

Magic Memories Spotlights Small Group Classrooms in Early Childhood Education at Norristown Location

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Magic Memories underscores the role of small group classrooms in fostering developmental progress among young children at its Norristown preschool and child care center. The approach aligns with established practices in early childhood education, where smaller settings enable educators to provide individualized attention and monitor each child's growth more effectively. This structure supports cognitive, social, and emotional development through tailored activities and close teacher-child interactions.

At the Norristown location, classrooms are organized into small groups based on age ranges, from infants starting at six weeks to pre-kindergarten children up to five years old. This setup allows teachers to adapt lessons to match developmental stages, learning styles, and individual interests. For instance, in toddler groups, educators can focus on building motor skills and language abilities by observing how children engage with toys and peers in a controlled environment. The center maintains a home-like atmosphere with natural light, clean spaces, and access to multiple outdoor playgrounds, which complement the indoor learning activities.

Ashlyn Phifer, Director at the Norristown location, noted that small group classrooms facilitate deeper insights into children's needs. "Teachers in these settings can track subtle changes in behavior and skill acquisition, adjusting their guidance to support each child's unique path," Phifer said. Her background in special education and early childhood education informs this perspective, drawing from years of classroom experience where personalized observation proved essential for progress.

Smaller group sizes also promote interaction among children while allowing educators to intervene thoughtfully. In preschool rooms, for example, teachers guide group play to encourage sharing and problem-solving, key elements of social development. This method helps children build relationships and emotional resilience under the watchful eye of trained staff. The Norristown center holds a four-star rating in the Keystone STARS program, reflecting standards in staff education, learning environments, and family partnerships that enhance these practices.

Educators at Magic Memories incorporate elements like STEAM activities (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math) within these small groups. Experiments and creative projects are scaled to suit the group's dynamics, ensuring every child participates actively. The curriculum, which includes resources like Learning Beyond Paper, provides tools for teachers to document and respond to individual learning patterns. This responsive approach extends to enrichment activities such as sign language and yoga, integrated into daily routines to support holistic growth.

Imara Nurriddin, Assistant Director at the Norristown location, highlighted the interactive benefits of small groups. "Children in smaller classrooms often show increased engagement during activities, as teachers can facilitate conversations and collaborations that might be overlooked in larger settings," Nurriddin said. With her degree in early childhood education and extensive experience in childcare, she emphasizes how these environments nurture confidence and independence.

The center serves various age-specific groups, including infants in Fireflies and Turtles classrooms, toddlers in Duckies and Tiggers, older toddlers in Monkeys and Caterpillars, preschoolers in Giraffes, Seahorses, and Leopards, and pre-K students in Busy Bees, Chameleons, and Foxes. Additionally, the Pre-K Counts program offers state-funded education for eligible three- and four-year-olds, incorporating specialized support for children with disabilities through partnerships with local intermediate units. Before- and after-school care for ages five to twelve, along with summer camps, extends the small group philosophy to older children, focusing on structured play and skill-building.

Parent involvement remains integral, with regular progress reports, conferences, and meetings that keep families informed about their child's development in these small group contexts. Teachers, many holding Child Development Associate credentials or higher, collaborate with parents to align home and school

experiences. This partnership strengthens the educational foundation laid in the classrooms.

Outdoor spaces at Norristown further reinforce the small group model, with fenced playgrounds allowing supervised play in manageable cohorts. Children develop gross motor skills through climbing and running, while teachers observe and encourage safe exploration. Indoor areas feature toys and materials selected to stimulate curiosity and learning, all within the small group framework.

Neydary Zambrano, Owner and President of Magic Memories, has steered the organization since 2006, drawing from her background in law and social work to prioritize supportive environments for children and families. Under her leadership, the centers maintain high standards, with senior management actively involved in daily operations.

Magic Memories operates as a locally owned provider of preschool and child care services across Pennsylvania, with seven locations, including Norristown. The organization focuses on creating nurturing spaces that blend education and care, serving children from infancy through school age. Committed to quality, Magic Memories integrates professional development for staff and family engagement to support comprehensive child development.

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Magic Memories Preschool and Child Care Center

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