



Gingerbread Preschool Classroom Guide

3-year-old



4333 Black Avenue Pleasanton, CA 94566
925-931-3430



Teachers for the 3-year-old classes



Ms. Maureen Doherty

Preschool Teacher, 12 years of service

Education: Elementary Education Degree-University of Delaware, 20 units in Early Childhood Education-Las Positas College, Paralegal Certificate-St. Mary's College

Personal Information: Ms. Maureen and her husband Lex have lived in Pleasanton since 1991. Ms. Maureen and Lex have two sons, Shawn and Brian, who are both married. She is a grandmother to Tommy and Madeline. She enjoys reading, walking and taking trips with her husband.



Ms. Lori Johnson

Preschool Teacher, 12 years of service

Education: Bachelors of Science Degree, Agricultural Business Management Cal Poly

Personal Information: Ms. Lori and her husband Chris have three children, Jessica, Katie and Emma. Lori has horses, dogs and cats and more and lives on a small ranch in Sunol. She likes to work with her horses and spend time with her family.



Ms. Claire Marie McDonald

Preschool Teacher, 4 year of service

Education: Bachelor of Arts Degree in Education/Sociology-San Francisco College for Women

Personal Information: Ms. Claire has two children, Suzanne and Scott. She enjoys gardening, photography and traveling. Ms. Claire has 17 years of experience teaching!

Our Classroom

Our curriculum and classroom routine have been carefully designed to help facilitate your child's growth and development. The class presents a fun hands-on learning experience and supports each child in building competency in social and learning skills.

The three-year-old curriculum is presented through thematic units. Presenting ideas and concepts thematically helps the brain to understand complete concepts. Thematic material is presented and reinforced through a classroom routine which includes activities such as: gathering time, learning activities, outdoor play and snack time. A classroom routine helps children gain skills in a variety of areas which assist them when they enter kindergarten. Each child 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 three-year-old class presents a warm and loving learning environment. Our goal for the three-year-olds is to be able to successfully participate in the classroom routine and to separate from their parent without experiencing separation anxiety by the end of the school year.

The three-year-old classes follow the primary caregiver system for each child. With three staff members in the room, the children are divided equally amongst the staff. By using this system, each staff member has the opportunity to make close connections with "their" children and "their" families.

Dress Code

Please send your child in PLAY CLOTHES. We do a lot of outdoor activities that include running, jumping and stretching which can be inhibited by the child's clothing. In addition to outdoor play, your child will be working with materials like paint, markers, play dough and other "messy" items that could end up on their clothes. This should be an environment where your child doesn't have to worry about getting "dirty". Please remember that children must wear closed-toed shoes.

Coming To / Leaving School

Upon entering the classroom at drop-off, your child will be asked to check in with their primary caregiver. This will consist of exchanging greetings with the staff and their peers, the child will be instructed to put their personal items in their cubby and then proceed to the carpet with their primary group. During this drop-off time, it is also an opportunity for parents to share information with their child's primary caregiver that might be helpful for staff, such as if they had a difficult morning, didn't get enough sleep or if they did something special over the weekend. This information will allow staff to support your child throughout the day and engage in conversation with them about their life outside of school.

At pick-up, collect your child's file folder from the wall pocket located in the lobby and sign on the appropriate date. Proceed to the classroom and hand the file folder to the designated staff member. Your child should then say "good-bye" to the staff and collect any items in their cubby.

Learning Activities

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

In the dramatic play area children learn to improvise and use items in a symbolic way to represent something else - this is abstract thinking. They also try on different roles and work to solve social problems through negotiation with friends.

Learning Activities continued...

Sensory Activity

During sensory activities children learn new vocabulary, concepts of texture, color, weight and size and they learn to observe likenesses and differences. These are pre-reading, math and science skills.

Manipulatives

During manipulative play children learn hand-eye coordination, symmetry, shapes, order, design and they learn to make and repeat patterns. These are pre-math skills. They also use their fine motor skills to manipulate legos, beads etc., which helps to develop hand muscles that are critical for writing.

Science

During science children use fine motor skills and tactile senses. They learn about real-life situations and experiences, cause and effect, experimentation, questioning and logic.

Arts and Crafts

Children use their imagination, creativity and express feelings during this time. They interact with staff and learn to follow instructions. They learn relationships of space and size, concepts of symmetry, balance and design. These are foundational pre-math and pre-reading skills.

Me Binder

During learning activities your child may create something to place in their Me Binder. Me Binders stay at school and are sent home the last week of school. The Me Binder will serve to help you and your child reflect on their Gingerbread Preschool experience.

Gathering (Circle) Time

Gathering (circle) time is an intensive learning time for the children. Gathering time is held at the beginning and end of the class time. It is important to bring your child on time so they do not miss an opportunity to be assigned a special responsibility for the day. Children participate in a variety of learning activities as well as work on developing attention span. At the beginning of the school year, Gathering time is typically 10-15 minutes and by the end of the school year it is up to 30 minutes.

