

Preschool 1 Family Packet



Welcome to Preschool 1!

Classroom Community:

When our year begins, we have 15 children ranging from 2 yrs. 8 months to 3 yrs. 10 months with 3 full-time teachers - Sarah Leonard, Chelsea Berge and Jackie Maietta.

About Our Teaching Staff:



Sarah Leonard, M.Ed. (sarah.leonard@unh.edu) began her professional career at CSDC in the Toddler room in the summer of 2000 and has taught in the Infant, Toddler and Preschool classrooms. She graduated from Plymouth State University earning a Master's in Education with a focus on Educational Leadership in 2017 and from the University of New Hampshire with a B.S. in Family Studies with a Young Child concentration and certification to teach Nursery

School and Kindergarten in 2000. Sarah holds credentials as a NH Master Teacher (Level 3) with an Infant/Toddler endorsement and Master Professional with endorsements for Workshop Trainer and Individual Mentor. Her professional interests include supporting anti-bias curriculum and family culture, incorporating sign language with young children and its effect on language acquisition with Infants and Toddlers and use of language with Toddlers and Preschoolers, creating language rich environments to support early literacy skills, the respect of young children through fostering independence and developing self-help skills, examining how physical environments affect children's learning and exploring outdoor learning environments such as the Classroom in the Woods.



Chelsea Berge (chelsea.berge@unh.edu) began her career at CSDC in August 2014 in the Infant-Young Toddler program, and moved to Preschool 1 in 2015. She graduated from Rivier University in 2014 earning a B.A. in Human Development, Early Childhood Education and General Special Education. Chelsea is currently completing her M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction at Plymouth State University and will graduate in August 2019. She holds NH

state certification in both Early Childhood Education and General Special Education, as well as a Level 6 Early Childhood Teaching credential with an Infant/Toddler level 2 endorsement. While working with preschool children, Chelsea's interests include exploring self-identity, engaging in our outdoor learning environments to support children's autonomy and risk-taking, and fostering independence and leadership skills.



Jackie Maietta, M. Ed. (jackie.maietta@unh.edu)

graduated from Plymouth State University in 2017 obtaining a Master's of Education in Curriculum and Instruction and from the University of New Hampshire in 2011 with a B.S. in Family Studies with a Young Child concentration. She holds a NH State Teaching Certification for Preschool through Grade 3 as well as a Master Teacher (Level 2) Credential. From 2011-2012, she was the Lead Teacher in an Infant Program at the ESPN KidsCenter in Connecticut. Jackie returned to CSDC in 2012 when she joined our teaching staff in the Preschool 1 classroom. This will be Jackie's 8th year in Preschool 1. In her work with both children and pre-service teachers, Jackie focuses on the teacher's role in the process of learning and children's development of executive function, environmental design and its impact on social interactions, STEAM in the early childhood classroom, and social justice and advocacy.

About Our Teaching Assistants & Interns:

Our teaching staff is supplemented with interns from the Human Development and Family Studies, Occupational Therapy and Psychology departments at UNH as well as Student Teaching Assistants from a variety of disciplines.

Our interns from the Human Development and Family Studies department are enrolled in HDFFS 709. They are expected to support children through an in-depth curriculum thread, develop relationships with children and their families, contribute to Journey Books, collect and analyze documentation and to be a member of our teaching team. Throughout the semester, they will be taking on more leadership roles throughout the classroom including greeting families, and leading gatherings.

Our Teaching Assistants support the daily functioning of our classroom. They too will develop relationships with children and families. They support our curriculum by documenting the work children are doing in the room: taking photographs, transcribing dialogue and sharing their findings with the teaching staff.

Our Interns and Teaching Assistants meet or exceed the NH State Licensing requirements and NAEYC criteria for qualified teachers.

Our Approach to Education

Emergent Curriculum:

As a program inspired by schools in Reggio Emilia, Italy (often referred to as a "Reggio inspired school"), CSDC practices emergent curriculum while providing your child with developmentally appropriate activities and challenges. This means that we will be observing your child's play and social interactions to

better understand their abilities and interests as we document their theories and questions. We analyze anecdotal notes, photographs and artifacts to further develop and plan classroom curriculum.

Socio-constructivism:

We believe that young children learn through *socio-constructivism* (the idea that learners co-construct knowledge within a social setting). We provide children with many opportunities to work with their peers to problem solve, form theories, and make new discoveries. Children and teachers spend time together questioning, researching, hypothesizing, and experimenting. Throughout this process, we collect data through documentation (images, dialogue, and artifacts), we then analyze these observations and documentation to provide subsequent experiences and provocations that are meaningful, challenging, and support further development.

