



Purple Cats Preschool

Purple Cats Preschool is designed to provide learning opportunities for children ages four to five years old. The classroom has a teacher-child ratio of 1:10. The preschool has one Lead Teacher and two assistants that have Early Childhood Education background, experience, and meet DHS educational and training requirements.

Purple Cats Preschool is part of a federal Head Start program, providing school-readiness to children of low-income families. The program follows *Early Learning Standards* and *Iowa Quality Preschool Program Standards*, to maintain a quality environment.

The classroom uses *Creative Curriculum for Preschool* as well as *Teaching Strategies GOLD Assessment*. The children attend fine motor, language/literacy, and math small groups daily to focus on Kindergarten readiness. The *Handwriting without Tears* curriculum is used as a multi-sensory approach to teach students number and letter formation. The classroom also uses the *Read It Again* program to focus on literacy that is developmentally appropriate for preschool-aged children and teaches them critical skills for building a foundation for future readers.

The daily schedule is a good balance of structure and time for exploration. The classroom uses student-led studies and themes based on the students' interests.

Purple Cats Preschool has a focus of play-based learning with eight centers that integrate art, blocks, dramatic play, early writing, fine motor, math, science, and sensory. The students also participate in small group guided cooking and snack activities. Each day the students participate in large group time on the carpet which includes music & movement, read-aloud, and social emotional learning. The students have many opportunities to use gross motor skills in the center's gym, outdoor playground, soccer field and off-site walks and trips to the park. The students take educational fieldtrips during the school year and summer based on the unit theme, giving them time to further explore the area of interest.

The classroom uses *Tucker the Turtle* and social/emotional activities to promote resilience and self-regulation. The classroom uses role play and teaches problem solving skills and solutions to help them become socially strong.

The students are served breakfast, lunch, and snack family style. This is a great opportunity for the children to be social and to learn how to be independent in taking care of their own needs. The students also have classroom jobs that foster independence. The classroom has a family-like atmosphere where the students and teachers have good relationships, working and playing together.