

Gingerbread Preschool



Program Guide



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



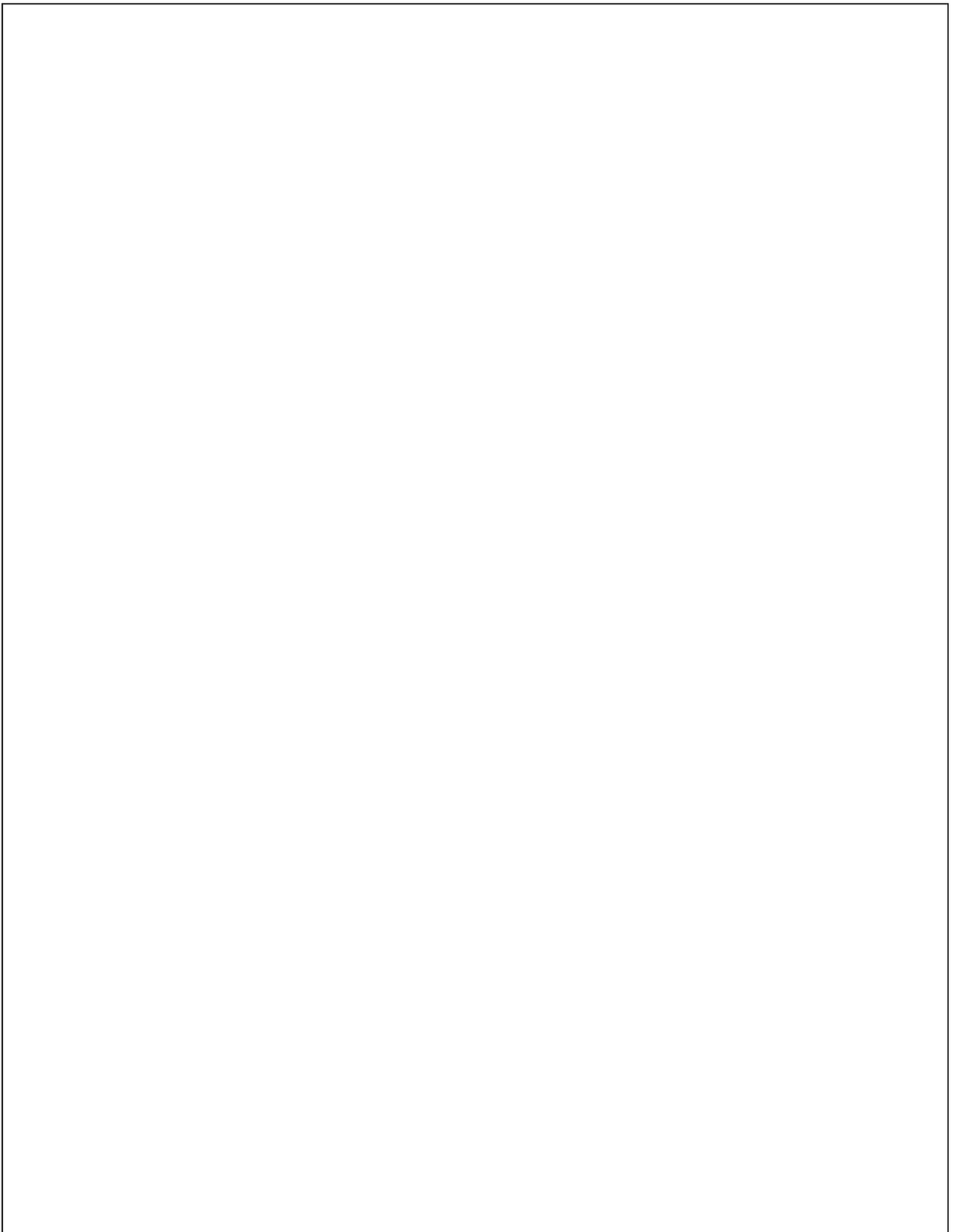


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**We find delight
in the
beauty and happiness
of children
that make the heart
too big for the body.**

-Ralph Waldo Emerson-

Gingerbread Preschool

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Gingerbread Preschool Administrative Team

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Program oversight, Supervision of Staff, Staff Training, Friends of Gingerbread Liaison, Parent Education, Classroom Observations, Special Needs, Parent Concerns

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Registration, Customer Service



Welcome to Gingerbread Preschool!

I hope your experience with our program will be enjoyable for both you and your child. At Gingerbread, your child will learn through play and hands-on exploration. It is our hope to instill an enthusiasm and love of learning that will serve as a foundation in the years to come.

This is a special time in your child's life, and at Gingerbread we want to help you and your child enjoy and treasure each moment!

As an Early Childhood educator for 17 years, I have come to share many strong beliefs about children and families.

I believe that a child's parent is their first and foremost teacher. Parents today are under a great amount of pressure to provide the best for their child and to get their children "ready" for school. Our message for you is to relax and be in the moment with your child. Focus on what your child needs and resist the pressure to push or rush your child to accomplish things they are not ready for.

I believe that children learn through play. Play is critical for the development of the whole child: physical, emotional, social and cognitive development. Children need daily routines, and opportunities for structured play as well as several hours a day of unstructured play and outdoor playtime.

