



PRESCHOOL PATHWAYS

Name of School: _____

Interview Kit - Part One: High Quality Questions

1. What is your school's philosophy?

2. Is the school accredited?

3. What educational background or other qualifications do the teachers and staff have?

4. How do teachers stay in contact with parents?



PRESCHOOL PATHWAYS

5. What is the teacher to student ratio?

6. What is the class size?

7. What is the daily schedule?

8. How is the curriculum developed?

9. How often are materials swapped out?



PRESCHOOL PATHWAYS

10. How do you measure the children's emotional, cognitive and physical growth?

11. What methods of discipline are used?

12. What are the school's end of the year expectations and goals?



PRESCHOOL PATHWAYS

What is your school's philosophy?

The correct answer to this question is subjective. The right philosophy for your preschooler is dependent on your own family values, the educational goals you have for your preschooler, and most importantly your preschooler's specific individual needs and personality. Common philosophies include Montessori, Reggio Emilia, Waldorf, High Scope, Traditional Developmentally Appropriate, Co-ops, Child Development or Religious programs. To learn more about the different preschool philosophies and to take an interactive quiz which can help you select the best ones for your child, please visit our website.

Is the school accredited?

Formal accreditation ensures that the quality of care your preschooler is experiencing exceeds the minimal state regulations defined for early childhood educational settings. Accreditation agencies hold their associated preschools accountable to maintain best practices and high quality standards by continually conducting formal assessments of the facility and program practices. Accreditation assessment typically includes an evaluation of academic practices, interpersonal relationships and the physical environment. Academic practices include curriculum, teaching methods, and child progress assessments. Interpersonal relationships are evaluated between teacher and student, teacher and families, school and community as well as management and staff. The physical environment is also evaluated for optimal health, safety, and developmental appropriateness. National accreditation organizations include ACSI, AMS, APPLE, COA, NAC, NAEYC, NAFCC and NECPA.

What educational background or other qualifications do the teachers and staff have?

Eligibility requirements for preschool teaching and staff positions vary from state to state and from preschool to preschool. Although each state has designated specific criteria required to obtain a child development certificate or credential, only public preschools are required to enforce this eligibility standard. Ideally, a preschool teacher has earned his or her bachelor's degree in a related field such as Child Development or Education and holds a national Child Development Associate Credential. An effective and skilled teacher with



PRESCHOOL PATHWAYS

in-depth content knowledge and experience is a crucial standard for your preschooler's developmental success.

How do teachers stay in contact with parents?

It is important to enroll in a preschool that is aligned with your preferred communication standards. Communication includes whole class communication such as monthly newsletters and individual communication such as an update on your preschooler's classroom behavior. Communication can also range from an in-person meeting to a phone call or email.

What is the teacher to student ratio?

A teacher to student ratio is the minimal standard of supervision at any given time throughout the day. Ratios vary by state regulation, the range of student ages and class size. NAEYC, a national preschool accreditation agency, suggests that the target teacher to student ratio for a class size of 20 students with an age range from 3 year olds to four year olds is 1:10. In a smaller class however, the ratio changes; in a class of 16 students NAEYC suggests a ratio of 1:8.

What is the class size?

Typically, small class sizes are found to be most optimal because they allow for more one-on-one attention between the teacher and student which helps to ensure each student's unique needs are being met. With that said, large class sizes with small ratios can also provide opportunities for one-on-one attention as well as offer more opportunities for varied social interaction and in addition raise the possibility of an increase in classroom diversity. Ultimately, the ideal class size depends on each child's individual temperament. For example, if your preschooler has a slow-to-warm up temperament with shy tendencies then a large class size might feel overwhelming and stressful to them and a smaller class size would be better suited for them.

What is the daily schedule?

Rapid development takes place during the first five years of life and it is crucial that your preschooler has ample exercise in all developmental domains; Language, Physical, Cognitive, Social and Emotional. In a ideal preschool classroom children are exposed to



PRESCHOOL PATHWAYS

language through multiple specific activities such as morning Circle Time when they sing songs, discuss the calendar and weather, Reading Time when children have to opportunity to be read to and Writing Centers where children practicing tracing letters and writing. Physical development should include both fine and gross motor activities, students should have the opportunity to engage in gross motor movement for about 90 to 120 minutes per day. Cognitive development should include daily engagement with age appropriate materials like building blocks and teacher facilitated activities like science experiments and hands on projects. Social and emotional development should be addressed in the schedule by allowing for different group sizes throughout the day and different forms of group and individual participation.

How is the curriculum developed?

Curriculum should be emergent meaning it is developed from the student's current interests and curiosities. Emergent curriculum is an effective way to facilitate a preschooler's genuine motivation to learn because when curriculum is tailored to a child's interests it becomes meaningful and significant to the child. Implementing emergent curriculum should be done with hands-on activities, projects and sensory experiences.

How often are materials swapped out?

Children's rapid development throughout the preschool years results in a constant flow of him or her achieving new milestones and developmental skills which requires an environment that progresses alongside the child. Materials should gradually advance in difficulty level and changed monthly. Maintaining a frequent rotation of materials also helps to keep the children engaged and interested in the classroom.