Assessment:

Assessment is done on an ongoing basis to document developmental changes occurring for individual children. We use several tools to gather evidence- such as Journey Books, classroom observations, documentation, and informal assessments. A variety of reporting methods are used to communicate your child's development to you- including conferences (2x per year), developmental narratives (2x per year), daily conversations, and other scheduled meetings. In addition to informing our curriculum development, these observations also give us an insight to where children are in their development.

Family Partnership and Communication

Working with Preschoolers and their Families:

We work in partnership with families to provide children with high-quality early childhood education. It is our belief that families are the experts on their own children; therefore, we work closely with families and read your child's cues to meet their individual needs. We do this by using the information we have gathered through the parent questionnaire, your child's transition visits, and through our observations of their play in the classroom.

Home/School Communication:

1. Daily Check-ins- We will touch base with each family during your child's drop-off and pick-up. These brief, yet meaningful conversations are key in finding out how your child's evening, morning or day at school has gone, and any important news. *Please ensure verbal contact is made with classroom teachers or teaching assistants during your arrival and prior to departure.*
2. Newsletters- Newsletters are used to update you on what is happening in the classroom, school and greater community.

3. Phone calls- If we need to have a lengthier discussion with you regarding your child or a certain situation, we will give you a call some time during the day. Please feel free to call us at school if you have any questions. If we cannot speak with you immediately, leave a message and we will give you a call back when we are able to step away from the classroom.

If your child is going to be absent please call the Center:

862-2835 (Main Desk)

862-4725 (Preschool 1)

4. E-Mail- E-mail is another option for communication; however, it is not the most efficient way to reach us if it is an urgent matter since we do not always have immediate access to a computer. If your information is not time-sensitive or you would like to schedule a meeting with us, e-mail is a great way to make sure all parties are on the same page. It is essential that we communicate as issues arise to ensure that we are meeting your family's needs.

Please make sure to CC all 3 classroom teachers on e-mail communication (sarah.leonard@unh.edu, chelsea.berge@unh.edu, jackie.maietta@unh.edu).

5. Conferences and Meetings- We will schedule conferences twice during the year; during this time families will meet with classroom teachers to talk about their child's development. Please feel free to contact us at any time if you would like to discuss your child's development or if other issues arise that need to be shared or discussed and we will schedule an appropriate time and venue for the conversation. We strive to have conversations- particularly sensitive or challenging conversations- without the children present.

Starting and Ending Your Day at CSDC:

Preschool-aged children thrive on established routines. With that in mind, we encourage families to develop a morning routine for your child as they begin their day at school. Your family's drop-off routine must begin with your child washing their hands, as this is a state regulation for early childhood programs. Routines may also include putting their gear away, reading a book, a hug and a kiss, or empowering children to share news about their morning or the previous evening. **Children must be accompanied by an adult when entering or exiting the classroom and be within arm's reach of their caregiver while in the hallways and parking lot.**

When families come at the end of the day your child may be excited to see you and be ready to go home right away or may want a few more minutes to wrap up their play. We encourage children to ask their families if they can stay for a

few minutes (if time allows) with the understanding that sometimes it may not be a choice.

Play-Based Learning:

Throughout our day, children choose what they would like to do in any area of the room. When they enter the room, provocations will be set up for children in addition to children having the *free choice* option. Play-based curriculum allows children to truly be at the center of their learning, moving at their own pace. Play-based curriculum also affords children the opportunity to make decisions about what they would like to do and how they would like to do it. Activities can be chosen independently, giving the children the power and control in this part of their day. Social interactions develop as children move from one area to another, negotiating play ideas, such as who will carry out each part of dramatization or who will be in charge of building parts of a block structure. Teachers engage in play with children when appropriate, challenging children's thinking and extending their thinking.

In addition to the play children create, teachers set-up the classroom with provocations- this refers to the way in which we intentionally prepare the environment to pique children's interest. Provocations draw children in and lend to deeper exploration of the materials. Provocations may include wire set out on a table with mirrors, clay with tools, or leaves found in the yard with magnifying glasses, etc. Each day we will have a variety of opportunities for children to work independently, in small groups, alongside a teacher, or parallel to each other. Investigations or small group work are focused around children's interests that teachers have observed and expanded upon them by providing children with a question for further research. This allows children to move at their own pace and enables each child to extend their current level of understanding while also promoting problem solving. These experiences contribute to children's learning in the following ways:

- Encourages children to self-regulate when they are done with an activity.
- Allows time and opportunities to focus on individual skills.
- Provides children the opportunity to move at their own pace.
- Allows children to follow/expand on their interest.
- Encourages communication skills.
- Provides opportunity for collaboration among peers.

