

Mustard Seed Preschool: At a Glance 2008-09

Contact: Rina Woodfin & Shirley Wong, Co-Directors
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Type of Program: Developmental and play based (with emphasis on self-regulation in a structured environment)

Faculty Credentials: ECE Certified Teachers, many with BA and advanced degrees. Co-director, MA Psychology, ECE Program Director Credential. Low staff turnover.

Ages: 18 months to 5 years

Number of children: 66

Child/Adult Ratio: 4:1 for Toddlers, 5:1 for 2 yrs., 6:1 for 3 yrs, 7/8:1 for 4-5 yrs. Excellent ratio for afternoon program in a mixed age group, fostering a home-like atmosphere.

Number of classrooms: 5

Ages mixed or separated: Classrooms are separated by age until 1:00pm. Afternoon program (from 1:00pm to 4:00pm) for children in the Toddler Option is separate from the children in the Preschool Option. Children of all ages are together in one classroom from 4:00pm-6:00pm.

Program hours: 7:30am-9am (early morning drop-off); 9am-1pm (morning session); 1pm-6pm (afternoon session)

Nap/Quiet Time: Yes. Nappers (1:00 pm-4:00 pm); resters & early risers (2:00 pm-3:30 pm); Individualized plan

Monthly Tuition: *Toddler Option (18 months-2.9 years old) Nanny care by professionals in the PM*

Days	9am – 1pm	9am – 3pm	9am – 6pm	7:30am – 1pm	7:30am – 3pm	7:30am – 6pm
TTh	\$ 390	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
MWF or TTh and one other day	\$ 510	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
MTWThF	\$ 595	\$ 1,115	\$ 1,925	\$ 980	\$ 1,520	\$ 2,330

Preschool Option (2.9 years old and up)

7:30 to 8	8 to 9	Days	9 to 1	1 to 2	1 to 3	1 to 4	1 to 5	1 to 6
+\$45	+\$75	1 day	-----	+\$65	+\$120	+\$170	+\$220	+\$270
+\$55	+\$100	2 days	\$ 390	+\$115	+\$170	+\$235	+\$285	+\$335
+\$65	+\$120	3 days	\$ 510	+\$130	+\$200	+\$270	+\$335	+\$390
+\$80	+\$140	4 days	-----	+\$150	+\$230	+\$305	+\$380	+\$450
+\$90	+\$160	5 days	\$ 595	+\$170	+\$265	+\$345	+\$430	+\$510

Elective Classes: Dance, Karate, French, & Spanish classes are offered for additional fees. Music and gymnastic classes are offered to all Mustard Seed children at no additional cost.

Potty training: Required for the pre-K classrooms, not for the toddlers & young preschool classrooms. Parents provide diapers.

Discipline: Developmentally appropriate limits to nurture social-emotional growth. Redirection, clarifying appropriate choices, problem solving, conflict resolution, logical consequences, “sit out” as a learning tool, not as punishment.

Food provided: Children bring lunch and snacks from home. Limited snacks provided.

Vacation schedule: Most national holidays are observed (please see our school calendar for details). Optional: Summer session (8 weeks) and holiday care (HC) are offered for additional fees. HC is offered during Easter (1 week), Christmas (2 weeks), and the weeks between summer session and first day of regular school.

Indoor Activities: Toys, blocks, manipulatives, puzzles, sensory-tactile area, dramatic play area, science & exploration, kitchen play area, doll house, classroom lofts, cozy reading area, projects & art area, and circle time.

Outdoor Activities: Newly remodeled play yard with plants, trees, pet rabbit, sand box, climbing structure with slide, play houses, water play, tricycles, and basketball.

Comments: A 100% non-profit Christian preschool operated by the Berkeley Covenant Church. We have an ethnically diverse staff and student population. All backgrounds and faith traditions welcomed.

Mission Statement: We strive to develop the whole child in a rich and varied school environment, balancing structure and free choice, child-initiated and teacher directed activities, form and freedom. We encourage children to build concepts, develop new interests and competencies, understand and express their feelings, and develop a healthy sense of self.



Information Packet

1640 Hopkins Street, Berkeley, CA 94707

Main Office: 510-527-6627

Steps to Enrollment

- Read this **Information Packet**.
- Call to schedule an appointment to **visit the school with your child while we are in session**.
- If you decide to enroll your child, complete a **Registration Form** and return it to our main office with payments of registration fee and one month's tuition deposit.
Please see below about our Wait List Policy.
- When a space at the preschool is confirmed for your child, you will receive an **Enrollment Packet**. Complete and return all forms to the school as soon as possible.
- Attend one of our **Parent Orientation Meetings** (the Monday before our summer session and the Thursday before Labor Day) to ask questions, learn more about our school's policies and procedures, meet your child's teachers, and visit your child's classroom.
- The First Day of school** begins the following Monday!

