



Gingerbread Preschool Classroom Guide

Kinderpals



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KINDERPALS STAFF



Ms. Lori Ann Johnson- Preschool Teacher

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Years of Service: 13 years

Education: Bachelor of Science Degree, Business, California State University, Hayward, 21 units of Early Childhood Education

Personal Information: Lori Ann and her husband Paul have two children, Ryan and Kiley. She enjoys reading and going on vacation. They have a dog named Koa.



Lumencia Holst- Preschool Assistant

Years of Service: 5 years

Education: Attended Rutgers University, New Jersey; Business Administration and Languages. Child Development courses at a Junior College

Personal Information: Ms. Lumencia and her husband John have 4 children. She was born in Columbia, South America. Lumencia loves soccer, bowling, and spending a lot of time with her family. Ms. Lumencia has one cat named Kohl.

We are excited that you have chosen our Kinderpals program! We are looking forward to what this school year holds for the class during this unique time in your child's life.

At Gingerbread Preschool, we believe that children learn through play. We also believe that children must have a supportive environment to be able take the next step in discovering their social, emotional and educational strengths. The Kinderpals program will provide your child with the encouragement they need to be successful in exploring the new world of our fabulous 5's.

Here's to a wonderful year!

**To contact Ms. Lori you may call
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Kinderpals Classroom

The Kinderpals class provides an extra year of preschool for social/emotional maturation. This class presents a fun and hands-on learning experience and supports each child in building competency in social and learning skills.

The Kinderpals program is currently working with a modified emergent curriculum. A true emergent curriculum is based on the student's interests while the teacher brainstorms ways to study a topic in depth. We have modified that approach in that through observation, the teachers can tailor the curriculum based on the needs of each student while still incorporating their interests in a play-based, developmentally-appropriate format. This approach does require a lot of observation, creativity, flexibility and patience, but it also makes it more exciting for the teachers and the students.

Kinderpals follows the primary caregiver model for each child. With two staff members in the room, the children are divided equally amongst the staff. By using this model, 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 Kinderpals classroom at drop-off, your child will be asked to sign in with their primary caregiver. This will consist of writing their name in an attendance book while also exchanging greetings with the staff. The child will then turn their attendance card to the "HERE" position on the attendance chart and then proceed to the carpet.

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 your child's primary caregiver. Your child should then say "good-bye" to the staff, turn their attendance card to the "NOT HERE" position and then collect any items in their cubby.

Learning Activities

Children use their imagination, creativity, and express feelings during this time. Something that is unique to the Kinderpals program is the way in which we teach art to the children during a whole group session. By showing the children that simple lines and shapes can create a piece of art, they gain confidence that they have the ability to draw things they didn't think was possible. This approach emphasizes the relationships of space and size, concepts of symmetry, balance and design. Learning how to follow directions and the use of fine motor skills are emphasized.

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.

Alphabet/Number Recognition

One way in which the children in Kinderpals are exposed to letter and number formation is through the Handwriting Without Tears program. One day of the week is consistently used to show the children through wood pieces, chalk and slates, or paper and pencils on how to form the letters and numbers. We emphasize the capital letters. In conjunction with the writing of the letters, we have an Alphabet Book for the children where they are asked to work on a skill (patterning, cutting, gluing, tracing, etc.) in addition to learning about the letter of the week. Once the children are exposed to the writing of the numbers, they will be given their own calendar and they will fill in the numbers on a daily basis. Letter and number recognition are also presented in a variety of other activities times such as gathering time, snack time, games and art/craft projects. These are foundational skills for reading, writing, and math.

Social Studies

Children will study different cultures and learn to compare and contrast them with each other. Through the introduction of other cultures, children will learn about the world outside of Pleasanton.

Gathering (Circle) Time

Gathering (circle) time includes group discussions, sharing, story time and music. Kinderpals has three gathering times one at the beginning to start the day, one in the middle to help transition between cleanup and outdoor time and one at the end to reflect on the day.

Beginning Circle

This first gathering time is packed with skills that we will work on throughout the year:

Attendance: By visually looking at the attendance chart, the children are asked to determine who is here and who is absent. We are working on name recognition of not only their name but their classmates' names as well. Math skills are used to determine the amount of children present for the day through addition, subtraction, counting by one, twos or fives.

Community Helpers: Community Helpers represents a variety of "jobs" that need to be completed by the children each day. The jobs are a way for the children to feel as a member of a community they have a responsibility. The jobs are assigned on a rotating basis and are held for the entire week.

Sharing Can: This is an opportunity for public speaking and for making the connection between home and school by having parents get involved in the writing of clues. This activity requires the children to use critical thinking and reasoning skills.

Calendar: We will be using a weekly calendar to highlight the concept of "today", "yesterday" and "tomorrow".

Weather: The skill we are working on during weather time is the ability for the child to be observant of his/her surroundings.