Toileting and Diapers:

Children enter Preschool 1 with a variety of experience with toileting. Some children are wearing underpants and using the bathroom independently, while others are wearing a diaper and are just beginning to develop an understanding of their body's rhythm. We work very closely with families as they move through this process. We have 5 scheduled times when we ask all children

to use the bathroom, though children can access the bathroom at any time they need. Children are encouraged to listen to their bodies and use the bathroom with increased independence. CSDC provides diapers and wipes for children who need them. We ask that you supply topical creams or ointments (if needed), such as Desitin, A&D ointment or Vaseline and we will apply it as needed. These creams or ointments need to be clearly labeled with your child's first and last name as well as have a clear expiration date- teachers will make sure we have the proper documentation to apply these ointments.

Licensing Laws Pertaining to Topical Creams & Ointments:

All creams and ointments (lotion, personal sunscreen, personal bug spray, lip balm, diaper cream or topical ointment of any kind) must have a clearly marked **expiration date**. If this date is not printed on the container, it may be on the original box. If this is the case, please also bring this. These creams must also be clearly labeled with your child/children's full first and last name. We have permanent markers available in the classroom if you would like to do this at school.

Please connect with a classroom teacher when bringing creams or ointments into the classroom so we can support you in filling out appropriate paperwork. (NH Licensing Law 4002.18)

Snack:

The snack menu can be found on the refrigerator in the kitchen. Modifications to the snack menu will be made for documented allergies or intolerances, within the Center's means.

Water Bottles:

Please provide a water bottle for your child to have at school each day. These will be kept in the classroom and children will have access to them throughout the day- please be mindful of the mechanics of water bottles as children open/close and refill water bottles with increased independence. Water bottles must be airtight. We ask that you take water bottles home each Friday (and as needed) for washing. Like all items from home, water bottles should be clearly labeled with your child's name.

Outside Learning Experiences:

At CSDC, we believe that daily outdoor activity is very important for young children and it is a regularly planned part of our day. We will go outside two to three times a day to the playground, the front yard, the Classroom in the Woods or the Learning Garden. Preschool 1 children from the 2013-2014 school year created the Classroom in the Woods. This is a space where children experiment with the skills they have obtained in the classroom and apply curriculum in new ways. We encourage children to challenge themselves physically as well as

push and extend their understanding of the world around them. This is an area where the children's vision of their own learning comes to life.

Throughout the year, we will also be exploring the woods surrounding our school. While the Classroom in the Woods is carefully maintained, the woods in their natural state create a magical space for children to explore freely, develop dramatic play schemes, climb, build with loose parts that they have found themselves, and truly engage with nature.

In addition to the classroom, playground, and the woods, children in Preschool 1 may go on adventures to visit the cows or sheep at the Dairy Research Center, or visit main-campus via Wildcat Transit.

We feel that a child who is well enough to be at school is well enough to play outdoors. This provides fresh air and movement, which is needed for your child's general well-being and healthy development. You can help your child enjoy the outdoor activities by making sure that they are properly dressed for the weather. In winter, this includes boots, warm coats, sweater, snow pants, mittens and a hat. In the late winter and springtime our playground becomes very muddy. Rain boots, rain pants or a rain suit can be helpful to keep your child clean and dry, though is not required. In the summer this includes a sunhat, use of sunscreen and insect repellent as authorized by parent or guardian; we will apply sunscreen 20 minutes before each outside time and reapply sunscreen if sun exposure exceeds 2 hours. CSDC will also spray the perimeter of the outdoor play space for ticks when the children are not present.

Lunch:

Lunch boxes are stored at room temperature, please send in an ice pack in your child's lunch to keep cold items cold. If you have an item that needs to be heated (we use the term heat-up with children), please place it in the white bin located on the Preschool 1 shelf (third shelf down in the right-hand refrigerator). We require any foods that need to be warmed in the microwave to arrive in an **airtight glass container, clearly marked with their name (on the lid and bottom of the container), and the date it is to be served.** We are not able to microwave any food for children *in or on* plastic (containers, bags, plates, wraps, etc.) or *in or on Styrofoam*. Please send in foods ready to eat such as: peeled fruits if your child prefers, oranges peeled or cut, cut pasta so your child can manage it with a fork. All leftovers are sent home so you know the eating habits of your child (unless requested otherwise). We ask that you refrain from sending your child's food to school in plastic bags (i.e.: Ziploc baggies or plastic wraps, etc.) as they pose a suffocation hazard.