I believe that each child's development cannot be rushed. They will develop according to their own timetable. This must be honored and protected.

I am excited about what this school year holds for each child and family joining us at Gingerbread! If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to stop in and see any of the Administrative Team at the Preschool Office.

Ms. Becky



“Far more beautiful things happen when we stand back and let children do.”

~ Kerri Krout, Early Childhood Educator ~

Our Program

Gingerbread Preschool has over a 40-year history in the Pleasanton Community. The program is provided through the City of Pleasanton Community Services Department. It is a part-time, recreational program, which is not required to be licensed by the State. (The Department of Social Services, Child Care Licensing exempts any preschool program, offered by a city recreation department, providing that it is not daycare.)

Our program provides children with an opportunity to experience a classroom setting prior to kindergarten. This experience may be the first time your child has participated in an activity independent of you. We believe participation in our program allows your child to successfully adjust to this newfound independence without being overwhelmed.

Our program is not a parent cooperative program and parents are not present in the classroom on a regular basis. This is purposeful; as one of our goals for your child is to be able to successfully separate from you, participate fully in the classroom routine and then happily reunite with you at the end of class. We provide a parent participation activity each quarter and the parent volunteer program begins in January. Parents may arrange with their child's teacher for any additional classroom visits throughout the school year.

Our program day is structured and requires children to participate as a member of the classroom community during specific times: gathering time, snack time and outdoor play. We also provide an opportunity for children to select activities they wish to participate in. For example, your child may love to play with blocks and play with them for several weeks before he/she moves on to the arts and crafts table. We allow each child to move at their own developmental pace while gently encouraging them to try new things when they are ready.

Many parents send their child to preschool so they will be "ready" for kindergarten. We believe that our developmentally appropriate approach to Early Childhood Education will provide a foundation from which each child will enjoy success in future learning.

Honoring Our Young Children: A Statement of Beliefs

(excerpts taken from "Early Years Summit: Preschool-Kindergarten Collaboration Makes a Difference" Young Children Publication, - January 2003)

Gingerbread Preschool has adopted a Statement of Beliefs originally drafted by Russ Firlik, Ed.D of South School in New Canaan, Connecticut. This Statement of Beliefs is the cornerstone of our program; development of these skills are the goal as we teach and nurture your child. It is important to remember that each child has their own timetable and matures at their own rate, and in their own way. Not all children behave alike, nor do they all reach the customary stages of development at the same time.

Early Childhood (0-8 years of age) is a special time of wonder, imagination, and discovery. Young children need knowledge and new experiences to develop and thrive. The early years mark a period of rapid change in the ways children think about themselves and the world around them. Too much exposure to television, computer games, and organized activities rob children of their childhood and may produce the *hurried child* syndrome (Elkind 2001). Additionally, too much exposure to formal academics early in a child's development may cause a child to grow resistant to the excitement of learning.

Honoring Our Young Children: A Statement of Beliefs Continued...

As educators of young children, we value childhood and want to keep it protected. It is imperative for us to ensure that children develop the skills and acquire the knowledge needed to provide them with a firm foundation for their later years. Toward that end, we endorse and value the following skills, knowledge, and experiences as appropriate goals for young children entering kindergarten.

Social-emotional Skills

To be successful in a kindergarten classroom, children need to be able to: exert self-control when frustrated, listen, follow directions, be polite, take turns, carry out self-help routines without direct supervision, and begin to read nonverbal language.

Children's social skills directly affect the quality and success of their school experiences. Young children construct understanding by interacting with others and with their environment. Throughout the early childhood years, educators emphasize sensitivity to the feelings of others, kindness, patience, and cooperation. These social-emotional competencies are best achieved through play and play-related activities.

Communication Skills

Communication and language skills are critical to children's social, emotional, and cognitive well-being. Throughout the early childhood years, we encourage children to develop increasingly sophisticated language skills through social interactions, dramatic play, and age-appropriate activities.

To communicate effectively, children must be able to determine appropriate conversational tone and volume, advocate for themselves, employ situation-appropriate vocabulary for putting feelings into words, be mannerly without prompting, and use language to discuss activities and events.

Self-help Skills

Children gain confidence and self-esteem as they become more independent. Throughout the early years, children should master important self-help skills, including the ability to:

- recognize teachers and other children by name
- respect property and materials that belong to others
- manage their own clothing, including buttons, zippers, and snaps
- wash hands and use the bathroom independently
- manage snacks independently

Fine and Gross Motor Skills

Educational progress hinges largely upon the acquisition of fine and gross motor skills. Proper diet, adequate rest, and good physical health habits go far in helping to set the stage for early success in these skills. Young children need exposure to a variety of rich activities designed to help them:

- develop large muscles, including upper-body strength
- experience skipping, jumping, hopping, climbing, and balancing
- play for exploration, imagination, and enjoyment
- develop awareness of personal space while walking, running, and playing
- use comfortable but proper grip when using crayons, markers, and pencils
- use scissors properly and safely
- experience a variety of art materials

Honoring Our Young Children: A Statement of Beliefs Continued...

