

Mater Gardens Academy
Pre-Kindergarten
Parent Handbook
2009-2010



Little Rays

Pre-Kindergarten Program

INTRODUCTION

The Pre-Kindergarten program will provide children the opportunity to explore, observe, and experiment. The learning environment encourages a preschooler to ask questions, make conclusions, and develop independence. Large group activities, small group activities, and center activities will stimulate a child's cognitive, social, emotional, and physical growth. Throughout the school year the children will develop skills while learning about themes meaningful to their lives. In our program, we continuously meet the developmental needs of the children as they develop skills and require new challenges throughout the year.

DEVELOPMENTAL OBJECTIVES

COGNITIVE GROWTH

To develop a positive attitude toward learning:

- To be successful in learning activities
- To make discoveries
- To take risks
- To continue with tasks after making a mistake

To enhance learning skills:

- To ask questions
- To use perceptual motor skills such as figure/ground discrimination, part whole discrimination, and configuration
- To explore and investigate something new in the environment
- To recall experiences

To expand logical thinking skills:

- To identify similarities and differences among objects (shapes, colors, texture, sizes)
- To sort objects according to common characteristics (i.e. things that look alike, things that belong together)
- To identify common characteristics of objects or events
- To arrange events in a sequence (i.e. what happened first, second, and last)
- To recognize patterns and be able to repeat them
- To explain simple cause and effect relationships on the basis of concrete experiences
- To identify solutions to problems

To acquire concepts and information leading to a better understanding of the immediate world:

- To demonstrate an understanding of time concept (sequence of the day's activities, yesterday, today and tomorrow)
- To identify and use the names of objects and things in the environment (i.e. plants, animals, people)
- To make comparisons (i.e. more/less, tall short, large/small)
- To identify and use words to describe the characteristics of objects (i.e. colors, sizes, shapes)
- To identify the roles people play in society (i.e. family, doctors)
- To identify where objects exist in space (i.e. below, inside, under)
- To use numbers in correct sequence
- To match one to one when counting

To expand on verbal communication skills:

- To listen to a story and explain what happened
- To recall words in a song or finger play
- To identify word order and sentence patterns
- To follow simple directions
- To use words to explain ideas or feelings
- To talk with other children during daily activities
- To use correct grammar
- To participate in group discussions

To acquire beginning written communication skills:

- To make increasingly representational drawings
- To move from scribbling to using some letters and numbers
- To recognize written names
- To print one's name
- To demonstrate an interest in using writing tools for a purpose (i.e. making signs, sending letters)

SOCIAL/ EMOTIONAL/ PHYSICAL GROWTH

To experience a sense of self-esteem:

- To identify oneself as a member of a specific family and cultural group
- To demonstrate confidence in growing abilities
- To demonstrate increasing independence

To exhibit a positive attitude toward life:

- To demonstrate interest and enthusiasm in classroom activities
- To try new activities
- To demonstrate trust in adults
- To be able to separate from parents with ease
- To participate in routine activities easily

To demonstrate pro-social behavior:

- To develop friendships with adults and children
- To identify and appreciate differences
- To accept some responsibility for maintaining the classroom environment

- To help others in need
- To respect the rights of others

To enhance large muscle skills:

- To use large muscle skills with confidence
- To walk up and down steps
- To run with increasing control over direction and speed
- To jump over objects or from objects without falling
- To use large muscles for balance (i.e. walk on tiptoe, balance on one foot)
- To catch a ball or bean bag
- To throw an object in the intended direction
- To climb up or down equipment without falling

To enhance and refine small muscle skills:

- To use small muscle skills with confidence
- To coordinate eye and hand movement (i.e. assemble puzzle pieces of increasing difficulty, string beads, use scissors)
- To use small muscles to complete tasks (i.e. build with blocks, stack graduated cylinders, place pegs in pegboards)
- To use small muscles for self-help skills (i.e. pour without spilling, use eating utensils, zip and button)
- To manipulate objects with increasing control
- To use writing and drawing tools with increasing control and intention

To use all senses to increase physical capabilities:

- To identify similarities and differences in sounds
- To identify how things are visually alike and different
- To identify foods by taste or how things smell
- To balance with increasing skill
- To respond to rhythm
- To use directionality
- To refine eye-hand coordination

Circle Time

If we are in circle time when you arrive in the morning, please bring your child to the circle and have him/her sit and join us. If you need to talk to any of the teachers, please leave a note on the counter, speak to an administrator, or call the office and leave a message. It is hard for your child's teacher to talk to you in the morning. We need to be with the children so we can plan our day.

Centers

Center time is a learning time for the children. It is their time to create, discover, explore, interact with their peers, and just have fun. Many of the center activities revolve around the main topic of learning. Although it may look like children are just playing throughout the day, please remember that the children are learning through their play.

