

Schools for tots list:

Services, concerns, philosophies, goals

By LORRAINE McCLISH

Mothers who are shopping for a school for their toddlers this fall are going to find a mixed bag offering, with mixed philosophies, aims, directions and concerns.

Roughly, the schools come in three categories—day care, preschool and co-operative, but even that can be confusing to the first-time shopper.

Some mothers hope to find a social outlet for their child. Some want an early learning program. Some need a baby-sitter for a few hours or an entire day.

As one nursery school director put it, "The woman who wants her child to learn to draw within the lines on a coloring book is not the same woman who wants a school that stresses stimulating the imagination."

Another director said, "I can tell within a few minutes into a phone conversation whether we are all right or all wrong for her."

We canvassed the area of schools for the little ones in Farmington and Farmington Hills this month, and pass on the information we collected.

The schools which responded to our inquiry are listed in alphabetical order. All are accepting registrations now.

ARTSTART

As the name implies, ArtStart is a cultural enrichment program with a focus on the arts aimed to nurture self-esteem and self-expression in constructive, wholesome ways. The developmental needs of preschoolers on physical, emotional and intellectual levels are met with a program both structured and flexible.

Small group experiences offer language arts, drama, painting, creative movement, puppetry, rhythm band and oral composition.

Director Nancy Bates boasts that her staff has backgrounds that include early childhood education, music majors, an exhibiting artist, psychologists, performing arts, "and most important, all are sensitive mothers." The ratio of child to teacher is about six to one.

Small groups meet each school day with a drama teacher, an art teacher and a music teacher. Enrichment comes from artists, gymnasts, veter-

narians and ballerinas, who visit periodically, as well as members of The Gauding Plaza, who serve as grandmothers and grandfathers.

ArtStart is held in spacious facilities in Mercy Conference Center, 2860 Eleven Mile, Farmington Hills.

Tots may be enrolled for an entire season, or parents can arrange to drop their children off there for one morning, afternoon or a day.

Ingram will take inquiries by calling her at 478-3142.

CHILDREN'S WORLD

Children's World subtiles itself as The Early Learning Center. It offers an educational day care, preschool, kindergarten and summer and after-school care programs.

The staff believes it is essential that parents take the lead in encouraging the development of the child, but to help the child reach its fullest level of potential, participation with other children, in a professional organized program, can be of immense value.

The philosophy is "to provide a rich, warm and joyous environment for discovery, and to build on children's curiosity to help them learn and develop."

Activities are planned to achieve a feeling of security which come through consistency, and to maintain a healthy balance between individual exploration and group interaction.

The program provides opportunities for each child to develop language and number concepts, explore new materials, express feelings and develop large and small muscles.

There are 13 Children's World Centers in the Detroit area. The one in Farmington Hills is at 29200 Shawwassee, at Nine Mile.

Inquiries will be taken by calling Debra Britton at the local center, 478-8110.

EARLY CHILDHOOD

Three certified teachers, plus aides from North Farmington High School, Madonna College and Mercy High School who are studying child development, carry on classes limited to less than 25 children in Early Childhood Nursery. The school uses a large section and the grounds of First Church of God at 25717 Power, Farmington Hills.

Barbara Tangora and Billie Karhu lead morning and afternoon sessions for children to learn, explore and develop in an atmosphere of love and concern," said Mrs. Karhu.

"Our program focuses on the individuality of each child, helping the child to investigate his world as he grows physically, mentally and socially."

Tots are encouraged to learn as they play, and share their experiences with other children.

The programs provide learning experiences through science, cooking, field trips, self-expression in art, music and role playing.

The telephone number at the nursery is 477-2235. Mrs. Tangora can be reached by calling 477-8989. Mrs. Karhu's number is 477-9198.

EARLY YEARS CHILD CARE CENTER

Marjorie Bundy directs Early Years Child Care Center at 32325 Gill, Farmington Road, with a firm belief that the early years of a child's life sets the stage for the later ones.

"By the time a child is 5, his personality is mostly set," she says, "so it is important that he receive every advantage in developing the social, emotional, intellectual, physical and creative experiences he can."

"This will help him to develop to his fullest potential."

The center aims to take a child from where he's at to as far as he can go for the totality of experiences for the whole child in a home-like atmosphere.

The programs offers children freedom to explore and discover the world around them through books, music, art, field trips, play and other creative activities, along with experiences in nature and science.

Preschool is offered mornings and afternoons. Day care is offered full or part-time, from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Mrs. Bundy will take inquiries by calling her at the center, 478-7840.

FARMINGTON HILLS NURSERY SCHOOL

Farmington Hills Nursery School, the area's newest school for tots, opens in September in the Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church complex at 2225 Middlebelt with directors Helen Konduros and Caroline Bonanni.

"Our main concerns are the fulfillment of each child's needs and provision of a wide variety of programs to choose from for today's versatile woman," said Ms. Konduros.

"All child care and nursery school options will provide for each child's education, physical and emotional development," she said.

The school will be open from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. It offers a regular three-hour nursery or kindergarten educational program for two to five days a week with or without lunch; a full day's care from six to 11 hours.

Parents may change from one program to another to meet their needs.

The teaching methods offer an eclectic approach, "drawing the best of the traditional and newest techniques," Ms. Konduros said.

The telephone number at the school is 476-3110.

THE HONEY TREE

Geraldine Pugh operates The Honey Tree Nursery School located in Incaonation Lutheran Church, 30333 Ten Mile, Farmington Hills.