Language Readiness Skills

A child's approach to learning is central to his or her success in school. Curiosity and the desire to learn come from positive, age-appropriate experiences in the arts and sciences. Throughout early childhood, children need to develop the ability to listen to and comprehend a story being read aloud. Children also need to develop the language and thinking ability necessary to retell and sequence a story. Recognizing and generating rhymes in games, songs and poetry form the foundation for understanding rhythms and patterns in language. Young children are ready to acquire familiarity with upper and lowercase letters and develop the ability to solve problems.

Dealing with Separation Anxiety

We want your child to love coming to school and can't wait to hear them say "I don't want to go home!" Coming to/leaving school develops your child's social and emotional skills. Specifically, your child is learning to "separate and attach" "Separation issues are lifelong and children learn to deal with them as they become increasingly autonomous." (Reiss 1984)

When children have difficulty separating they may experience separation anxiety. "Separation has three stages: protest, despair, and adjustment or emotional detachment. A child may suffer for a few hours or as long as ten days." (Reiss 1984) As children work through these stages they will begin the attachment process. When they are ready, they will begin to bond with their teachers and classmates and find comfort in the classroom routine. Children often re-experience separation anxiety after holiday breaks, illness, or when returning to school after summer break.

No one knows or loves your child better than you! We respect the trust you have placed in us to care for and teach your child. Parents must first deal with their own separation anxiety; your child will know if you are anxious about leaving them. Be consistent, bring them to school every day, even if they protest. Decide on how you will say goodbye and do it the same way each day.

Leave after you say goodbye, even if your child is crying. Linger and saying goodbye over and over only intensifies the feelings of separation. Our staff will comfort crying children and take your child from you if needed. On the first day of school parents may stay up to 30 minutes, the second day up to 15 minutes and on the third day parents will drop off, say goodbye and leave. Staff will let parents know if their child is having continued difficulty with separation. You may call the preschool office at any time to check on your child. Parents often feel bad for the staff if they leave while their child is crying. Staff is trained and prepared to help your child through the stages of separation, knowing that once the process begins, a smiling face will soon follow.



What does
Developmentally Appropriate mean?

Honoring each child's timetable for
growth... physically, emotionally,
cognitively and socially.

Gingerbread Preschool Staff

Staff Ratios

Our program provides a ratio of one (1) staff to every eight (8) children. This 1:8 ratio is in accordance with the National Association for the Education of Young Children Guidelines. Although we are exempt from licensing, we do comply with the staffing ratios required for state and government funded facilities.

Gingersnaps provide one (1) staff for every four (4) children at all times. Each staff member is assigned four children for whom they are the 'primary caregiver'. Additional support staff is also available throughout the day.

Qualification

We adhere to State Licensing and the City of Pleasanton's hiring practices. We look for people who enjoy working with young children and who work as a team to develop a loving, developmentally appropriate environment. Each teacher must have a minimum of twelve (12) semester units in Early Childhood Education and be certified in CPR and First Aid. All staff are fingerprinted and processed through the Department of Justice. The Gingerbread staff receives ongoing professional development through on-site workshops and off-site professional growth activities. Gingerbread staff will receive 40 hours of professional development and in-class technical support during the school year.

Gingerbread Preschool staff directory

Messages may be left for any staff member via the phone at (925) 931-3430, via e-mail at gingerbread@cityofpleasantonca.gov or your teacher's e-mail address. When leaving/sending a message, please state the staff members name, your child's name and classroom.

Communication between Parent and Teacher

The relationship between the parents and staff are critical to your child's success at Gingerbread. It is important for parents and staff to establish a good working relationship early on in the school year. Finding a good time for both parent and staff to talk may be difficult. However, the staff is typically available at the end of each class to discuss with you any concerns, questions or comments you may have regarding your child's participation in the classroom. At any time you may leave a message for staff at (925) 931-3430 and they will return your call as soon as possible.

When speaking to your child's teacher it is helpful to ask specific questions regarding your child's abilities in the classroom setting. For example, "Does Bobby participate in the group activities? How long is his attention span at circle time? Does he play well with the other children?" This will assist the teacher to specifically address any questions or concerns. Some communications tools available to parents are the GB Newsletter, Room Parent Email Tree, reminders on sign-out folders, notices in the preschool lobby, GB website and the Red Cards.

Gingerbread Preschool Staff continued...

Primary Care Giver System

A primary care giver system is a relationship-based approach in which staff develops a rapport with both child and parent. Each child/family is randomly assigned to a staff member who is principally responsible for that child. This means that the staff member is intentional in engaging with the child to build a relationship/attachment and also observes the child throughout the day and is able to engage in conversation with parents about their child's daily experience in the classroom. Sometimes a child may form a close attachment to a staff member that is not their primary care giver. In such an instance, to ensure that each child is comfortable and connected, staff may make a change in a primary care giver assignment. If there are concerns regarding a child, the classroom teacher will communicate with the parent.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

The teaching staff does not conduct parent/teacher conferences or give recommendations to parents regarding their child's "readiness" for kindergarten. Throughout the year, your child's teacher will send items home and informally discuss with you your child's progress. Our goal is to always support your child and family to meet your child's needs. Staff will speak to parents if they feel a child is having difficulty in the classroom. However, if you feel your child is not progressing as they should, speak with your child's teacher. Your child's teacher will refer you to the Recreation Supervisor to discuss additional evaluation options. We believe in early intervention to ensure each child reaches their greatest potential. If staff or parents have concerns regarding a child, they may request: the Recreation Supervisor to consider conducting a classroom observation of the child, implementing Ages and Stages Questionnaire or a "Team Meeting" (Teacher, Parents and Recreation Supervisor).

