

Class and Program Overview

Geneva Day School is a private, independent preschool and kindergarten facility which provides nurturing educational experiences for young students. Learning occurs in class meetings and developmentally appropriate pre-academic activities, shaped by an emerging curriculum that stems from teachable moments and the diverse interests of students. Children are scheduled for outside time every day on two well-equipped playgrounds, in addition to specialized weekly experiences in Art, Environmental Education, Mindfulness, and Physical Education, as well as field trips and other cultural events.

After a comfortable transition period to school, children are informally assessed in the important developmental areas of motor, language, cognition, self-help and social-emotional growth. Then, Teachers design learning goals that utilize hands-on, multi-sensory, and high interest materials. Goals are shared with families so that both home and school work together.

A carpool system is used for daily drop-off, and later pick-up purposes. After everyone's arrival, with time to socialize and play, clean-up is announced. Circle time takes place to discuss or read daily plans, and perform various class jobs. Students are assigned to and rotate through various learning centers for small group work with teaching staff. A snack and playground time occur each day, and a closing circle includes stories and songs.

Teaching staff work with young children because they respect and enjoy them. Lead Teachers have at least a 4-year degree with experience and training in early childhood, elementary or special education. Teaching Assistants have at least 90 hours of coursework in early childhood growth and development, as well as curriculum planning.

We are happy to work with you to customize a school experience that meets your child's and your family's needs; each child and family is unique and we value all of ours.

Some of the unique attributes for which we are known include:

- Low student – teacher ratio.
- A developmentally appropriate curriculum which allows students to explore, experiment, develop and practice early academic skills in a safe and nurturing environment.
- An atmosphere that respects and allows children to work at their own pace to achieve goals.
- Positive relationships with staff and students, and staff and parents.
- Warmth of reputation and overall standing in the community.

Thank you for exploring Geneva Day School. The following provides a brief overview of the classes and programs offered. Please feel free to contact us anytime with further questions.

Classes:

Kindergarten

Kindergarten is developmentally based and prepares students for entry into other public or private schools. It promotes learning of pre-academic skills for reading and writing, language and cognition, science and STEAM, social-emotional skills and manners, as well as gross and fine motor skills. Reasoning, problem solving, and vocabulary are enriched through units on literature, science, and social studies.

Whole language and phonics instruction form the core of the reading program. Students study letter names and phonemes, as well as handwriting through *Learning Without Tears* materials. They learn how to complete and write sentences, make daily journal entries, and practice beginning composition skills. Reading practice takes place 1:1 with a Teacher so that instruction is individually based.

Mathematics is taught through a hands-on approach with manipulative materials.

Students practice reciting and writing numbers, patterning, grouping and comparing sets, measuring, and using basic operations, among other skills.

This class also includes frequent field trips, cultural experiences, and a specialized art program known as *Art Through the Ages*. One unique aspect of this class is the spring study of the life cycle of ducks. It includes incubating duck eggs, candling them daily to observe growth, journaling progress, observing hatching, and caring for ducklings with a finale field trip that takes them to a local farm or the 4-H.

Pre-Kindergarten

The Pre-K Class offers developmentally appropriate learning in a warm and nurturing environment which successfully prepares students for kindergarten the following year. These students continue to build social and emotional skills, as well as pre-academic skills (literacy, math, STEAM, social studies, fine/gross motor) in a structured classroom setting. Emphasis is placed on helping each child achieve confidence and independence, all of which contribute to a “lifelong love of learning.”

A typical day in Pre-K begins with self-directed free play and then the first of two class circle times. Hands-on learning center activities follow which support pre-academic learning. Pre-K students use *Learning Without Tears* program materials, and are provided many opportunities throughout the day to practice phonemic awareness, sight word reading, and math concepts. During circle time, songs, finger play, movement activities, and stories are included. Afterwards, a healthy snack is offered, and students get ready to go outside to play before dismissal.