Outdoor Play and Walks

Outdoor play is a scheduled part of the daily program. Please make sure your child is dressed appropriately for the day's weather conditions and is wearing an appropriate pair of shoes (sneakers). If you would like your child to wear a hat on the playground and on walks, please bring one to school labeled with your child's name. The times and routes for the walks are posted in the classroom. Occasionally we may go on unscheduled walks as well.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Goals for the Year

We work on being consistent with everything we do, and we follow through with all of our rules in the classroom (sitting down, raising hands, listening to one another, and we use words - not hands - to communicate to our friends). Our curriculum is set up to help each child grow socially, emotionally, physically and cognitively in an environment where he/she is having fun and learning at the same time.

Arrival/Departure

Arrival - The school day begins at 8:30 am and ends at 2:00 pm. Students are to be seated in their classrooms by 8:30 am. It's normal for children to have a difficult morning, from time to time; but lengthy good-byes often do more harm than good. Let us know if we can assist with your departure and make it easier for both you and your child. Also, always say good-bye at your child's eye level.

Departure - Dismissal is at 2:00pm, however, should you need to pick up your child earlier, please pick up your child and pick up his/her belongings from the cubby and leave promptly. This will minimize the distractions to the other children while they are busy working on their activities

Uniform

Please have your child dressed in uniform and with closed shoes. Each child is provided with a cubby that has his/her name and picture on it. We have found that providing the children with a picture of themselves makes it easier for them to find their cubbies when putting items away. Please make sure any items you bring from home are clearly labeled and everything fits inside your child's cubby.

If you need to speak to your child's teachers, feel free to schedule a meeting with the head teacher. It is important that the teachers are involved with the children at all times, including arrival and pick-up. If you would like to speak to the teachers you may call the office and leaving a message.

Parking

Parking is available outside the school gate. **Please note that any vehicle left unattended on the pick-up/drop-off lanes will be issued a warning and/or a referral.** Your child safety is our number one priority.

DO NOT ALLOW YOUR CHILD TO RUN OUT OF THE SCHOOL AND INTO THE DRIVEWAY. PLEASE MAKE SURE YOUR CHILDREN ARE IN THEIR CAR SEATS/SEAT BELTS AT ALL TIMES WHEN DRIVING TO AND FROM SCHOOL.

Security

For students safety all classroom will be locked from the outside. Teachers have been instructed not to open any doors unless a message has been sent by the office giving that person clearance.

Signing in and out

It is extremely important that you sign your child in and out. In case of an emergency, this is the form of attendance that we use to show that your child is present. These sign in/out sheets are dated and should not be removed from the clipboard for any reason. If you need a list of the children in the classroom, please ask the teachers for a list. For the safety of the children DO NOT LEAVE THE CLASSROOM DOOR OPEN when you sign your child in and out. No child will leave the classroom without a parent or teacher. If your child attends the afterschool program they will be picked up by their afterschool teacher five minutes before dismissal time.

Breakfast

Most children arrive at school without having eaten breakfast. For more information on our before-school care program which includes breakfast contact Diana in the main office. Breakfast will be offered from 7am to 8:15am daily. The breakfast generally consists of cereal, milk, and fruit or a bagel, cream cheese, and milk or muffin and milk.

Meal Time

Lunch has been scheduled at 10:00am daily. Although a nutritious lunch is included, lunches maybe sent from home, however, refrigerator space is limited, therefore, we ask that you pack lunches in a labeled lunchbox or bag.

- Please send child size portions.
- Please do not send in hard food, candies, and gum since they are a choking hazard.
- Some children have food allergies or react poorly to chocolate or high sugar snacks. We ask that you try to avoid putting them in your child's lunch box and replace them with more nutritious alternatives.
- We will provide water for your child at lunch time if he/she does not have juice or milk in their home packed lunch. **Soda is NOT permitted.**

Snack Time - We offer a healthy snack during the day. Snack time is usually scheduled for shortly after nap time. Snacks usually consist of crackers and cheese, fruits or vegetables and dips. Occasionally due to birthday parties or other circumstances, we may need to alter what we are serving without notice. We will keep in mind the dietary requirements and restrictions when making these changes. The children are encouraged to try the foods provided and are encouraged to clean up when they are finished.

Rest time

Young children need a certain amount of "rest time/quiet time" to assure they are not overwhelmed by daily routines. Please provide a cover for the mat and cover for your child. All bedding must be small enough to fit in your child's cubby. A cuddly toy and or a pillow for sleeping if your child needs these to sleep may be brought in. Please label all bedding. Classroom toys may not be used for rest/quiet time. Please take home your child's blanket and sheets every Friday for laundering or as necessary.

