



CLASS OVERVIEW

Mazama is a developmentally appropriate, play-based classroom community. We strive to inspire, support and educate the whole child. By utilizing the child's interests and strengths, we encourage every child to be actively engaged in critical thinking, exploring, creating, and pretending as they develop over the year.

A strong focus is given to providing a foundation of social emotional and cognitive skills such as trust, empathy, self-awareness, relationship building, self-regulation, curiosity, motivation and persistence. This helps create a classroom community where children feel safe to explore and excited to learn.



KEY COMPONENTS OF THE MAZAMA DAY

- Free Play - Learning through play is a term used in education and psychology to describe how a child can learn to make sense of the world around them. At the Gardner School, teachers provide opportunities for children to explore materials of their choice.
- Thematics - Thematics is an opportunity for our class to explore a study topic for a greater in-depth understanding, building on the experiences and interests of the children.
- Outdoor Experiences - Daily outdoor experiences in our large natural play space where children are able to fully explore nature and explore large motor movement activities.



MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES

Preschool children naturally explore, question, create, invent, and solve problems using each of their intelligences, while gravitating towards different intelligences at different times. Our classroom environment, curriculum and experiences are designed to build on student interests and create opportunities for students to explore all of the different intelligences.



OBSERVATION AND ASSESSMENT

Assessment of children's interests and developmental growth is an ongoing process. Teachers use anecdotal notes, running record observations and samples of children's work to create a portfolio and to evaluate and plan thematics/curriculum. Three times a year, teachers complete a developmental checklist to assess each child's growth in Social Emotional, Physical, Language, Cognitive, Literacy and Mathematics. This is paired with written narratives from all teachers working with the child. Teachers meet twice a year for formal conferences with families to discuss these assessments and observations and to collaborate on child goals and next steps exploration of natural materials. On any given day, you will find students pedaling the bikes, using branches and logs to build forts, constructing in the sand box or on a safari amongst the fir trees.



FIELD TRIPS AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Field trips, speakers and/or demonstrations are extensions of our curriculum, investigations and interests. These types of experiences provide a greater depth of knowledge and allow students to make further meaningful connections to existing knowledge and to the world they live in.

