

## **Program Overview**

Geneva Day School is a private, independent preschool and kindergarten program which provides a rich and nurturing educational experience for each child. Learning occurs through freedom and flexibility of center time, organized circle activities, emerging curriculum, and the “teachable moment.” A large, well-equipped playground, outside garden, plus music/movement and art programs also support development.

Each child is informally assessed in the important developmental areas of motor, language, cognition, self-help and social-emotional growth. A program is designed to maximize learning strengths, interests, and various intelligences. Themes, activities, discussions, and literature, together with art and music, are designed to be irresistible for all students. Learning takes place in warm and supportive, yet challenging and stimulating classrooms with three staff assigned to each fully enrolled classroom.

Teaching staff work with children because they respect and enjoy them. Teachers have at least a four-year degree, with experience and training in early childhood education or elementary education. Assistants have coursework in child growth and development, curriculum planning, and teaching techniques. The school annually provides staff with continuing education, plus training or review in pediatric CPR and First Aid.

The following is a brief review of the various programs offered at Geneva Day School to give you a glimpse into our classes. Each child and each family is unique, and many issues must be considered when choosing a school. Certainly, class times and cost are two important factors. Other factors to consider include:

- the teacher/student ratios,
- a curriculum that allows children to explore, experiment, and develop safely,
- an environment that allows children to work at his or her own pace and to meet age-appropriate goals,
- relationships developed between staff and children, and staff and parents, and
- the reputation and standing of the school in the community.

At Geneva, we support each family while encouraging the optimal development of the whole child. We are happy to work with you to customize a program that meets your child’s and your family’s needs. We hope that you will enjoy your “glimpse into our classes.” If you have any questions, please let us know. We want you and your child to have the best experience possible at our school!

### **Two-Year-Old Program**

This program provides a loving, nurturing, and secure learning environment for the child's first school experience. Goals of the program are to promote independence, a positive self-esteem, appropriate social, language and early math skills, fine and gross motor skills, and to "*encourage a lifelong love of learning.*"

Classes begin with a free play period, during which children are encouraged to participate in art and cognitive learning projects. The projects presented by the teacher are designed to allow each child to accomplish a task at his or her own individual developmental level. After free play, children gather in a circle where a story, game, or movement activities are presented to reinforce the topic of the day. Children eat a healthy snack, join together for a second circle, and then play outside until dismissal.

All activities are tailored to the developmental level of two-year-old children who learn while having fun. Through hands-on and multi-sensory experiences, children discover the wonders of the world around them. Independence, communication and social skills are promoted, though children are presented with opportunities to make choices, too. Individual, large and small group activities are offered with a wide range of age-appropriate materials for active exploration and manipulation. Regular specials in Music and Movement, and visits from The Felt Board Lady, and other special guests also enhance the child's school experience.

*Age: Must be two to begin school*

*Ratio: 3:12*

*Days: Monday, Wednesday & Friday mornings (9:00-11:30 a.m.) or afternoons (12:15-2:45 p.m.)*

*Tuesday & Thursday mornings (9:00-11:30 a.m.) or afternoons (12:15-2:45 p.m.)*

### **Three-Year-Old Three-Day Program**

Self-contained classrooms for three-year-olds offer a loving, nurturing, and secure learning environment. Program goals are to promote appropriate social skills and independence, enrich language, promote thinking in early math and literacy areas, enhance fine and gross motor skills, and develop a thirst for discovery and a "*encourage a lifelong love of learning.*"

Classes provide children with many opportunities to experience and explore the world around them. Learning takes place through a hands-on approach with projects and activities that appeal to the developmental level and interests of the children. Manipulatives are visually attractive, enticing the children to touch, hear, taste, and smell. A feeling of "belonging" is generated as a child learns to play, share, take turns and develop relationships with peers.