Children eat lunch in the classroom at tables. Teachers eat their lunches with the children, creating a time of community building and conversation. We offer

children glass plates and bowls during our eating times and we provide silverware for them to eat with.

Licensing Laws Pertaining to Food:

Heat-ups (stored in the right-hand refrigerator in the kitchen), must be clearly labeled including:

- Child's first and last name
- Date

Children in Preschool 1 may **NOT** have:

- Pretzels (hard pretzel sticks and hard, small traditionally shaped pretzels)
- Hot Dogs *or any other food that is coin shaped* that are whole or sliced into rounds- **foods this shape must be cut lengthwise.**
- Popcorn
- Whole grapes/cherry tomatoes- **foods this shape must be cut lengthwise.**
- Raw peas, carrots or celery
- Chips (potato, tortilla, etc.)
- Marshmallows
- Seeds, other foods that pose a choking hazard

We promote balanced meals with a variety of healthy choices. Candy should be saved for at home, as it will not be served at school.

Rest/Naptime:

Children store their rest items in cubbies located on the back wall of the Community Room. If your child prefers soft snuggly items from home, please be sure they are able to be fully contained in the cubby, are labeled with your child's name, and do not light up or make sounds. Please be thoughtful about the size of rest items that come to school as the cubbies dimensions are 5"x5"x11".

Rest takes place from 12:30-3:00. We sleep in the Community Room where mats and blankets are provided, and we have music and a white noise machine playing. Teachers sit with children and offer to help them fall asleep. When children wake up, a teacher walks them down to the classroom, beginning at 2pm. After rest, we offer quiet provocations and snack from 2:30-3:30pm. In keeping with NH State Licensing Laws, we will not be preventing children from falling asleep, nor waking them before our rest time ends. Licensing laws also state that children need to rest for a minimum of 30 minutes, if they do not fall asleep after this amount of time we will provide them with quiet activities to do on their mats. (NH Licensing Law: He-4002.23 part D/E)

Classroom Culture

Helper of the day:

The Helper of the Day has many jobs and assists the teachers throughout the day. The Helper sounds the chime during cleanup times and leads the line outside. Children often enjoy being the Helper and look forward to their turn; however, if your child seems hesitant about the responsibilities we will support them through the process. The role of Helper of the Day encourages children to follow through with responsibilities, practice turn taking, assists in the child's development of autonomy, helps them develop a sense of self, practices public speaking, and helps in exploring the concepts of power.

Birthdays- celebrating the child:

In Preschool 1 we celebrate each child by having a morning devoted to some of their favorite things to do at school. Examples of this have been: bringing in trains, dollhouses, trampoline, painting, etc. We welcome families to come in and join the Morning Gathering and provocations to honor their child. Teachers will reach out to each family to choose a day that works best.

Classroom Events:

Throughout the year, Preschool 1 will host various types of events. This will give families the opportunity to talk openly and to get to know other families on a more personal basis. Please see our classroom newsletters for more information on the timing and style of the events.

CSDC Policies and Culture

Allergies:

CSDC is a peanut and nut RESTRICTED facility; we cannot serve any kind of nut, peanut butter or products containing these ingredients. Please check labels carefully. Additionally, due to an extreme allergy, kiwi fruit cannot be served in the Preschool 1 classroom. Food allergies will be posted at our back sink and in the kitchen. We share this information with ALL teachers that will be working with the children in the Preschool 1 classroom. In preparing for potlucks throughout the year we will provide a general list of the allergies that we have in the classroom. If the dish that you are bringing contains one of these items we would appreciate it if you would label it with a note stating that item. If you are looking for alternatives we would be happy to help in any way that we can. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding. We want to make sure that all the members of our community remain healthy and safe.

Medication:

We can only administer current prescription medication with the attached prescription sticker or over-the-counter medication with a doctor's note. Medications MUST be in the original containers (and/or accompanying boxes).

All medication must be handed directly to a classroom teacher to ensure proper storage and use. Medication can only be administered during the time specified on the label. Parents/guardians must fill out a blue medical administration form before medicine can be given by school staff. Only CSDC staff members will administer medication to children. **Please refer to your Family Handbook for more information.**

Illness:

If we notice that your child is not feeling well, we will make a warning call to inform you of the situation and let you know that we may need you to pick them up early. It is our goal to work with you and provide you with time to adjust your schedule or finish up tasks before you pick up. In some cases, vomiting and high fever, for example children will need to be picked up immediately. If your child does need to go home, we need you to be here within a half-hour from the original phone call.

