

How long have the teachers been at the school?

We are proud to say that our director has been with us for over 10 years and the rest of our staff has been a part of our team for over 2 years.

What is the daily routine?

We have a certain schedule that we follow that allows us to expose our children to a variety of activities in different dynamics. However, at the same time our schedule allows us the flexibility to cater our day according to the overall mood of our classroom. We realize that every day is a different day, and we as educators must be prepared to allow for those changes and be prepared at all times.

How is discipline handled?

Discipline is handled by teachers and parents working together through communication. Discipline must be consistent in order for it to be effective and must be followed through at home and vice versa. We believe that it is a team effort, with both parents and school being equally involved.

Does the school take field trips?

Giant Step Learning Center is not licensed to transport children to a place outside the facility. However, with the help of our parent volunteers, we do take walking trips to the local shops and businesses during holidays.

What is the vacation and holiday schedule?

Giant Step Learning Center is closed during all public school holidays.

What is the policy for taking care of a sick or injured child?

We take precaution by monitoring our children. If a child is injured, depending on the severity, we would take the necessary actions so that the child is safe and out of harms way. Our policy is to notify the parent, via letter or in person during pick up time or call home if it is severe. Every child is precious and special to us, and we treat them as our own.



Tips on choosing a good Preschool

Tip 1 Ask the following Questions About the Preschool

Is there time for group or individual activities?

At Giant Step Learning Center we believe that individual and group work serve very different and important functions, both being equally important. Individual work allows a child to learn discipline, as well as use their own minds for creativity, problem solving and allows them to become more independent. Group work allows children to learn how to work with others. At Giant Step we believe through group work, children learn social skills such as sharing, taking turns, being considerate of others and team work. Children also learn through their peers and are exposed to different ideas presented by their friends. It is important to allow both individual and group time for all children because it enhances learning. Taking this into consideration, we at Giant Step allow both group and individual work time.

Is the Preschool licensed?

Giant Step Learning Center is approved by the Social Services Department and follows all State Regulations and is proud to have met the requirements that enable our preschool to be a safe, clean environment for our children.

Have there been any complaints or licensing violations?

Giant Step Learning Center takes pride as being a reputable preschool and kindergarten. We have no complaints or licensing violations, that is why we continue as one of the most highly recommended schools in the Costa Mesa area. We are proud to be known through word of mouth for years and years to come.

Are children busy with activities much of the time?

Here at Giant Step, you will find that children are engaged in various activities. Whether it is painting, reading, building or "Share Time", our children are constantly stimulated by our teachers and their peers.

Is there time for teachers to read to children as a group and one-on-one each day?

Here at Giant Step Learning Center, we have a well established reading program that involves our parents, which we hope will encourage both our students and parent to take an active role in learning. Our goal is to enhance our students' love for reading as well as encourage the values of proper care for books. Every day our teachers read to their class as well as help each individual child with reading during independent work time.

Do children play inside and outside every day (weather permitting)?

Having one of the largest outside play areas in Orange County, Giant Step utilizes both indoor and outdoor play to provide children a variety of experiences.

Is there a large play area where children can build things, run or jump?

A section of each classroom and our large outdoor play area is allocated to allow children to build. We understand the importance of building for children and we encourage them to be as creative as they can be. Our yard includes a large sand area and a running track for children to run, jump, hop and skip. Physical activity is very important for a child's growth and taking care of one's body is a life long habit that is important for children to learn.

Is there sand, wood chips, or rubber under the play structures (instead of grass or cement)?

Giant Step Learning Center has one of the largest sand areas, where we have put all our play structures so that children are safe and secure while exploring what they can do.

Giant Step Learning Center
www.giantsteplearning.com
(714) 540-1775

Are the children comfortable with the teachers?

Giant Step Learning Center is proud of all of their highly qualified teachers. We like to think of ourselves as a family and work together. Our teachers are friendly, warm and sensitive allowing children to feel loved and secure. Every child is like our own and we like to think of all of our families as part of our family, The Giant Step Family.

Are children busy with activities much of the time?

Children get the most out of preschool when they're playing and learning as much as possible. There is never a dull moment here at Giant Step Learning Center! Children are always working and playing, which both always have learning involved. Children learn a variety of skills throughout the day.

Do teachers work with the children as a class, in small groups, and one-on-one?

They're all important. Here at Giant Step, our teachers have developed a daily schedule that allows time for small group work time, independent work time, one-on-one time as well as class time. We take into consideration that children learn in various ways and each have their different learning styles. It is important to incorporate different teaching methods, so that all children and their unique styles are embraced.

Do teachers listen to children and help meet their needs?

At Giant Step, we are fortunate to have an intimate and warm environment that allows children to feel comfortable to communicate their needs to their teachers. Our teachers believe that it is important to help each child help themselves to meet their needs. We assist in brainstorming ideas with the child on ways they can meet their needs and then we walk them through the process. Children love when they know that they have accomplished their goal through their hard work.

Do teachers and children talk to each other with kind words and smiles?

As you walk into Giant Step, you will see children giving hugs and smiles to their teachers and to one another. We have established a family environment where there is love, consideration and respect for one another and we are very proud.