Ages and Stages Questionnaire

The Ages and Stages Questionnaire(ASQ) is a developmental screening tool. Each questionnaire contains 30 developmental items organized into five areas: Communication, Gross Motor, Fine Motor, Problem Solving, and Personal-Social. In October, an ASQ will be given to you to complete with your child and return to the Preschool Office. Staff will then use the information from the questionnaire to support their activity choices in the classroom to individually support your child's learning and development. If any areas of concern are identified in the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ) staff will discuss them with you.

Americans with Disabilities Act

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the City of Pleasanton encourages those with disabilities to participate in its programs. Gingerbread Preschool is a program of the Community Services Department and thus we provide inclusion for those who may have special needs. We believe this allows an opportunity for our participants to include those who may be different from themselves. If your child has a life threatening allergy, medical condition, developmental disability, or other special need requiring accommodation, it is helpful if parents contact the preschool office prior to the first day of school to ensure that your child's needs are met. Additional information regarding our accommodation process is available by contacting the Recreation Supervisor at (925) 931-3432.

A Diverse Community

Gingerbread Preschool is a diverse community. We respect all cultures and faiths and actively celebrate our children and their families. The diversity personified in our classroom represents the community of Pleasanton. We want to share this image of Pleasanton with our participants and instill values of respect and acceptance for all.

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, they 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.

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 check in with your child's primary care giver. 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 a staff member to let them know your child has arrived.

To pick up your child, collect your child's file folder from the wall pocket located in the lobby. The file folder is color coded to match the classroom color your child is attending. 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 the designated staff member. **Once a parent has signed a child out, it is the parent's responsibility to safely monitor and escort their child out of the classroom, through the security door and into the parking lot.** If you need to pick your child up early or if you wish to observe your child, please check-in with the preschool office first and receive a visitor's sticker.

Staff may require any individual picking up a child to provide identification. Staff will not release your child to anyone who is not listed on your Release Authorization Waiver and Assumption of Risk Form. Special Instruction Cards (RED Cards) are available in the front office to complete if someone other than a parent is picking up your child or if you would like the teacher to call you for any reason. This should be given to staff at the beginning of class time. If there is an emergency, and someone who is not on your list needs to pick your child up, you must contact us by phone at 931-3430 (press 3, then press 1). When calling, give the full name and a physical description of the individual and instruct them to bring a State Driver's License or a State Identification Card.



*“If I try to be like him,
who will be like me?”
~ Yiddish Proverb ~*

Bathroom Time

Children learn personal hygiene and independence skills when taking a trip to the bathroom at preschool. Staff reinforces the importance of hand washing and children learn to care for their own needs.

Children with pants that are wet/soiled by a bowel movement on a regular basis will be considered not fully potty-trained. Staff will confer with parents regarding the child's readiness for the program.

Staff are required to escort children to the bathroom, stand in the hallway with the bathroom door open and, as needed, verbally coach the children through the toileting process, assist children with snaps and zippers and make sure that all children wash and dry their hands. Staff then escort the children back to class.

Generally, staff will not enter a bathroom stall when it is occupied. Sometimes however, it will be necessary for staff to enter a bathroom stall in order to change or re-dress a child. If a child is in need of such assistance, staff will ask a second adult to be an "observer".

Children with wet pants will be escorted to the bathroom, their wet clothes placed in a plastic bag, and given dry clothing. Children with pants soiled by a bowel movement will be escorted to the bathroom, coached as to how to clean themselves and given clean clothing. The soiled pants are placed in a plastic bag. A parent will be called to return to school to clean their child if staff is unsuccessful in the coaching process or the child becomes upset. Parents are to wash the school clothing and return them the next class day.

Participant Behavior

A main goal of our program is for each child to have an enjoyable and quality experience at preschool. A contributing factor is the individual child's participation, which must follow certain behavior guidelines and general rules in order that the entire group can function together.

It is important to understand that children come to us from many different backgrounds and a variety of parenting styles. Within each age group there is a wide spectrum of physical, cognitive, emotional and social development. Children in preschool are just beginning to learn and refine these skills.

At times, there may be conflict in the classroom, either between children and possibly between the teacher and child. These are "teachable" moments in which staff will guide children towards learning how to express themselves and communicate their needs, desires and wishes. Teachers encourage the development of skills including: use of appropriate "inside" voices, respect for one another, taking turns and sharing.

The role of staff in the classrooms is one of providing guidance. This is a process which includes modeling appropriate behavior, positive reinforcement and redirection. If the behavior deems it necessary, the "process" may include removal of the child from the classroom or being sent home for the day.

Participant Behavior continued...

When a child is demonstrating inappropriate behavior or is involved in a conflict with another child, staff will document this behavior in an Incident/Injury Form. The parents of all children involved will be asked to acknowledge their child's behavior by signing the Incident/Injury Form. If the severity or frequency of the behavior is deemed detrimental to others or to the staff's ability to implement the program, a conference may be scheduled with the Recreation Supervisor.