Classes begin with a period of free play, during which children are encouraged to participate in art or cognitive learning projects which are presented either one-on-one or in small groups. Then, children gather in a circle where the topic of the day is discussed and learning is reinforced with

a game, movement activity, and story. After circle, the children eat a healthy snack, regroup for a second circle, and enjoy outside play on the playground.

As with all classes, the teaching staff focuses on a variety of topics and events that may range from transportation and community helpers, to seasonal and holiday activities. Teachers develop themes as they spontaneously emerge from the children's play, too. For example, if a group of children is "building" a spaceship, the teacher may include a conversation or story about space exploration, stars or planets. Students in this class use the *Handwriting Without Tears* program. Regular specials in Music and Movement and Elements of Art, visits from The Felt Board Lady, field trips, children's entertainers and other special guests also enhance the child's school experience.

*Age: Must be three by September 1*

*Ratio: 3:14-20*

*Days: Monday, Wednesday & Friday mornings (9:00-11:30 a.m.) or afternoons (12:15-2:45 p.m.)*

### **Three- and Four-Year-Old Open Classroom Program**

The Open Classroom is a unique and wonderful experience for mixed ages of three-and four-year-olds! Each child is assigned to one of two "homerooms," with each "homeroom" class consisting of 20 students, a teacher and two teaching assistants. It is within this group that children enjoy stories and circle activities, review the daily schedule, and perform jobs. Otherwise, the two classes are "open" for joint learning and activities.

After arrival and a brief welcoming circle, the children rotate to various centers where teaching staff work with individuals and small groups. They explore one of seven learning centers (math, language arts/literacy/handwriting, science/social science, sensory, art, dramatic play, blocks) using manipulatives and multi-sensory materials. After center time, children enjoy a healthy snack and then gather for a final circle and story, playground or outside time, and then dismissal.

As children rotate to various centers, activities are designed to allow each child to direct and personalize their own learning experiences. For example, one child may take a set of colored blocks and make a simple tower or configuration disregarding the colors. Another child may take the same blocks and construct a pattern alternating the colors. The tool is the same, but the outcome is one that is developmentally appropriate and unique for each child. At the end of the session, children gather for a final circle, story, and dismissal.

Through center time activities in all development growth areas, the Open Classroom builds a strong foundation for future learning in any school environment. Social skills of problem-solving, decision making and developing responsibility are especially enhanced. Students in this class use the *Handwriting Without Tears* program. Regular specials in Music and Movement and Elements of Art, visits from the Felt Board Lady and children's entertainers, field trips, and other special guests also enhance the child's school experience.

*Age: Must be three by September 1*

*Ratio: 3:20*

*Days: Monday through Friday mornings (9:00-11:30 a.m.) or afternoons (12:15-2:45 p.m.)*

### **Three- and Four-Year-Old All-Day Class**

The All-Day Class provides a warm and nurturing learning environment in which children are supported by teachers and peers, and encouraged to grow socially, emotionally and intellectually.

Primary goals of the class are to develop each child's emerging sense of independence, self-confidence, creativity and natural curiosity. Children learn best by doing. The All-Day Class supports this educational philosophy and encourages each child's growth in language, pre-math, pre-reading, social studies, and science through hands-on activities. Regular specials in Music and Movement and Elements of Art, as well as visits from the Felt Board Lady and children's entertainers, field trips, and other special guests also enhance the child's school experience.

The All-Day Class provides a structured learning environment in which students thrive. The teachers work with the students in small group learning centers to support each child to complete a specific task. Learning activities are integrated throughout the curriculum and reinforced through literature, games, art activities, songs, and dramatic play. Students in the All-Day Class use the *Handwriting Without Tears* program.

The mix of threes and fours in the All-Day Class offers an opportunity for older children to practice leadership skills while they continue to develop their own social-emotional skills. These children are well prepared to successfully transition to kindergarten when they "graduate" from the All-Day Class. For the younger children, this class allows an opportunity to focus on age appropriate skills with wonderful hands-on manipulatives to learn new ideas and concepts from both their teachers and peers.