In many situations your child may be healthy enough to come to school but unable to tolerate a full day. It is important to remember that a child who is not feeling well may do fine at home one-on-one with someone, however coming to school and being with 14 other preschoolers is very different. It is important to try and minimize continuous re-infection, especially during cold season. In these situations we can work together to figure out what is best for everyone involved. We are concerned for your child's health as well as the other children and teachers in the classroom and school.

When a child has vomited, had more than one instance of diarrhea, or has an excessively high fever at school or at home, they must be out the day of the incident (day 1), out the whole next day (day 2), and may return the following day (day 3) provided they are symptom free all of day 2. **Please refer to the detailed school health policy in your Family Handbook for more information.**

Arrival & Departure Policy:

The center's hours are 7:30 am- 5:30 pm. The security door opens promptly at 7:30 am. When you are dropping your child off at school, please be sure to check in verbally with a classroom teacher each day. Upon entering the classroom, please have your child wash their hands before engaging with materials.

Families should arrive no later than 5:25 to ensure you have enough time to gather your child's belongings. If you have more than one child to pick up, please get here earlier than 5:20 so you have ample time to pick up your children. Please keep in mind that all children and families have a different experience at pick-up time. If you know that your child takes more time to

transition from home to school and school to home, please allow yourself extra time so that your child's transition can be smooth. Please refer to the family handbook for more information.

If someone else is picking up your child on any given day we need to know about it in the morning or receive a phone call during the day. If the person is not on your alternate pick-up list, then we need a note giving that person written permission to pick up your child on a specified date. Please warn friends and family that our center policy requires us to ask for photo identification before we will release your child into their care. If you need to leave a car seat when someone else is picking up your child, there is a shed located at the edge of the parking lot where you can store it for the day. Please label your car seat to avoid confusion at the end of the day.

**If your child is going to be absent please call the center:
862-2835 (Main Desk)
862-4725 (Preschool 1)**

Extra change of clothes:

Please bring in **3-4 complete sets** of extra clothes to keep in the provided cloth bag on your child's hook in the hallway. It is ideal to have 3-4 sets of pants/shorts, shirts, socks, and underwear (if potty trained), this way children can choose their preferred clothing within reason. **Please label everything.** If something goes home that is wet or dirty, it helps if you can replenish the supply of clothes the next day. We will send a note home in your child's lunchbox if we notice that they are running low on extra clothes. Also, you should periodically look in your child's extra clothes bag and see if there is anything that is needed, especially at the change of a season. Please limit extra hallway items to outdoor gear and the provided cloth bag- due to space limitations, children in Preschool 1 should not have extra bags or backpacks hanging from their hooks.

Footwear:

Children need shoes that will support the variety of activities that they will encounter throughout the day. We ask that children wear a supportive shoe that fits their feet with a non-slip bottom, that they wear closed toe shoes, and that sandals have a strap in the back.

For safety reasons, flip-flops, open toe shoes, loose fitting shoes or classic Crocs™ will not work as outdoor shoes. We explore our Natural Playground or Classroom in the Woods daily- each area providing children with opportunities to engage in gross motor movement. While on the playground or in the front yard, children are welcome to remove their shoes and socks to be barefoot. Following

conversations with Occupational Therapists, child development specialists and leaders within the field of early childhood education, we find the benefits of being barefoot immeasurable. We will never require children to remove their shoes if it is not within their comfort but we will support them through the process of learning about the different textures they might feel if they do choose to go barefoot.

Please also send in a pair of slippers (soled slippers are preferred but not required), **or indoor shoes that do not light up**, for your child to change into during the day for nap or when we transition inside from the playground on a rainy or muddy day. Children have a place to store slippers or indoor shoes in our slipper basket located in the classroom.

School-wide celebrations and events:

The center will facilitate several school-wide celebrations including: Harvest Festival, Literacy Week, and Week of the Young Child. In planning these events we will follow basic principles for developmentally appropriate practice. Beyond these scheduled school-wide celebrations our classroom will celebrate other events as they present themselves within the classroom or are brought in by family members.

We encourage families to share family traditions and customs with the entire class. This is something that you can do on your own or we would be happy to assist you. Our goal is to celebrate and share activities that are meaningful to the lives of the children within our classroom not just because they exist on a calendar. We encourage you to contact one of us in advance to make sure that all plans are in place ahead of time. If you have any questions or need clarification please don't hesitate to call or check-in.

We look forward to a wonderful year together in Preschool 1. We are excited about creating a classroom community with your child and family. If you have any questions about this packet or your child's transition, please reach out to us.

**Warmly,
Sarah, Chelsea and Jackie**