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Christa Paisley visited Early Childhood Nursery's open house this week and found she was adept at some of the indoor gym equipment. (Photo by Allen Schlossberg)

Some points to ponder

The National Association for the Education of Young Children stresses that a good early childhood program provide continuous developmental educational experiences while children are away from their parents.

For those who are in the process of selecting a program, the following points are listed for important consideration.

•Is there space for active play, and still enough other space where quiet play may go undisturbed, both indoors and out?

•Does every staff member understand what to do in an emergency?

•Does the center require a full written report from a health care resource before a child is admitted?

•Do the adults help children accept the physical difference between boys and girls in a matter-of-fact way? Are toileting and undressing handled casually? Are handicaps and illnesses accepted in an honest and open manner?

•Does the center provide appropriate and sufficient equipment and materials? Are they readily available for each child's enjoyment and development?

•Are teachers comfortable with the fact that children of differing ages and interests will be more or less successful at different activities?

•Does the center plan for visitors or trips that will broaden the child's understandings?

•Are the children freely conversing with each other as well as the adults?

•Do staff members help children learn to consider others' rights, yet also to stand up for personal rights when necessary?

•Does the center welcome parents to observe, discuss policy, make suggestions and perhaps participate?

•Are the children's true feelings accepted and is each child's individualism observed and respected?

•Does the staff stress children's accomplishments and progress as well as their problems?

"Our purpose is to give the children a happy, meaningful, first experience in school," she said. "We work with the children to challenge and develop each of them to the full extent of their own capabilities."

This is done by exposing the youngsters to as many experiences as possible in the areas of art, music, science, literature, reading readiness and social adjustment.

"Our program," she said, "is truly a learning experience."

Two certified teachers are assisted by aides at all sessions.

Mrs. Pugh will take inquiries at the school, 661-2233.

MISS ROSE'S CHILDREN'S WOORLD

Anna Wisniewski is the school administrator for Miss Rose's Children's World at 28375 Halsted, Farmington Hills, where "children are respected individuals," she said.

Development of the whole child, with positive and total growth at the child's own rate of progress is stressed.

"Children learn through process, not product orientation," she continued.

"This nursery program was created to give preschool-aged children an opportunity for physical, sensory, cognitive, emotional, social and verbal development through interaction with their peers and caring adults in a group setting."

Daily music lessons are given by a specially trained teacher in large, spacious, well-supplied classrooms. The young have access to barnyard animals. Lunches are available in morning sessions only. Transportation to and from school is available.

She can be reached at the school for inquiries by calling 653-4666.

RED BELL NURSERY

A typical day in Red Bell Nursery, on the corner of Thirteen Mile and Greening in Farmington, will include physical training, art, music, science, social studies and some lessons on health and safety. The nursery maintains a staff of 10 who help in teaching and assisting on a 21-acre grassy, tree-shaded site.

In purpose, the staff says, for your child is "fun and friends." For the parent, "seeing the emotional, social, intellectual and physical development of the child."

The program aims to supplement the home with a flexible schedule geared to character building in each individual. Every effort is made to provide opportunities for successful interpersonal adjustment, looking forward to the day when school officially opens for the youngster, and so making the transition from home to school a little smoother.

Only after the student is familiar with the keyboard is he introduced to musical language and terms. Parents are expected to assist with lessons and for children under six, mothers are required to attend. The method is, however, not exclusively for small children.

Blue Lake Camp is in Twin Lake and is attended by many metropolitan area children. For more information call Phyllis Jansma in Fremont, (616) 924-0527.

Piano workshop set

A two-day piano workshop will be conducted at Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp on Sept. 8 and 9.

The workshop will employ a method of instruction that allows children as young as age three to learn piano. Stewart piano instruction is named for its creator, Elsie Stewart. It teaches students to play before they can read notes.

By first learning to play simple piano pieces, students sharpen fingering skills and eye-hand coordination before they must tackle more difficult

The school specifically asks that girls wear dresses and boys refrain from blue jeans.

The school is open from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday. Fall and part-time programs are offered, and lunch is available.

Inquiries will be taken by calling the school at MA5-3020.

SETON NURSERY SCHOOL AND DAY CARE CENTER

Seton is a non-profit nursery school, kindergarten and day care center, sponsored by the Daughters of Charity to meet the needs of the community in the areas of extended day care, early learning and effective parenting. It is located on the grounds of St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Home, 29475 Inlister, Farmington.

The operation runs year round, from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., directed by Ann Coyle with flexible hours to meet individual needs, and hot lunches.

Although Seton is operated by Catholic Sisters, Ms. Coyle stresses, "The beliefs of parents are respected. All children are welcome."

The program is flexibly structured to meet individual needs for children to develop at their own rate, based on his or her readiness to learn. Opportunities are provided for socialization, exploration, creative expression, mastery of language and motor skills, creative play and learning.

"Our overriding goal is that your child develop his potential and feel good about himself and the world around him," Ms. Coyle said. "Value is placed on work ideas and feelings while he is encouraged and guided toward doing as much as possible on his own to add to his self-confidence."

Definite limits are set on inappropriate or disruptive behavior.

"This type of behavior is redirected into acceptable activity and alternative ways of dealing with such situations are learned," Ms. Coyle said.

The school utilizes one building and much of the grounds in the Sarah Fisher Home complex.

Ms. Coyle will take inquiries by calling her at 625-6990 or 398-1751.



At Red Bell Nursery, youngsters pick and choose their activities from a wide variety of equipment on the grounds. Jenny Brittin (above) chooses solitary play in the sandbox. At right, Mike Farrell wants to know what Bin Wong and Jason Maurice are doing inside that barrel. (Photos by Allen Schlossberg)



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