*Age: Must be three by September 1*

*Ratio: 3:18*

*Days: Monday through Friday (9:00 a.m.-2:45 p.m.)*

### **Pre-Kindergarten**

The Pre-Kindergarten program allows children to refine social, gross and fine motor, language and literacy, handwriting, early math, science, and social studies skills. Teachers foster independence and build self-confidence while facilitating learning.

The day begins and ends with a circle time. The curriculum topic introduced at the first circle directs activities for learning in the centers for the day. Circle activities may include a story, discussion, hands-on project, or movement activity that is relevant to the topic. Children then

move to small groups at various learning centers which are established to promote learning through developmentally-appropriate "hands on" activities. Students in this class use the *Handwriting Without Tears* program. Problem solving skills are promoted as part of an integrated curriculum. Children enjoy part of each day outside on the playground, as well.

Regular specials in Music and Movement, Art Inspired by Nature and Native American Indian Art, visits from the Felt Board Lady other children's entertainers, field trips and other special guests enhance the child's school experience.

*Age: Must be four by September 1*

*Ratio: 3:18*

*Days: Monday through Friday mornings (9:00-11:30 a.m.) or afternoons (12:15-2:45 p.m.)*

### **Kindergarten**

As with other Geneva Day School classes, the kindergarten program is developmentally-based. It promotes learning in the developmental areas of social/emotional, self-help, gross and fine motor, language and cognition. Socialization, manners, and self-help instruction are integrated throughout the program day. Fine motor activities are planned daily to refine basic writing, coloring, and cutting skills. Language, reasoning, and problem solving are challenged and enriched through units on literature, science, and social studies.

Whole language and phonics instruction form the core of the reading program, which is supplemented by the *Handwriting Without Tears* program. Children study upper and lower case letter names and sounds. Students are encouraged to read simple words and books appropriate to their individual reading levels. Composition is taught through instruction in the formation of letters, words, sentences, stories, and personal journals. Mathematics is taught with a hands-on approach through the use of manipulative materials. The skills of counting, grouping, patterning, basic operations, measuring, comparing, understanding time and money are some of the math topics studied.

Special classes in Music and Movement and "Art History" are integral to this program, as are visits from the Felt Board Lady, special guests, and cultural programs which all enhance the child's school experience. The children have many opportunities to work in small, individual, and large groups, both inside the classrooms and in the adjacent outdoor garden area.

Unique to this class is the spring study of ducklings. Eggs are incubated and candled to watch the growing embryos. Students watch the hatching, and then the class cares for the young ducklings for six weeks before delivering them to free-range farm to live with other ducks and chickens. During this period, students keep a journal of drawings with text to show the life cycle of the ducks. Children throughout the school enjoy learning about and watching the ducklings, too.

*Age: Must be five by September 1*

*Ratio: 3:24 (2 teachers, 1 teaching assistant)*

*Days: Monday through Friday (8:50 a.m.-2:45 p.m.)*

### **Music and Movement**

This class is a time to explore and experiment in a musical environment. Young children learn at their own pace as they explore warm-ups and songs. They begin to relate music to movement through games that utilize gross motor skills and imaginative play. The goal of this program is for children to develop inner hearing, rhythmic understandings, eye-hand coordination, and a love of music.

The Music and Movement program integrates movement, dance, songs, stories, instruments, games, puppets, and rhythmic finger plays to create a musical atmosphere in which children can learn that music is everywhere.

Research tells us that music is important in developing emotional growth, for it can express what cannot be said in words. It also confirms that music instruction promotes logical thinking. The Music and Movement classes help facilitate this development.

### **Art Programs**

Three different art programs are offered at Geneva Day School providing a nurturing environment that fosters each child's natural curiosity, talents, and enthusiasm for art. In a safe and accepting atmosphere, each child is given freedom to explore and enjoy the "art process." The children learn that there are many ways to create. Students are encouraged to use their imaginations and to experiment with and modify the art materials provided at each art lesson. As a result, no two creations look alike because the children are allowed to make their own interpretations and express their uniqueness. The emphasis is on the process of art and not on the product. However, the finished masterpieces created in this accepting environment are truly wonderful.