Dismissal Policy

It is our goal to work in partnership with parents to address areas of concern regarding your child. Parents will be informed of any problem or concern by staff. Staff will work with parents to determine a plan of action towards a resolution. If the problem continues, a conference will be scheduled with the Recreation Supervisor to discuss all possible options, one of which may be dismissal from the program.

Your child may be dismissed from the program if:

- Staff determines that the preschool experience is too stressful for your child.
- Staff determines your child's behavior is having an adverse effect on the classroom routine and participants.
- Discipline or behavior problems are requiring excessive staff time or added staff is necessary for one-to-one attention for more than two continuous weeks.
- Your child has frequent bathroom accidents over an extended period.
- Your child is not signed-out on a daily basis.
- Continued tardiness in picking up your child.
- Failure to comply with the school Health and Wellness Policies.
- Failure to complete and return the required paperwork.
- Failure to comply with parking lot procedures.
- Nonpayment of registration and late fees.
- Inappropriate or unauthorized use of Gingerbread Families personal information.

Health & Wellness Policy

The goal of the Health and Wellness Policy is to prevent and reduce the spread of communicable illnesses among children, their families and staff. Parents, staff and children must work cooperatively to ensure that everyone remains healthy.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE/WELLNESS CHECK

School Attendance

Participant's school attendance is monitored by the Preschool Office. Staff take attendance each class session. If a child is noted absent and the school has not been notified regarding a Planned Absence or an Unplanned Absence/Illness, the Preschool Office may contact a family regarding the absence.

Planned Absence

If you know in advance that your child will be absent from class due to an appointment, vacation, etc. Please write on your child's sign out folder on the dates they will be absent. For example: "appointment" or "vacation". In addition, verbally notify your child's primary care staff person of your child's planned absence.

Health & Wellness Policy continued...

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE/WELLNESS CHECK continued...

Unplanned Absence/Illness

If your child is absent, parents should contact our Preschool Office via email at gingerbread@cityofpleasantonca.gov or call (925) 931-3430 to report your child's absence. When contacting the Preschool Office, provide the following information:

- Your child's name
- Your child's class day/time/teacher
- Reason for absence
- If absence is related to an illness:
 - What is the specific illness/symptoms?
 - Has child been seen by a physician?

Wellness Check

If a child has been absent for two (2) consecutive class periods, the Preschool Office may contact the family to inquire regarding the child's absence. This is to ensure that the child is not ill with a communicable disease in which notification to other families may be necessary.

HYGIENE

Hand Washing

We are committed to teaching your child proper personal hygiene. Hand washing is an important activity throughout the day at preschool. Before class begins, all children are required to wash their hands in the preschool bathroom or classroom. While liquid hand sanitizers are available throughout the preschool facility, these are intended for adult use. The most effective way to kill germs is by using soap and water. Children will also wash their hands after using the bathroom, before eating snack and after playing outside on the playground. We also encourage the children to wash their hands in the classroom as is necessary.

Cleaning

The preschool facility is cleaned daily by a professional custodial service. During program hours, preschool staff disinfect each toilet seat after it has been used and wipe down bathroom toilet and sink surfaces as well. In the classroom, staff cleans the tables throughout the day and disinfects the tables with a bleach and water solution before and after snack time. Three times a year preschool staff deep cleans the classrooms, washing all furniture, cleaning the area rugs and sanitizing all the toys. If there is an accident in the classroom in which an area is soiled, it is immediately cleaned or the carpet removed to be cleaned. If a communicable illness is reported that requires special cleaning by County Health, the classroom is closed and cleaned according to the proper guidelines and then is re-opened.

WELLNESS

For many children, this is the first time that they are participating in a large group setting of other children their age and they will be exposed to a variety of "new germs" and may become ill, notwithstanding hygiene practices. Your child must build up their immunity to these "new germs", this is part of "getting ready for elementary school".



*“Red paint in the hair?
Blue paint on the jeans?
Sand in the shoes?
Peanut butter on the favorite shirt?
White socks that look brown?
Sleeves a little bit damp?
Your child probably worked with a friend,
solved a problem, created a masterpiece,
learned a new skill, developed new
language, and had a great time! “*

~ OPTIONS Summer 1995 Newsletter ~

Health & Wellness Policy continued...

WELLNESS continued...

Sleep

Getting enough sleep is critical for your child's proper brain and body development. It is also a key factor in helping your child be able to fight off illness. Children who do not get the proper amount of sleep may often show reduced coordination and reaction time which makes them more likely to get injured. Additional concerns are difficulty paying attention, reduced memory retention, increased irritability, frustration and difficulty controlling their emotions.

The recommended amount of sleep changes as your child grows.

2-4 years of age need 11-13 hours of sleep a day

4-7 years of age need 10-12 hours of sleep a day

Nutrition

Children should always eat before coming to preschool. It is important for them to have nutritious food to energize them and enable them to actively participate. Although a snack is provided, it is not substantial enough to replace a meal.