Do teachers get down on the floor and play with the children?

All our teachers have a very close relationship to the children in their class. We know that relationships are built by trust and time spent with one another. Our teachers truly enjoy playing and working with their children.

Do the classroom and outdoor play areas look safe and clean?

Here at Giant Step Learning Center, we believe that cleanliness is vital especially where children are involved. Our facility is cleaned every day and proper rules are established that ensure the cleanliness of our facility.

Are there reading, drawing, and writing materials in all areas of the facility and are they easily available to children?

Each classroom at Giant Step have their own art and writing center where children can easily access materials used for coloring, tracing and writing. In addition, each child has their own material box with their name labeled on it.

Are there special areas designated for reading, playing, and art and group activities?

Every area at Giant Step is designated for a specific activity so that children know where to go and what to do at that particular area. By having designated areas and labeling all materials, children also learn how to put things back where they belong.

Are the chairs, tables, and other equipment child-sized?

All our chairs, tables, cabinets, etc. are child-sized so that it is easier for our children to access the necessary materials and equipment in their classrooms. Our goal is to provide an environment that allows our children to become more independent.

Are all types of families represented throughout the classroom (pictures, toys, materials)?

Preschool classrooms should celebrate diversity. Being a diverse school with many different cultures and backgrounds, Giant Step Learning Center embraces and celebrates each and every child's unique background. Through our Multicultural days to exposing our children to different music from around the world, our children develop an appreciation for differences.

Is the room warm and inviting? Is the children's work displayed at an eye level for 3 and four year olds?

When you walk into the classrooms of Giant Step Learning Center, you will see children's work proudly displayed and bright colors and pictures at both eye level and higher up. We take pride in our children's work and show them off whenever we can.

Are there building blocks, toys, items for pretend play, art supplies, puzzles and games?

At Giant Step Learning Center there is always something to do and someone to do them with. With the help of our schedule and large facility, we have the opportunity to expose our children to a variety of activities. From our pretend colored houses outside where they can pretend play and take on various roles, our block areas, art and puzzles areas; allows every child to have something to do.

Do most of the children seem happy and involved in the activities?

Here at Giant Step, we feel fortunate and honored to see our children walk in every morning with a smile and excitement in their eyes. Our parents feel secure knowing that their child truly enjoys their time here at Giant Step Learning Center.

Do teachers or assistants supervise children at all times?

Children at Giant Step Learning Center are supervised at all times. Whether it be during classroom time or outside play time, the safety and well being of our children is of utmost importance to us.

Are the classroom rules fair and are teachers consistent in enforcing the rules with all children?

At Giant Step, we understand the importance of consistency with children especially when it comes time for discipline. We believe that for every action there needs to be a specific reaction, one that is consistent so that children are aware of what happens when they break a rule.

Do teachers help misbehaving children learn how to act the next time, telling the child what behavior is expected?

At Giant Step we believe that children need to be explained why that certain behavior is not acceptable and what their alternative can be. All of our teachers spend time with the child that has misbehaved and helps that child understand and think of alternative ways of handling that specific situation. Saying that you have misbehaved, is just not enough; communication is key.

Do teachers use positive discipline words? "Remember to walk into our classroom" is better than "No running."

We believe that through positive communication, everything can be accomplished. Children love when they are acknowledged for doing something good, or when they are reminded of the rules rather than scolded for not following the rules. Here at Giant Step we always say, "Let's remember our rules."

Are children with disabilities and other special needs included and supported?

Our school includes all children whether with disabilities or special needs. We also create an awareness and understanding for all of our children so that they can welcome and embrace our special needs children.

Do teachers and parents share information about the child both at scheduled meetings and when parents are dropping off or picking up their children?

All of our parents are part of our family, and we communicate with them as much as we can. We feel a close bond with each parent through our conversations during drop off and pick up times, our school events and potlucks. We have an open door policy for parents and we welcome them to call for any reason. Parents play an important role in their child's learning and we encourage our parents to be actively involved in school affairs.

Do teachers share written information and assessments on a child's development?

Here at Giant Step, we have allocated certain days throughout the year to allow time for teachers to share assessments with every child's parent. It is important for parents to know how their child is progressing academically. We encourage all parents to help their child learn by sending activities home for them to work with.

Are parents encouraged to drop-in at any time throughout the day?

Parental involvement in a child's education is critical to his or her future success. At Giant Step, we have an open door policy and welcome parents to feel free to come in at any time.

Do parents help in the classroom by bringing in special activities, books or songs?

We are fortunate to have wonderful parents that are actively involved at our school. Our parents play their role as volunteers and share new ideas and books with our teachers.

More Key Questions to Ask the Preschool**How long has the school been in existence?**

Giant Step Learning Center has a well established preschool and kindergarten program for nearly 25 years.

What experience, education and training in early childhood development do the teachers have?

All our teachers at Giant Step Learning Center are highly qualified teachers. All of our staff have degrees in early childhood education, are first aid and CPR training certified. In addition, almost all take courses to update their knowledge on new and effective ways to work with children. With the combination of work experience and academic training, our teachers are more than qualified and are respected for their vast knowledge.