Birthdays

Birthday parties are a wonderful experience for a child. A child's self-esteem is developed in celebrating that special day. At Mater Gardens we love to recognize each one of our children on their special day. Once again please remember that children maybe on special dietary requirements or restrictions. Bringing in lunch for the class causes difficulty for those children who cannot participate. Please ask your child's teachers if there are any children with special food restrictions. If any children have dairy allergies or restrictions Pareve cakes are available at many local grocery stores. The times that parties are allowed are at lunchtime (please supply a snack, i.e. cake or cupcakes, ONLY in order to help observe any dietary restrictions of children in the classroom) or at afternoon snack time.

Entertainment may NOT be brought in for the security purpose and in conjunction with the Jessica Lunsford Act.

Toilet

Pre-Kindergarten children should have independent toileting skills. If your child messes in his/her pants on a daily basis you will be called and asked to come to the school as this may be cause for embarrassment for your child.

Illness

Mater Gardens is a family and we tend to share everything, including colds. Staying at home at the first sign of illness is important. Under no circumstances will parents be allowed to bring a sick child to Mater Gardens.

Sick children expose other children, parents, staff, and their families to the spread of their illness. Sick children want care from their parents in the comfort of their own homes

Infection Control

Because pre-schoolers are so oral, (putting toys in the mouth, licking objects, putting hands in the mouth, and then touching items) germs are easily passed. The staff strives to maintain a sanitary room. All classroom items are all washed with hot soapy water and rinsed with a water/bleach solution to keep items sterile. We also ask that you take your child's sheet and blanket home on the last day of the school week to be washed. Remember that germs are easily passed with this age group and that daily baths will keep the risk of germs from getting passed around when they get home.

Medication

Mater Gardens requires that a medication form be filled out for any prescription or non-prescription medication that needs administration. For any medication that needs to be taken multiple times per day, please administer the a.m. dose at home prior to school and the p.m. dose after school. Please check with your doctor about flexibility in administration times as All students will be given medication after lunch.

Please make sure that any medications that are to be given to your child comply with the following criteria:

- Any Prescription Medication must be in the original childproof container, clearly labeled with the child's name, physician's name and number, instructions on administration and expiration date.
- If your doctor gives you samples of any drugs to give your child, we need to have a note from the doctor stating that your child is being treated with this medicine. The note must state the name of the medicine, how long the treatment will last and when it needs to be given to the child.
- No oral over-the-counter medicines, (ex., Robitussin, Dimetapp, Tylenol, Benadryl, etc.) will be given to the children unless we have a prescription from the doctor stating that he/she has prescribed the medicine to treat your child. If you do not have a prescription from the doctor, it may be faxed to the school (305-512-3705). If we have not heard from the doctor within 30 minutes of the time the medication is to be given, we will contact you.
- Topical ointment may be applied if it is in the original tube, clearly labeled with the child's name and the parent fills out the medication form.
- Please do not put any medications in a bottle of formula, milk or juice sent from home. Please do not put any medications in your child's

cubby, lunch box or cups. This could endanger any child as accidental ingestion may occur.

Behavior Management

The purpose of discipline is to help children learn ways of behaving that are acceptable to themselves and to others. With very young children, this usually means setting limits for their safety, the safety of others and the safety of property. Young children need to be reassured that the people who care for them will guide and protect them. All behavior has a reason and it is part of our behavior management to find out the cause of the behavior before setting a program to help a child deal with those difficult times.

We understand and agree to the following discipline policy of Mater Gardens Preschool as required in Section 10M-12.013 of the Florida Department of Children and Families Child Care Standards:

No discipline shall be severe, humiliating, or frightening. No discipline shall be associated with food, rest, or toileting. Spanking and any other form of physical punishment is prohibited.

Teachers facilitate the development of self-control in children by using positive guidance techniques such as modeling and encouraging expected behavior, redirecting children to a more acceptable activity, and setting clear limits for the benefits and safety of all children.

In the event that the unacceptable behavior is not resolved, a child's teacher will call his/her parent(s).

In the event that the unacceptable behavior is not resolved with redirection or parental contact a parent/teacher/director conference will be arranged immediately and enrollment may be terminated at the director's discretion.

Biting

For this age group biting is considered age appropriate behavior. Because younger children often lack language skills to express themselves appropriately, it is not unusual for them to bite another child out of frustration. Bites usually occur on the arms, hands, faces, and backs. When a child bites, s/he will be redirected to another activity and told "no biting, biting hurts." The injured child will be offered comfort and the wounded area cleaned. The parents of both children will be notified of the incident via written report. In the rare instance the bite breaks the skin; parents will be notified by telephone. For the safety and well being of all children, any child who bites another child 2 times in the same day may be asked to leave the school for the remainder of the day. If biting becomes a persistent problem, parents must meet with the Head Teacher and Director to discuss possible options, including counseling or withdrawal from the school.