A unique component of the Pre-K curriculum is the exciting study of the bald eagle life cycle. Students observe a pair of nesting eagles as they raise their young eaglets, through an eagle cam at the National Arboretum. It is a “National Geographic style” wonder to watch nest building, hatchings, the arrival and growth of the young eaglets, and eventually their fledging the nest. Students record observations in their science journals. Another fun and meaningful Pre-K tradition is Science Friday, during which students explore STEAM in highly innovative, hands-on experiments. Such experiences inspire curiosity and instill a love of science, nature, and math.

The specialized art program for Pre-K students, known as “Nature and Native American Art,” is unique to this class and offers a spectacular discovery of art inspired by nature and American Indians. Field trips and other special guests enhance the Pre-K school experience.

Full-Day 4 Year Old Class

Families may extend the school day for their 4s to a full-day class. This is a combination of the Five Day Class in the morning and the Pre-K Class in the afternoon. Students remain with the same group of students for both classes and their lunch program.

Three and Four Year, Five-Day Class

This class is a unique and wonderful experience for mixed ages of three and four year olds! It is a cohesive group of students and staff with a ratio of 6-7 to 1. Students enjoy and rotate through structured learning centers which are designed to address individual strengths and abilities.

After arrival and check-in procedures are completed, students greet and socialize with friends, and select from a range of free-choice activities. When all children have arrived and settled, they clean-up and prepare for the first of two circle times. Children gather to sing songs, recite poems, go over the schedule for the day, and perform jobs.

Children then move to assigned small group centers to work with teaching staff on such activities as art, dramatic play and role playing, construction, motor skills, as well as pre-academic activities of literacy-handwriting, and math-science. During the course of a typical week, children visit all centers to engage with multi-sensory, hands-on and highly interesting manipulatives.

A second circle involves songs and a story, before a snack is served. The class then enjoys time outside on the playground for recess.

During the week, students participate in other specialized enriching classes and a unique “Elements of Art” program. During the year, they also enjoy cultural activities and field trips, including the ever-popular creek walk.

Three Year Old Class

This part-time class for 3s offers a loving, nurturing, and secure learning environment in which to practice developing skills. Goals address positive social interactions, independence, thinking skills, enriching oral language and pre-literacy, early math and science awareness, gross and fine motor skills, and the joy of discovery as students begin a “lifelong love of learning.”

This class provides students 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 young children. Manipulatives are visually attractive and enticing to children so as to encourage sensory exploration. Some materials are used from the *Learning Without Tears* program and “Letter of the Week” Activities to introduce letter names and phonemic awareness.

Class begins with a period of free play, during which children are encouraged to participate in art or cognitive learning projects. Then, they clean-up and gather for circle time, during which the theme of the day is discussed and learning may be reinforced with a game, movement activity, or story. Small center times are provided, along with a healthy snack, a second circle, and outside time on the playground.

Two and Three Year Old Class – The All-Day Class

The All-Day Class provides a warm and nurturing learning environment in which children are supported by teachers and peers, and grow socially, emotionally, and intellectually. Primary goals for the class are to promote an emerging sense of independence, self-confidence, creativity, and natural curiosity. Children learn best by doing, so all pre-academic learning activities are multi-sensory with hands-on manipulatives. Instruction addresses language arts of oral expression and vocabulary development, early math and literacy skills, gross and fine motor development, as well as social studies, science, and cooking.

The structure of this class allows teachers to work with small student groups at various levels. Literature, games, art, songs, finger play, and dramatic play are a part of each day. A quiet time for napping is provided, as well.

The mix of ages in the All-Day Class offers the opportunity for older children to practice leadership skills as they continue to develop their own social-emotional skills. Younger students learn from not only their teachers, but also their peers.

Two Year Old Class

The part-time 2s class is a wonderful introduction to the first joys of school! Primary goals are to support a successful transition to school, develop independence and positive self-esteem, learn to follow class routines and directions, make new friends, and develop social skills such as turn-taking and cooperation.