Immunizations

A record of immunizations or a Personal Beliefs Against Immunization Affidavit is required at the time you register your child in the Gingerbread Preschool Program. Participants who are not immunized may be temporarily excluded from the program in the case of an outbreak of a communicable disease for the child's protection. Exclusion will be determined by the City of Pleasanton in accordance with Federal, State and County recommendations.

EXCLUSION FROM PROGRAM DUE TO ILLNESS

Children are to stay home when they have the following diagnosis or symptoms:

- Diagnosis of communicable diseases such as conjunctivitis, strep throat, chicken pox, measles, pin worms, ringworm, lice, meningitis, pertussis/whooping cough, and the flu. Report any communicable illness to the Preschool Office (925)931-3430 or gingerbread@cityofpleasantonca.gov
- Fever, your child must be fever free for 24 hours, without the use of fever reducing medication.
- Strep infection - child must be on antibiotics for 24 hours before they may return to class.
- A cough with mucus secretion (a wet wheezy cough).
- A rash or skin ailment such as: poison oak, impetigo, ringworm, cold sores or fever blisters.
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Pink eye or conjunctivitis. Your child must be on medication for 24 hours before returning to school.

Removal from the Classroom

A staff member may remove a child from the classroom if they are presenting symptoms of an illness. Parents or guardians may be required to pick-up their child within a reasonably short period of time after being notified of the illness, and the child may be isolated from others while waiting to be picked-up. Parents or guardians may be required to provide certification from the child's doctor that the child is allowed to return to the preschool.

Health & Wellness Policy continued...

EXCLUSION FROM PROGRAM DUE TO ILLNESS continued...

Health epidemic

In the case of a health epidemic, the City of Pleasanton/Gingerbread Preschool may revise or add additional requirements to the Health and Wellness Policy and families will receive an Exclusion Addendum, specifically addressing the health epidemic.

Advising Parents/Guardians of a Reported Communicable Disease

Written notice is given only to the class or classroom affected. Once a communicable disease has been reported to the preschool, the affected class or classroom will receive a written notice attached to the child's sign-out folder and the notice will also be e-mailed to the family and or mailed.

LIFE THREATENING FOOD ALLERGY/MEDICAL CONDITION

The City of Pleasanton/Gingerbread Preschool accommodate children with life threatening food allergies/medical conditions using a team approach with parents, classroom staff and preschool administration in order to ensure each child's safety. All staff are EpiPen® trained and receive general training regarding food allergies and safety precautions annually.

A parent of any child who has a life-threatening allergy/medical condition must complete an Emergency Action Plan for Life Threatening Allergy/Medical Condition Form. Constant communication between parents and staff regarding planned activities, snacks and ingredients is necessary. Parents should notify staff if they have any concerns regarding the scheduled snack. Parents are always welcome in the kitchen to review food labels.

All medications, prescription and over the counter medications, must be provided to the preschool in their original packaging, with the child's full name and dosage written on the container and placed in a zip lock bag. A measuring spoon or cup must be included. Any child, who requires medication for life saving measures, may not attend the program without that said medication on site.

Safety Policies and Procedures

Fire Drills

Fire drills are held twice a year. Teachers prepare children during the first circle time for the drill. Each class is assigned an evacuation route. Once everyone is out of the building, staff takes roll call and plays games with children until the "all clear" signal is given to reenter the building. If a false alarm occurs during drop off/pick up time, parents are to follow the instructions of preschool staff and evacuate the building. Once the alarm has been sounded, staff is required to follow evacuation procedures, even if it is a false alarm.

Building Security

We have implemented several measures to ensure the safety of the children and staff. The entries into the preschool from the lobby are locked at all times and accessible by key or to be "buzzed" in. The back door of the building remains locked from the outside at all times. The door is only left open if a staff member is loading/unloading in the back parking lot. The front doors to the facility remain unlocked during program hours. These doors are locked only if there is no staff scheduled to supervise the lobby area. A green doorbell may be found to the left of the door for parents to gain entrance if the building is locked. All parents and visitors must check-in at the preschool office to receive a visitor's sticker.

Safety Policies and Procedures continued...

Personal Information/Privacy

The email address, provided at the time of registration, is intended to be used for official Gingerbread Preschool, Friends of Gingerbread, and City of Pleasanton business. Those who are authorized to send information on behalf of the Gingerbread Preschool/City of Pleasanton are the Friends of Gingerbread Preschool (FOG) Parent Board, Room Parents, and Gingerbread/City of Pleasanton Staff.

Photograph and Video Taping

Your child will be photographed/videotaped while in attendance at Gingerbread Preschool. These photos/video tapes may be used for classroom projects or in promotional materials for Gingerbread Preschool and the City of Pleasanton. Parents may take photographs and videotape for personal use only.

Administrative Policies

Parking Lot

Class times have been purposely staggered in order to help alleviate overcrowding in the parking lot. Overflow parking is available at the Aquatic Center. Preschool staff park off-site to provide more parking spaces for participants.

Please be considerate of other parents when dropping off and picking up your child and leave as promptly as possible. This will allow parents in the next class time to find parking.