About Our Wait List Policy

When our enrollment is full, you may choose to be placed on our wait list. To be placed on the school's wait list, submit a completed registration form with one month's tuition deposit and a non-refundable registration fee. When a space is available for your child, we will notify you by phone. **If you decide not to enroll your child at The Mustard Seed Preschool after a space has been offered, then you will forfeit 50% of the tuition deposit.** In the event that the school is not able to find a space for your child at the time when you inform the school that you no longer wish to remain on the wait list, you will be fully refunded your one month's tuition deposit. Alternatively, you may elect to have your registration and tuition deposit applied to the following school year or any mid-year openings that may occur.

Thank you for your interest in Mustard Seed Preschool. After reviewing our information packet, if you have further questions about the school, or have a specific concern or need that you would like to discuss with us, please do not hesitate to call us.

We are a small community school, striving to make children and parents feel a part of a family. We have an ethnically and culturally diverse staff and student population. Our teachers are experienced in Early Childhood Education and have a deep love for God and children. Our low staff turnover helps us to maintain a stable, high quality program year after year.

Philosophy

We provide a rich and varied school environment that encourages the physical, cognitive, social, emotional, creative and spiritual growth of children.

Our program balances structure and free-choice, child initiated play and teacher directed activities, adult training and self-regulated development, creative expression and following directions, form and freedom. Our curriculum is structured to help children develop a sense of love and respect, as well as relatedness with their peers and teachers.

We respect children's individual needs, skills, and interests and allow them to explore and grow at their own pace. We treat each child with love and respect as a unique individual, created in the image of and loved by God. We encourage children to love themselves, others, and all of creation. We are a non-denominational, non-profit Christian school and we welcome families from all backgrounds and faith traditions.

Program Structure

The program structure of Mustard Seed Preschool consists of the Toddler Option (18 months—2.9 years old) and the Preschool Option (2.9—5 years old). Both options have flexible schedules: 2 days (TTh); 3 days (MWF; TTh and one other day); or 5 days a week. A school year includes 180 school days, 8 weeks summer session and 7 weeks holiday care. School is closed on national holidays observed by the school.

Our regular program includes the morning sessions (9:00AM-1:00PM) and/or extended care hours, which includes early morning drop-off (7:30AM-9:00AM) and afternoon extended care (1:00PM-6:00PM). Nap time begins at 1:00PM and rest time begins at 2:00PM.

Toddler Option (18 months—2.9 years old)

The philosophy for both toddler and preschool options is the same but the structure is flexible to meet the developmental, and especially the emotional, needs of the toddlers. Toddlers in the morning sessions are placed in either the "18-30 months" classroom or the "2-2.9 years" classroom. The teacher-child ratio is kept low. Toddlers who stay for the afternoon program will nap in a room separate from the older children. Unlike older children, toddlers may have emotional needs that require a longer process to transition them into the nap routine. Therefore, the

teacher-child ratio is 1:2 with a group size of 4. Toddlers may rejoin the mixed age at 4pm when the class returns to a small group size.

Children who are not yet 2.9 years old but are able to fully transition to the afternoon program with the older children may be considered for enrollment in the Preschool Option and its tuition rate. With the afternoon head teacher's approval, these children will have a one-month trial period to transition into the afternoon program with older children. During this trial period, your tuition rate remains at the Toddler Option rate. If your children are able to fully transition at the end of the one-month trial period, your tuition rate will then switch to the Preschool Option rate.

Preschool Option (2.9—5 years old)

Older children who stay for the afternoon program will nap or stay outside for an additional hour or attend elective classes, and then rest. The teacher-child ratio in the nap room is 1:4 with a group size of 12-13.

Extended Care Program

The extended care program consists of early morning drop-off and afternoon sessions. The Extended Care Program provides an opportunity for children to work and play in small mixed age groups. Children have many opportunities to practice their social and communication skills in a family-like setting. Children are given choices and are able to explore activities planned to meet their needs, including experiences with creative arts, large and small motor activities and more. A more specific description follows:

- At 1:00PM, the “nappers” go to their nap room. The “resters” and “early risers” remain on the play yard for an additional hour for art activities, books, sand and sometimes water and structure play, or attend elective classes.
- At 2 PM, the resters and early risers move from the play yard to separate classrooms for a rest time. Some children fall asleep. When children wake up from nap or rest time, they have a snack at the tables and enjoy conversations with one another! Children are then able to choose from a variety of developmentally appropriate activities both indoors and outdoors.

Throughout the afternoon many transitions occur as children say good-bye to Mustard Seed and rejoin their families. Every transition is carefully monitored so that children have a positive and growing experience throughout the day. We believe in allowing children to settle into an excellent rhythm

for their day so that they return home to be wholesome and relaxed individuals, ready to spend quality time connecting with family members. We believe that the pace of the morning program, if extended to the end of the day, will be less than optimal for children's emotional development and for essential bonding with family members.