In each of the three art programs, children are exposed to a wide variety of art media and art techniques. Each new art process introduced helps develop new skills, new concepts, and new vocabulary while reinforcing those previously learned. The students are encouraged to use critical thinking skills, to ask questions, to analyze, to use all of their senses, to be curious, and to gain greater awareness and appreciation of the world of art that surrounds them.

#### Art for Three- and Four-Year-Old Children: "The Elements of Art"

In this art program, the children are introduced to the concepts of line, shapes, colors, texture, and space. During the art lessons, the children explore these basic elements of design using their imaginations. There is great excitement as the children see how their actions can dramatically make a change. A color changes when another color is added to it, a series of dots become a line, a line flows from a curve to a zig-zag, a slab of clay becomes a pancake and then a bird's nest! There are endless possibilities as the children explore and experiment.

### Art for the Pre-Kindergarten Class: “Nature & Native American Art”

The Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) art program continues to build on the knowledge and art techniques learned in previous years. The children approach these concepts at new developmental levels and in relationship to two new themes being studied. In the first half of the year, the children explore “Nature Art” and in the second half of the year they explore “Native American Indian Art.” The Pre-K artists enjoy visiting the Meadowside Nature Center with a Native American Indian presentation. At the end-of-the year Annual Art Show, the Pre-K classroom is transformed into its very own “Native American Indian Art Museum” showcasing the children’s magical art work.

### Art for the Kindergarten Class: “Art History”

The Kindergarten “Art History” program is a developmentally appropriate approach to learning about art history. With the use of art reproductions, stories, and discussion, kindergartners are introduced to various periods in art history, from cave art to contemporary art. The Kindergarten children work with a wide variety of art media and create unique masterpieces that reflect the subject matter, mood, style, or technique of a specific art period or artist. A visit to the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. is part of this exciting curriculum. The docents are always amazed by the children’s interest, knowledge and art history vocabulary! At the end-of-the-year Annual Art Show, the Kindergarten children’s masterpieces from cave art to modern art are on display in their own special “Kindergarten Gallery of Art.”

## **Additional Programs**

### **Lunch Bunch**

Lunch Bunch is a program designed to give your child an opportunity to enjoy lunch with school friends, strengthen self-help skills, and develop new relationships. Children are eligible to stay if they can transition easily to lunch and are toilet trained. This program is offered to children age three and older, but some two-year-olds who are toilet trained, may join Lunch Bunch with teacher recommendation.

The Lunch Bunch program runs from 11:30 a.m.-12:15 p.m. and is supervised by teaching assistants. It is a time not only designed for children to enjoy healthy meals from home, but also have conversations around the table and practice appropriate table manners.

Children may either bring their own bag lunch or order a catered lunch when available. When bringing food from home, please remember to pack lunches that do not need to be refrigerated and that Geneva is a **peanut-free school**. Low fat 1% milk and water are always provided.

### **Enrichment Program**

Geneva’s Enrichment Program offers children the opportunity to participate in a variety of fun and exciting classes after a morning or afternoon session. Enrichment staff consists of Geneva Day School teachers and community enrichment professionals who have dedicated themselves to

the nurturing and education of young children. These engaging classes may include soccer, drama, movement, and dance, foreign languages, piano and cooking. Geneva Day School's enrichment classes are limited to children ages three through Kindergarten who are toilet trained.

Enrichment programs are offered Monday through Friday, after lunch (12:15-1:00 p.m.) and after school (3:00-3:45 p.m.).

### **Extended Care**

Extended Care is available for children requiring additional care before school from 8:00-9:00 a.m. or after school from 2:45-6:00 p.m. Supervised by experienced and trained staff, children have opportunities for inside seasonal activities, crafts, and games, plus outside playtime. Children must register in advance with the office and pay additional fees.