When entering the parking lot, **please drive slowly**, be cautious of pedestrians walking down the driveway and through the parking lot. At the end of the driveway, before entering the parking lot, please stop at the stop sign to make sure a parking space is available. Yield to vehicles exiting the parking lot. Parking is available at the back of the building. You may not block another vehicle or park illegally in any of the red zones, handicap parking spaces or in the cross walk area. The driveway (red zone) must be able to provide access to emergency vehicles at all times. **Never leave children unattended in a vehicle at any time.**

On special event days and parents days, please park at the Aquatic Center to alleviate overcrowding in the Gingerbread Preschool parking lot.

Late Fee

If a child is picked up late, a late fee of \$1.00 per minute will be assessed. You will receive a late fee invoice from your child's teacher which must be paid to the preschool office by the next class time. Continued lateness in picking up your child may lead to dismissal from the program.

Refunds

Patron requested refunds are given if requested no later than ten (10) days prior to the first class meeting each quarter. Refund request after this time, but at least five (5) days prior to the start of the class will be assessed a \$5.00 administrative fee per program/activity. Full refunds will be given for any class cancelled by the Community Services Department. No refunds will be issued for requests received less than five (5) prior to the start of the class or program.

Patrons purchase a space in the program by the quarter. Portions of a quarter cannot be purchased separately.



“Each of us shines in a different way, but this doesn’t make our light less bright.”

~unknown~

Administrative Policies continued...

Distribution of Information/Flyers/Cards, etc.

Nothing is allowed to be distributed by hand, attached to sign-out file folders, or in the children's cubbies, that is not approved by the preschool and related to preschool or City business.

Payment Plan

Parents may select the Payment Plan option to pay tuition. To participate in the Payment Plan, an agreement must be signed at the time of registration for each quarter. The Payment Plan agreement lists dates that each payment is due. **Parents will not be sent a bill or reminder in the mail. VISA and MASTERCARD payments ARE NOT automatically charged against your account.** Each payment must be individually authorized. Credit Card payments are to be made in person, by phone, fax or online on or before the due date. If payment is not received on the due date by 3:00 p.m., a \$25.00 late fee will be charged.

Late Payment Fee

A fee of \$25.00 will be charged for quarterly and payment plan fees that are received after the payment deadline. Failure to pay this fee will forfeit your child's space in the program.

Return Check Fee

A check that is returned from the bank with insufficient funds will incur a \$10.00 fee. The \$10.00 fee must be paid separately by cash or money order. Subsequent payments may be made with credit card, check, cash or money order.

Re-registration Information

Once your child is enrolled, you will be given first priority to re-register (Priority Registration) for the next quarter. Re-registration is completed once the preschool office has received a payment for the upcoming quarter.

Wait List

If you are currently enrolled in a class, and wish to be transferred to a different class, you must complete a Wait List Form at the Preschool Office. As spaces become available, those on the Wait List are accommodated in the order that they were received. All transfers are made at the Recreation Supervisor's discretion.

Gifts

It is against City policy for staff to accept gifts from our participants. The Friends of Gingerbread Preschool, on behalf of the entire student body, provides several special luncheons, professional development opportunities and gifts throughout the year to let the staff know they are appreciated. If you would like to give a donation towards these activities or volunteer to help with one of the activities, please contact the preschool office at 931-3430. If you feel it is necessary to give a personal gift, your child may make a card, picture or baked-good to show their appreciation.

Special Activities

Birthdays

Birthday celebrations validate the uniqueness of each child and contribute to the development of a strong self-image. Every child is invited to celebrate their birthday at school, whether or not it is on their actual birthday. Parents are asked to pick a date and put your child's name on the class calendar. Only one child per day celebrates their birthday as this keeps it "special" to your child. The sign-up is on a "first-come, first-serve basis". If you want a certain date and it is taken, select the next available date. When your child comes to school on the day you designated for their celebration, he/she will receive a birthday crown that they will be able to take home and the children in the classroom will sing Happy Birthday to your child.

NO PARTY FAVOR BAGS AND NO FOOD is allowed to be brought into the classroom.

If any such items are brought, staff is not allowed to give these items to the children or send them home with the children. If you would like to do something special for your child's class, you may donate a book to the classroom library. Your child may bring the book wrapped, open the gift during circle time and present it to the teacher.

NO BIRTHDAY PARTY INVITATIONS are allowed to be distributed at the preschool.

Nothing is allowed to be distributed by hand, on the sign out file folders, or in the children's cubbies that is not approved by the preschool and related to preschool or City business. If you want to invite specific children from your child's class to a birthday party, please use your classroom roster to contact a child's parent via e-mail, mail, and phone or speak privately to that child's parent. When parents and children discuss birthday parties in the classroom, children who were not included in the party feel left out and have hurt feelings. While this is a natural part of growing up, we would like to guard against this during the preschool years.

Visiting Readers

During Read to Your Child Week 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.

Off-site

Throughout the year children will leave the school campus to do a nature walk through the park or play on the "big" playground in Amador Park. Staff will let you know when you drop-off your child that they will be going off-site that day. No parent participation is required.

Parent's Day

Parent's Day is a half hour event at the beginning of your child's class. Children and parents participate in a classroom activity together. The GB Newsletter will list your child's Parent's Day date and time and you will receive an invitation from your child attached to their sign-out folders.

Week of the Young Child

Gingerbread's celebration is based upon a nationally celebrated week. We have so much fun we need an entire month to celebrate! An art auction-food drive, a raffle fundraiser, family social and other special activities occur during this week.