Summer Session

We offer an 8-week summer session with similar hours, fees and curriculum. Summer session registration and billing are separate from that of the 180 school days. Priority for registration is given to children already enrolled in the regular school year.

Year-Round Care Billing Option & Holiday Care

Holiday care (HC) is signed up and billed at an hourly drop-in rate, except for those who choose the year-round care billing option. For those who plan to use HC throughout the year, the year-round billing option provides you with a flat monthly fee, which covers all HC and the regular 180 school days. Year-round care option, however, does not include Summer Session.

Classrooms

We have five classrooms, grouped primarily by age. Classes have an excellent teacher to student ratio and group size. Our goal is to place your child in the class that is developmentally appropriate for him/her, to the best of our ability.

CLASSROOM	Teacher-child ratio	Group size
Roo (18-30 months)	1:4	8
Piglet (2-2.9 years)	1:5	10
Pooh Bear (2.9-3.4 years)	1:6	12
Tigger (3.4 years & older)	1:7	14
Kanga (4 years & older)	1:8	16

Elective Classes (optional)

Music and gymnastic classes, taught by a specialist, are offered to all the children at no additional fee. It is an integral part of our morning program. Elective classes—Dance, Karate, French and Spanish—are also taught by specialists and offered in the afternoon (1-2PM) for children ages 2.9 years and up, for additional fees. Class sizes are kept at a maximum of 6-8 children per class so that children will get individual attention and thrive in the classes.

Program Content

We believe that children actively learn from engaging the environment through play. Words, numbers, letters, and abstract concepts are presented to children as part of the world around them and not as “academics” they have to master. By presenting

concepts and symbols repeatedly in developmentally appropriate ways, a majority of our students learn the letters, letter sounds, numbers, seasons, etc., by the time they complete the Pre-K class, but there is no pressure or time-line involved.

Curriculum

We offer children developmentally appropriate experiences in: art, music, language & literature, gross and fine motor activities, pre-reading & pre-writing, mathematics, music, science, woodwork with real tools (child size), dramatic art & creative expression.

Academic Goals

Our academic goals include fostering intellectual curiosity, keeping children excited about learning, and helping them develop a sense of confidence and competence in a school environment.

Our steps toward reaching these academic goals include:

- Providing developmentally appropriate opportunities for children to grow in independence, responsibility, and self-expression.
- Nurturing intellectual curiosity and a disposition for learning.
- Developing self-esteem through social-emotional growth and the development of competencies.
- Maintaining limits on behavior in a way that nurtures children's inner impulse-control and appropriate self-regulation.
- Stimulating an awareness of God's love.

Daily Schedule

A consistent yet flexibly followed daily schedule offers children the opportunity to develop routines, prepare for transitions, and play and learn in a low-anxiety environment. Actual schedules are posted in the classrooms and each day will allow time for all of the following activities:

Indoor Free Play, Projects and Station Play

We employ a structure of station play to support young learners in choice play at one of several creative stations for a sustained period. This facilitates intensive teacher observation and teacher support so that children can work on their developmental milestones and skills such as cooperative play, communication, and conflict resolution.

Each day begins with free-choice play. Children may choose from blocks, puzzles, dress-up clothes, dolls, books, playhouses, science activities, manipulatives,

and arts and crafts projects—all within their reach. Children are given ample time and space to imagine, explore, and play cooperatively. Children are also given an opportunity to work on multi-level, multi-sensory, multi-objective projects, which have been designed and presented with an emphasis on process and exploration rather than product.

Circle time/Devotions

Children gather in a large group for singing, a cognitive skill game, musical instruments, drama, movement, etc. While the teacher directs this activity, children have many opportunities to involve themselves—they are not the passive audience. Some of this time may be used for simple Bible stories, or contemporary value tales.

Outdoor Free Play

Our newly remodeled large outdoor yard provides opportunities for gross motor development, social, creative and dramatic play, and woodwork. It is equipped with several climbing structures, slides, sandbox, vegetable and flower garden, play houses, basketballs with hoops, tricycles, art and water play, and woodworking areas. Our most recent addition is the woodworking area. Older children (4-5 years old) get to explore building structures with wooden pieces and glue. They also get to use real tools to learn to drill, saw, hammer nails, and take measurements of things. Some tools include child size hand drills, saws, hammers, screwdriver, C-clamps, and measuring tapes. This activity not only gives children great joy and fun, it also enhances their creative expression, eye-hand coordination, and ability to focus.

On rainy days, older children (4-5 years old) remain in their classrooms, while younger children in Roo, Piglet and Pooh Bear classrooms share a large Fellowship Hall for indoor active play.

Lunch

Lunch is a warm, social time for teachers and children. Children bring their own lunch to school. We also use this time to read books together.