

MADEIRA PRESCHOOL COMMON QUESTIONS



1. Do you have separate classes for 3, 4, and 5 year olds?

We do not. Our classrooms have "multi-age" groupings, *but* children are grouped in as close of an age range as possible based on enrollment. The philosophy behind multi-aged classes is that the wider age range provides richer experiences for all the children. In multi-age classrooms, older children become leaders and stretch the younger ones by providing models for social behavior, language, motor skills, academics, and interests.

2. How is a child's second year different from his/her first year?

When a child returns for a second year, he or she is typically more confident with school routines and has built trusting relationships with the staff. Returning students approach learning centers in new ways, and we find that repeated exposure helps with skill mastery. Children often, but not always, change teachers because of the class groupings. Our teachers purposefully create new experiences for the children, building on the skills learned in the first year, but with a novel approach.

3. How can teachers meet the needs of such a wide range of ages?

The teachers at Madeira Preschool are certified with either a Bachelors or Masters degree in Education. Therefore, they have knowledge of child development in all areas. Continued professional development keeps them in touch with current trends and research in the Early Childhood field.

Teachers maintain ongoing observations and assessments of all the children. Lessons are then planned according to the student's individual needs and interests. They create a learning environment with a variety of materials that reflect the developmental levels of their students.

Teachers also collaborate with other support staff to develop curriculum, and they rely on the professional expertise of the specialists to implement learning strategies that enhance student learning.

The low student to teacher ratio allows for even further flexibility within the lessons by affording frequent opportunities for small group and individualized instruction.

4. How do teachers decide what to teach?

Decisions about curriculum are made in several ways. Teachers balance decisions based on 1) Ohio Early Learning Standards, 2) best practices outlined in the National Association for the Education of Young Children [NAEYC] accreditation standards, 3) developmental information, and 4) by observations of special interests that children may have. All curriculum is designed to meet specific learning objectives. Links to our curriculum can be found in the Preschool Handbook that is online.

5. How is my typically-developing child affected by the children with identified special needs?

Children benefit from a classroom designed for a diverse group of learners. As they become members of a school community, they learn that each person has different strengths and challenges. Over time, interactions with others help to foster different talents in each child. Some children become class

leaders, some develop a deep empathy for others, while other children learn to communicate in different ways. All children come out of this experience with a greater understanding and acceptance of the uniqueness of each person.

6. How do the teachers prepare children for kindergarten?

Children learn concepts in language arts, math, science, and social studies in accordance with the State of Ohio's Early Learning Standards. These standards are specifically designed to prepare children for kindergarten. Intentional instruction is provided in literacy skills, such as phonemic awareness (rhyming, letter naming, and sounds), story knowledge, written expression, and listening to and following directions. The same occurs with math skills, such as counting, estimating, patterning, numeral identification, graphing, sorting, patterning, classifying, and measuring. Teachers encourage children to be independent thinkers and problem solvers, as well as how to be a part of a group.

Our teachers are knowledgeable about the Madeira kindergarten program and the expectations for incoming kindergartners. In addition, the teachers meet with parents in May to create a transition plan for each child that makes the transition to kindergarten a smooth experience.

7. What is a typical day like?

During a typical day at Madeira Preschool, children have many hands-on learning experiences as individuals and as a group. Each day starts with group time to welcome and discuss the day. Each day ends with a literature-based group time. Group instruction might also include a special sharing time, letter and number activities, finger plays, music, and movement. Children have 45-60 minutes of free choice. During this time, the students can choose from a variety of learning centers that include: dramatic play, blocks, open art shelf, music center, math games, writing, science, computer, books, and manipulatives. The day also includes snack time and indoor/outdoor recess. The large motor room is where the children eat snack and lunch. It is also set up with 2 easels, a sensory table, and a play dough table. Teachers will give parents their daily schedules at the beginning of the year.

9. Can I choose what day(s) my child will attend preschool?

Parents who enroll in the full-day preschool program may choose 4 days (MTWVR) or 5 days a week 9:00-3:15. Before school care is available from 8-9. After school care is offered at the Madeira Elementary School through the Champions program from 3:30-6:00. Children, accompanied by a staff member from the preschool, ride a school bus to the elementary school. Parents who enroll their child in the half-day program do not have a choice. Those children attend MTWVR 9:00-11:30 or 12:45-3:15.

10. What size are your classes, and how many teachers are there?

We have 4 preschool classrooms, each with 12-16 children. Each class has one certified teacher and one assistant teacher. One classroom has an additional Early Intervention Teacher who works directly with children who have been identified with a preschool disability.

11. What is your approach to discipline?

Learning self-control is an important part of growing up. Teachers use positive, clear language to set limits and redirect children by telling them what they should be doing instead of what they should not do. If children are arguing over materials, teachers take time to facilitate problem solving and negotiation until the children involved are satisfied with the solution.

Negative behavior is avoided by making the daily schedules predictable, giving children warnings a few minutes before asking them to change activities, explaining when something different is going to happen, and letting children have as many choices as possible.

Teachers also use logical consequences to help children develop self-control. If a situation occurs that threatens the emotional or physical safety of other children or staff, a child may have a brief time-out before the child is reminded of school behavior expectations. The child may be asked to choose another activity or may be asked to shadow the teacher for a while. In the event that on-going negative conduct occurs, parents, teachers, and possibly other support staff meet to create a behavior management plan.

12. Does the preschool follow the same calendar as Madeira Elementary School?

We do, including all holidays, early release days, snow days, and teacher inservice days. The only exception is that the preschool is closed on Election Days because the building is a polling location. Preschool teachers conduct classroom visits during the first week of school, and the preschool has two transition days the second week of school. A preschool calendar is distributed to parents prior to the start of school along with times for early release days.

13. What types of opportunities do you have for parents to be involved?

We encourage strong home-school partnerships. Parents can volunteer to be a Room Parent, volunteer in the classroom as an extra set of hands once a month, or do work at home for the teachers. Preschool parents are encouraged to join and participate in the Madeira Elementary School Parent Teacher Organization (PTO).

14. Can preschool children ride the school bus?

Parents will transport their preschoolers to and from school unless they are enrolled in the after school program. Preschoolers enrolled in the Champions after school program will ride the bus to the elementary school at 3:30. A preschool staff member or Champions employee will escort them to their classroom.

15. What safety features will the church have?

The preschool has a separate entrance with a security buzzer. All outside doors will be locked during the school day. Teachers will have cell phones and walkie talkies connected to the other classrooms and preschool office. Children will be taught about and will participate in documented, monthly safety drills for fire, tornado and intruder.