness

- * Uses tomorrow, yesterday.
- * Figures out which child is missing by looking at children present.
- * Asserts independence: "Me do it."
- * Puts on simple garments such as cap or slippers.

Expression of feelings

- * Frequently displays aggressive feelings and behaviors.
- * Exhibits contrasting states and mood shifts (stubborn versus compliant).
- * Shows increase fearfulness (of dark, monsters, etc.)
- * Expresses emotions with increasing control.
- * Aware of own feelings and those of others.
- * Shows pride in creation and production.
- * Verbalizes feelings more often. Expresses feelings in symbolic play.
- * Shows empathic concern for others.