How do you measure the children's emotional, cognitive and physical growth?

A child development assessment is an important tool used to measure a child's competency level in specific developmental domains. Assessment tools range in what domains are assessed, how the information is recorded and how the information is measured. Some assessment tools assess only language and literacy skills while others include all four domains. Most assessments tools use observation notes to record and scale information through a rating system while other assessments tools may use a standardized test, checklist,



PRESCHOOL PATHWAYS

portfolio or report to record and measure a child's development. Common assessment tools include Desired Results, High Scope and The Work Sampling System.

What methods of discipline are used?

Positive reinforcement should be the favored method of discipline. All discipline methods should be utilized in a way that helps the child comprehend what the inappropriate behavior was, why the behavior was inappropriate and how to correct the behavior. Most disciplinary action should result in teachable moments while natural consequences should be only be used if necessary.

What are the school's end of the year expectations and goals?

Goals should include specific skill advancements from each developmental domain that are age appropriate and reflect the program's philosophy. Academic based programs should include goals with an emphasis on school readiness skills such as pencil grasp development, letter and number recognition, and cooperatively working in groups.

PRESCHOOL PATHWAYS

Interview Kit - Part Two: Environmental Checklist

Environment Lighting	<input type="checkbox"/> BAD	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> GREAT
Availability of Natural Light (YN)	<input type="checkbox"/> BAD	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> GREAT
Overall Control of Lighting	<input type="checkbox"/> BAD	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> GREAT

Condition of Floors and Walls	<input type="checkbox"/> BAD	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> GREAT
Overall Cleanliness of Space	<input type="checkbox"/> BAD	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> GREAT
Availability of Open Space	<input type="checkbox"/> BAD	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> GREAT
Overall Size of Space	<input type="checkbox"/> BAD	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> GREAT
Wheelchair and Accessibility Access (YN)	<input type="checkbox"/> BAD	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> GREAT

Environment Temperature	<input type="checkbox"/> BAD	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> GREAT
Availability of Ventilation (YN)	<input type="checkbox"/> BAD	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> GREAT
Ability to Control Heating / Cooling	<input type="checkbox"/> BAD	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> GREAT

Condition and Cleanliness of Furniture	<input type="checkbox"/> BAD	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> GREAT
Durability of Furniture Choices	<input type="checkbox"/> BAD	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> GREAT
Availability of Child-Sized Furniture	<input type="checkbox"/> BAD	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> GREAT
Availability of Play Shelves / Cubbies (YN)	<input type="checkbox"/> BAD	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> GREAT
Amount of Furniture per Activity	<input type="checkbox"/> BAD	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> GREAT
Availability of Soft Furniture	<input type="checkbox"/> BAD	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> GREAT

Organization of Room	<input type="checkbox"/> BAD	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> GREAT
Ability to Supervise over Room	<input type="checkbox"/> BAD	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> GREAT
Materials Accessible for Independent Use (YN)	<input type="checkbox"/> BAD	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> GREAT
Separation Between Quiet and Noisy Spaces	<input type="checkbox"/> BAD	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> GREAT
Availability of Undisturbed Cozy Area (YN)	<input type="checkbox"/> BAD	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> GREAT
Availability of Different Interest Centers	<input type="checkbox"/> BAD	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> GREAT
Children can Play Independently from Peers (YN)	<input type="checkbox"/> BAD	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> GREAT
Availability of Separate Easels and Writing Centers	<input type="checkbox"/> BAD	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> GREAT

PRESCHOOL PATHWAYS

Amount of Childrens' Artwork Displayed	<input type="checkbox"/> BAD	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> GREAT
Availability of 3D Artwork on Display (YN)	<input type="checkbox"/> BAD	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> GREAT
Availability of Child-Centered Posters on Display	<input type="checkbox"/> BAD	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> GREAT
Amount of Student Pictures Displayed	<input type="checkbox"/> BAD	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> GREAT
Amount of Current Student Interests on Display	<input type="checkbox"/> BAD	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> GREAT

Outdoor Space Available for Gross Motor Play (YN)	<input type="checkbox"/> BAD	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> GREAT
Availability of Shade Outside	<input type="checkbox"/> BAD	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> GREAT
Availability of Water Outside	<input type="checkbox"/> BAD	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> GREAT
Availability of Bathrooms Outside	<input type="checkbox"/> BAD	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> GREAT
Amount of Hard and Soft Surfaces Available	<input type="checkbox"/> BAD	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> GREAT
Overall Size of Play Area for Multiple Activities	<input type="checkbox"/> BAD	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> GREAT

Safety of Equipment	<input type="checkbox"/> BAD	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> GREAT
Availability of Age-Appropriate Equipment	<input type="checkbox"/> BAD	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> GREAT
Equipment Promoting Multiple Gross Motor Skills	<input type="checkbox"/> BAD	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> GREAT
Equipment Promoting Advanced Gross Motor Skills	<input type="checkbox"/> BAD	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> GREAT
Equipment Variety	<input type="checkbox"/> BAD	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> GREAT
Amount of Equipment Available	<input type="checkbox"/> BAD	<input type="checkbox"/> OK	<input type="checkbox"/> GREAT