Special Activities continued...

Mini-Indy

During the spring quarter your child will participate in the annual Mini-Indy. The children ride their tricycles, bicycles or big wheels around several courses. Helmets are required for all participants. There are no classes at preschool on these days. (*Children who are not enrolled at Gingerbread will not be allowed to participate.*) Parent participation is required.

Cultural Celebrations

We are very excited to have a culturally diverse school and enjoy learning about and participating in a variety of cultural celebrations. If you would like your child's class to learn about and participate in a cultural celebration that your family enjoys, please speak to your child's teacher and we will be happy to work with you.

Friends of Gingerbread Preschool - FOG

The Friends of Gingerbread Preschool is a non-profit organization formed for the purpose of providing parent involvement in the program and individual classrooms. These activities include fundraising for specialized items for the preschool, providing opportunities for parents to network with other parents, and providing parent and community education. The Friends of Gingerbread Preschool board also provides a two-way line of communication between staff and parents.

Friends of Gingerbread Preschool have a five member board that is elected annually to represent the parents and children of Gingerbread Preschool. This board meets monthly to discuss a variety of issues and concerns, as well as plan for upcoming activities. Some of these activities include: welcome coffees, socials, parent lending library and so much more! Consult the GB Newsletter and the information board located outside the front doors for information regarding current Friends of Gingerbread activities.

Parent Lending Library

A parent lending library, located in the preschool lobby, is available to all Gingerbread parents. Books, DVD's and audio books have been provided by parent donations and the Friends of Gingerbread Preschool.

The ideas and concepts in these materials do not necessarily represent the views of the Friends of Gingerbread Preschool Board, The City of Pleasanton or Gingerbread Preschool. As there are a variety of parenting ideas, it is important to keep your family values and your child in mind. Not all of these ideas are going to meet your families or child's needs.

This is a "help yourself" library. Parents who are interested may borrow materials for a 2-week period. Complete the index cards located in the book or DVD case and place the card in the card file box. Once you have finished using the borrowed material, pull the card from the card file box, cross your name off, place the card in the book and return it to the Parent Lending Library shelf. If a book or DVD is damaged or lost, you will be asked to pay for the cost of replacement.

Parent Support

At Gingerbread Preschool we hope to meet the needs of the whole child, this includes supporting the child's family as well. Parenting today is at times very challenging. We want to provide information and opportunities for parents to be supported in the most important role of their life - being a parent!



“We must make sure that children have ample time to play outside. To wallow in the mud, sand and water, with enough time to poke things in the dirt, catch rollie pollies and frogs and roll down hills.”

~Lisa Murphy, Early Childhood Educator and Author ~

Friends of Gingerbread Preschool – FOG continued...

Parent Support continued...

We provide several educational leaflets and brochures that will be attached to your child's sign out folders and articles in the GB Newsletter throughout the year as part of this effort. We also will be offering a variety of classes and workshops for parents. Space is limited so look for registration information in the preschool lobby and the GB Newsletter.

Room Parents

The Room Parents program is supported by the Friends of Gingerbread Preschool. Room Parents provide additional support to the classroom teacher. Typically each class has two to three Room Parents. Responsibilities include creating a class roster so that parents can keep in touch. They coordinate play dates and functions for the children in the class to continue foster friendships outside of school. They keep parents informed about class/school functions through e-mails. They welcome new families as they join the classroom. They maintain the classroom Shutterfly website for photo sharing. They work with the classroom teacher in a variety of supportive roles, from providing classroom activity preparation, photographing classroom activities/events, and more. They also create/coordinate a class donation for the Week of the Young Child Silent Auction.

A room parent orientation is held in the fall and an additional meeting is held in January. This is to provide some training, answer questions and provide support. Teachers schedule regular meetings with their Room Parents to go over their needs and to ensure that information is being disseminated in a timely fashion to families.

Classroom Shutterfly Website

Homepage Information - <http://www.shutterfly.com>

The purpose of creating a website on **Shutterfly** is to electronically share pictures and videos with the parents of each particular class. The benefit for the families will be many more pictures than before to view, print, and have access to. You may purchase photos through **Shutterfly** if desired at anytime!

The classroom teacher and parents are invited to upload and share both videos and photos to this site. It is a great way to document all the fun things happening at Gingerbread and to make images accessible. Toward the end of the school year, the Room Parent may create a yearbook that will be available to purchase through Shutterfly. Purchasing a yearbook is optional.

Membership and Privacy

Membership is given to teachers and parents only. Pictures and videos can be shared with this privacy in mind. EACH CLASS WILL HAVE THEIR OWN EXCLUSIVE WEBSITE WITH ONLY THEIR CLASS ROSTER HAVING ACCESS.

Administrative access will be given to the **Shutterfly** Room Parent representative and teachers only. All other parents will be "members" ONLY. It is the administrator's duty to ensure no other people are added beyond the direct parents of each class.

Only teachers and parents of each student in the class can be invited to join. Aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents, friends, etc. are not allowed to be members.

All teachers and parents, are encouraged to take lots of pictures and videos to post to the site. The more photos and videos posted, the better the website will be.