Group Discussion

Group discussion is a time when the teacher greets the children, discusses what they will be doing that day and possibly asks the children to respond to a question. This allows the children to practice raising their hand, waiting their turn, and having their comments be valued by the teacher and the group.

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. These are foundational skills for reading.

Music Time

During music time, children are exposed to a variety of songs, poems and musical instruments. They learn principles of music and rhythm, vocabulary, memory skills, sequencing, and auditory discrimination (recognizing different sounds) - these are foundational skills for reading and math.

Gathering (Circle) Time continued...

Surprise Bag (Sharing)

Sharing helps increase children's socialization and language skills. It provides an opportunity for children to share part of their world-what they like, what they know, what they found, and how they feel. As they share something of themselves with one another, they gain confidence in becoming the focus of the group's attention, develop speaking skills, and find others are interested in them. They discover there are things they know about and they learn to feel good about themselves. Sharing requires use of critical and creative thinking processes.

Sharing is done with a Sharing Bag. Children take the sharing bag home, on a rotating basis, and bring back to class the next class session to share with the entire class. With the help of their parents, children will select an item from home, place it in the bag and bring to class for sharing. Please do not include valuable items or play weapons. If a child forgets to return the bag, an extra one will be available. Each child will have several opportunities to take the sharing bag home.

Community Helpers

Community Helpers represents a variety of "jobs" that need to be completed by the children each day. Children are selected on a rotating basis; if a child is absent, they may miss their turn. Community Helper "jobs" include: Door Holder, Line Leader, Bell Ringer, Plant care taker, Class Pet sitter. The class pet is a stuffed animal that will become the class mascot. The children will select a name for the mascot and each day a child will be responsible for making sure it is cared for. In addition, each day three children will be selected on a rotating basis to have snack at a special table with the teacher. Sharing in these jobs will allow children to take a leadership role in the class, feel successful for completing their task and develop their social and emotional skills, as well as establish positive self-esteem.

Yoga

Yoga is used during transition times such as coming in from our time outside, we wash hands and gather on the carpet. This is a time to focus on breathing and calming the body to help each child learn the skill of self-regulation.

Outside Play

We view outside play as an extension of the classroom. Children will be able to self select their own play activity as well as experience group games such as relay races and parachute play.

Snack Time

At snack time your child will practice their social, language and communication skills. Occasionally children will have the opportunity to assemble their own snack. This activity introduces "cooking" at a preschool level. Through this experience children are practicing pre-math (measuring), pre-reading (sequencing), and science skills (cause and effect).

Snacks are primarily healthy foods that children enjoy such as oranges, apples and a variety of crackers. Occasionally sweets will be served during special celebrations and if it relates to the curriculum. Water is served at each snack time. 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 communication skills.

Visiting Your Child's Class

Parents are welcome at any time 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, up to 30 minutes, so as not to interfere with your child's participation in activities. Parents may begin visiting classes after the second week of class of each quarter. Please make an appointment with your child's teacher and remember to check-in at the preschool office.

Volunteering in Your Child's Class

Parents are invited to volunteer in their child's classroom. It is our hope that 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.

Parents are asked to volunteer for the entire class session. Parents will be interacting with all children in the classroom and assisting with a variety of activities, such as crafts, reading books, building blocks. Parents will not be responsible for dealing with toileting, injuries/illness, or "discipline". Parents may not bring another child with them while volunteering without the teachers permission.

Once the staff feels that the routine for both the children and the teachers is established, we will welcome volunteers into the classroom. This will usually occur sometime in January. A calendar will be posted in the classroom listing the time and dates that we would like you to come in. You will be asked to work at a table doing an activity with a small group of children or to come in to read a book to the entire class. Please sign up for whatever activity you feel most comfortable doing.

Parent/Teacher Communication

Keeping an open line of communication between the classroom and the home is one way to insure the success of your child in the class. The staff is always willing to discuss any concerns or comments that you have about your child or the program. The teacher will make available her email address at the start of the school year so that you have a couple of options to communicate, either face to face or with your computer.

Since we do follow the primary caregiver model, not everyone will talk with the head teacher on a daily basis, but this does not mean that you cannot approach her to discuss an issue. We do work as a team within the room, so the assistants will always keep the teacher informed whenever there is an issue with a child.

Special Activities

Fall Gathering

During the fall the three-year-olds host their parents at a Fall Gathering. This is a half hour event at the beginning of your child's class. Children work during the week prior, preparing a special program and snack for you. The GB Press Newsletter will list the date for your child's Gathering.

Visiting Readers

During Read to Your Child Week (January), parents are welcome to sign up in their child's classroom to be a visiting reader. This is on a first-come, first-serve basis. You may bring one of your child's favorite books to share or your child's teacher will select one for you.