Question of the Day: A couple of days a week, the children will be asked a question of the day that they will answer during their free choice time. The results will be shown as a graph and then discussed. We learn about the concepts of more, less and equal to.

Class Mascot: A stuffed bear, Beary, will have an opportunity to go home with a child once during the year on the weekends. The child will have the opportunity to document through words, drawings and/or photos their time with Beary. We will discuss Beary's adventure with the child which lends itself to more public speaking.

Music/Movement: To get the blood circulating, we usually have music that includes hands or body movement. It's a great way to begin the class.

Middle Circle

This gathering time is a way to transition between cleaning up after our free choice/ small group session to going outside time. We use this opportunity to discuss and model any outdoor games that we want to play as well as a time to discuss any incidents that have happened.

Last Circle

Yoga: After coming in from our time outside, we wash hands and gather on the carpet. In the beginning a staff member will lead the children through yoga poses. As the year progresses, the children will take turns leading the group. This is a time to focus on breathing and calming the body to help each child learn the skill of self-regulation.

Last Circle continued...

Story Time: After yoga, the children are calm and ready to hear a story. In the beginning, stories will be simple. As the year progresses the books will get longer and more complicated. We are not only working on listening skills, but also being able to stay focused for longer and longer periods of time.

Circle - Up: The children will be asked to “circle-up” which means they will create a circle by sitting on the outer edge of the carpet. During this time a stuffed bear will be brought out and whoever is holding the bear is the “speaker”. This is another opportunity for public speaking. We will ask the children a question that either reflects on the day (Tell me something that you liked about today) or a question that tells about the child (My last name is.....).

Outside Play

We view outside play as an extension of the classroom and not recess. It is an opportunity to introduce group games such as relay races, parachute play, exercises and sports to the children. We usually set about 10-15 minutes aside for organized play and then the children are free to choose their activity for the remainder of the time.

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.

Unlike the other age groups, Kinderpals incorporates snack time as a learning center. During our small group/free choice time, the snack for the day will be available to the children to come to at their leisure. It is their choice as to whether or not they eat during this time. The children will be told the serving size of the snack (one scoop of goldfish crackers or 1 sheet of graham crackers) and they are told to patrol themselves. By doing snack in this manner, we give the control of the food to the child and they decide whether they are hungry or not. We also talk about what a serving size is and how important it is to only take the serving size amount. In the beginning of the year, staff will closely monitor the snack table, but as time goes by, the children will monitor themselves and take the opportunity to eat with their friends and have a social time. A friendly reminder will be given ten minutes before clean up, to give those children who forgot to eat a chance to have a 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.

Bathroom Time

Children learn personal hygiene and independence skills when making a trip to the bathroom at preschool. Staff reinforce the importance of hand washing and children learn to care for their own needs. For hygiene purposes, all children are required to wear underwear under their clothing. Staff will speak to a parent if the child is coming to school without the appropriate underwear.

Bathroom Time continued...

Kinderpals have the privilege of going to the bathroom by themselves. We have bathroom passes in the classroom so that when a child needs to use the bathroom, the child will tell a teacher, they will take a pass and proceed to the bathroom. The child will hang the pass in the bathroom before entering the stall. After flushing and washing hands, the child will return to the classroom with the pass. The staff will monitor the amount of time a child has been gone and will check when necessary. The privilege of going to the bathroom by themselves will be taken away for a specified amount of time if a child is not able to follow the rules.

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 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 Kinderpals class. The staff is always willing to discuss any concerns or comments that you have about your child or the program. The teacher's email address is available so that you have a couple of options to communicate, either face to face or through email. The teacher will also e-mail a monthly newsletter that will describe the different activities that are taking place in the classroom and the skills that are being worked on. The newsletter is also a way to inform you about any dates that you need to remember concerning Gingerbread events.

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

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 be on their actual birthday. Most of the Kinderpals birthdays are clustered around the start of school, so for that reason we could be celebrating several birthdays a week. We do follow the guidelines of the rest of the school in that we ask that no food, goodie bags or birthday invitations be distributed in the classroom. We will acknowledge the birthdays on the weekly calendar and we will discuss it as a group during the first gathering time. The birthday child will be asked if he/she wants us to sing the birthday song and we will proceed from there.

Fall Gathering:

As a way to expose the children to different cultures, the Fall Gathering in Kinderpals will consist of a unique gathering that used to take place in Hawaii called a Hukilau. The children will learn a hula. Family and friends will be invited to “gather” with us to celebrate with songs, dance, art, food and music. What could be better!

Off - Site:

There will be times when the Kinderpals class will leave the building to go on a walk, to do activities in the adjacent grassy field or to go play at the nearby playgrounds. We will notify the front office when we do these activities and we can be contacted easily by cell phone or by two way radio.

Parent's Day:

The Kinderpals Parent's Day will be in May. This fun event is an opportunity to come into the classroom and participate in an activity with your child. We will have music, dance, art, food and songs available for your enjoyment. Not to be missed!