Accidents

Although it may be unsettling to find a bump, bruise, scrape or bite on your child, there are a few things to keep in mind. First, getting hurt is a normal part of growing up. Children of this age group are especially active throughout the day as they explore their environment. It is also important to keep in mind that although an injury may have left a mark on your child, it does not mean your child cried or even noticed. Unless it is a serious injury, children usually get up and walk away and continue what they were doing. Whatever mark may be on your child is not necessarily an indication of how much pain s/he may be feeling or the severity of the injury. You will receive accident reports for all injuries that occur and require treatment. Often a phone call will be made to advise the parents of injuries or other situations.

Toys/Show & Tell

Show and Tell will take place once a week, at the teacher's discretion. The children will be allowed to bring a picture, toy, or a book. Books are always welcomed in the classroom for us to share during story time. Please no guns, weapons or toys that will cause classroom disruption.

Weapons and Rough Play

Research has proven that toy weapons increase aggression and negative interactions. Therefore, no such toys are permitted. Hitting, fighting, biting, and destructive (Ninja/Power Ranger) role-playing is discouraged at all times.

Daily Reports

You will receive daily report, describing the activities that happened throughout the day. Behavior issues, successes, injuries, illnesses and any special needs of your child will be given on a daily basis as needed.

Pre-Kindergarten Graduation

Children graduating from Mater Gardens and going into Kindergarten will be given a diploma and a tassel which will be given to the children at the graduation ceremony to be scheduled for the end of the year.

Parent Conferences

Conferences are scheduled 3 times during the year. The first conference is a scheduled orientation prior to the child's entrance into a new classroom. It is an opportunity for parents to share information about their child with the teachers. The second conference is mid year. Each child will receive a developmental observation to be discussed at the scheduled meeting. The last meeting is at the end of the year. This is an optional meeting based on the child's progress and needs.

Parental Input

Parents are encouraged to make suggestions and bring up any concerns to the head teacher or the administration. The staff believes that no concern is too small. We genuinely do want parental input. This exchange of information will help create the optimal learning experience for your child.

I have read and agree to comply with all of the policies and procedures set forth in the Preschool/Pre-Kindergarten Class Handbook.

Signature

Date

Signature

Date

Mater Gardens Pre-K Four week Sample Menu

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1	Quesadilla	Shredded Pork	Meatballs	Fish Sticks	Pizza
	Lettuce	Rice and Beans	Spagetti	Yellow rice with	
	Tomato	Plantains	Green Beans	Mix Vegetables	Mixed salad
	Fruit	Fruit	Pears	Peach	Fruit
	Milk/Variety	Milk/Variety	Milk/Variety	Milk/Variety	Milk/Variety
Week 2	Hot dog	Ground Beef with	Mini Drumsticks	Ham & cheese	Pizza
	Hot dog Bun	Rice	White Rice	Sandwich Bread	
	Corn on the Cob	Plantains	Green Beans	Mixed Vegetables	Mixed salad
	Fruit	Applesauce	Pineapple Bites	Apples	Fruit
	Milk/Variety	Milk/Variety	Milk/Variety	Milk/Variety	Milk/Variety
Week 3	Chicken Nugget	Sausage and Rice	Chick Pea Soup	Fish Sticks	Pizza
	Mac n Cheese	Dinner Roll	Chicken Fricase	Mashed Potatoe	
	Corn	Baby Carrots	Plantain	Mixed Vegetables	Mixed salad
	Applesauce	Pears	Orange	Peach	Fruit
	Milk/Variety	Milk/Variety	Milk/Variety	Milk/Variety	Milk/Variety
Week 4	Hamburger	Pepper Steak	Spagetti	Chicken and Rice	Pizza
		Rice and Beans	Dinner Roll	Plantains	
	Corn on the Cob	Broccoli	Salad	Dinner Roll	Mixed salad
	Grapes	Applesauce	Banana	Fruit	Fruit
	Milk/Variety	Milk/Variety	Milk/Variety	Milk/Variety	Milk/Variety

Snacks

- 1 Cookie & Juice
- 2 Raisins & Juice
- 3 Grapes & Juice
- 4 Apple slices & Juice
- 5 Banana & Juice
- 6 Strawberries & Juice
- 7 Jello & Juice
- 8 Yogurt & Juice
- 9 Pudding & Juice
- 10 Cheese and Cracker & Juice
- 11 Crackers with Cream Cheese & Jelly & Juice
- 12 Fruit Smoothie

* Please note that this is a tentative menu, therefore menu items may change.