Free play begins in class with learning activities that are presented at a child’s own developmental level. These are hands-on and multi-sensory experiences accompanied by materials to facilitate attention, active play, completion of a task, and feelings of success. After clean-up, a short circle time follows with songs, finger play, movement activities, and stories to reinforce the theme of the day. This period slowly extends in time so that circle activities are much longer by the middle and end of the year, eliciting greater involvement and attentiveness.

Students have a healthy snack, play outside on the playground, and join together inside for a second circle and projects before dismissal.

Programs:

Art

Specialized art instruction continues to be a favorite weekly activity for students 3-6 years at Geneva. Three different curricula are presented: *Elements of Art* for 3s and 4s, *Nature and Native American Art* for the Pre-Kindergarten Classes, and *Art Through the Ages* for Kindergarten.

At the beginning of each lesson, art concepts and vocabulary are introduced and reviewed. Students are encouraged to be interactive in making observations, asking questions, manipulating objects/artefacts, and experimenting with different art media and techniques. The process of each activity is considered more important than the product, though all “masterpieces” are wonderful for their unique interpretations of an assignment. When the child’s art comes home, a written explanation of the concept and process is attached so families may also appreciate the depth of these lessons.

Environmental Education

As a Maryland Green School, Geneva values the natural environment and intentionally teaches stewardship. This program is conducted outside in all types of weather within the Children’s Garden. Presentations in the outdoor classroom include stories and information, songs, dances, and games. Arts and crafts projects are completed at various picnic tables.

Opportunities to enjoy Nature occur through observing changes in trees and clouds or searching for Monarch caterpillars within our milkweed gardens. Students learn about animals (frogs, squirrels, turkeys, and more), insects (bees and butterflies, among others), as well as plants (daffodils and pumpkins receive special focus). Student-scientists revel in exploring the unique ecosystem of our nearby creek. Important environmental lessons are brought to life for our young naturalists as they, too, discover and engage in the wonders of nature.

Mindfulness

Geneva is fortunate to be able to provide Mindfulness instruction to students 3–5 years. In weekly, quiet circle times, children practice calming breathing techniques, focusing on the present moment, developing gratitude, and being kind. The Instructor uses a variety of props, books and songs designed to enhance concentration, eliminate distractions, and identify emotions. In this quest for “calm,” yoga poses are introduced to promote balance, coordination, and flexibility.

Some of the many positive outcomes of this class have implications for home. One family reported that, after a child had difficulty sitting at the dinner table, he stood up and went upstairs to his room. After a few minutes, he returned and announced he was ready for dinner now that he was more mindful and had calmed down!

Physical Education (P.E.)

Weekly P.E. that addresses various gross motor goals for young children is provided to all Geneva students. Often, this takes place outdoors as a function of weather.

As a “high energy” program, students individually or in small groups engage in a wide range of gross motor skills: warm-up calisthenics, balancing, running, jumping, hopping, skipping, climbing, stepping/jumping over and in, sliding, pushing/rolling balls, catching, reaching, walking on balance beams or ropes, following directions, and much, much more. Developmental age and individual goals are addressed, just as challenges for those who are ready are presented. This program is always fun and a great opportunity to exercise the mind, body and imagination!

Fours Enrichment

This special enrichment program is designed for 4s who will be enrolling in kindergarten the following school year. The program builds on and provides extra practice in reading, writing, and math skills that are already being taught in classrooms. The program utilizes the Whole Language Approach with early reading books, literacy/math centers, and math manipulatives. Games, art, songs, and weekly cooking projects are also incorporated into the program.

Specific skills will include:

Literacy Skills:

- Rhyming words
- Use of syllables
- Word Families
- Story structure
- Sight words

Math Skills:

- Graphing
- Measurement
- Number sense

Writing Skills:

- Journals
- Letters
- Names
- Numbers