

GODDARD SCHOOL MAKES EARLY LEARNING FUN

By Rochelle Karina • December 14, 2011



The Goddard School administrative staff of Director Melissa Koebrugge, owner Dawn Sellner, and Assistant Director Courtney Walsh offers quality day care for children six weeks old through pre-K. Photo by Brian Lancione

Any parent who has gone through the challenge of searching for a decent daycare for their child knows they are not all the same. At the Goddard School in Pasadena, you could say that “different” is their guiding philosophy.

Owner Dawn Sellner opened the franchise in January 1999. She had one young child already, and she and her husband were contemplating having a second. A childcare center seemed like the ideal choice, and when she came across Goddard School, she found the right match.

“We have such a great program. We start at six weeks and go through pre-K,” Director Melissa Koebrugge says. “Families often start here with their infants and stay here. Then they bring the younger siblings. We have wonderful teachers, and children and families who help us with so much. Pre-K graduation is always hard, it’s tough to let the kids go.”

Sellner explains, “The owner on site makes a difference. It helps the school get what it needs without having to go through a bunch of bureaucracy. Because they are making Kindergarten have more mandatory enrichment, Goddard School will play a key role in preparing children for Kindergarten.”

Koebrugge, known as Mrs. Melissa to students, has been with the school since it opened in 1999. Working here is fulfilling a life-long dream of being a teacher, a common theme among the Goddard staff. “A lot of our teachers are working on their professional degrees. The program here helps mold teachers for the future,” she explains. They recently learned that the school sends the most ready children to Anne Arundel County Public Schools – quite an accomplishment for an early childhood learning center.

“There is learning even in the baby room,” Koebrugge explains. “And it’s a tight-knit family. We have eighth graders who were here as infants still coming around for the holiday programs.”

The Goddard curriculum is based around play, and the FLEX Learning Program is child-focused and designed to create “teachable moments” that make learning fun and engaging. It’s a successful model that fits right into this community. “Pasadena is a close-knit community,” Sellner shares. “You run into people you know at the grocery store. And it truly is a community; everybody comes to see the students’ programs, not just the parents. We do get a lot of siblings; we have entire classes made up of siblings of other students.” Koebrugge agrees, “A lot of families have been here for a long time,” she adds. “My husband’s family has been here for over 30 years. It’s very common in Pasadena.”

That sense of community carries over into the school. “We really try every season to do several charities and outreach programs,” explains Koebrugge. Those programs have included a food drive in November, and organizing a mitten tree and collecting donations for needy families for the holidays. “In the spring, we run a Saint Jude Trike-a-Thon, and a Ho-a-Thon for Johns Hopkins. It’s constant, we do as much as we can.”

To learn more about the Goddard School, contact them via phone at 410-439-9655, email at pasadenamd@goddardschools.com This e-mail address is being protected from spambots. You need JavaScript enabled to view it , or online at www.goddardschool.com.