

PRESS RELEASE
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Learning Times Three for These ECC Children

Michele Iannotti, of Bayville, has triplets. Early on she knew her son Grayson would need services, which he began at 18 months. Grayson, who is nearly five, was enrolled at the Mill Neck Manor Early Childhood Center (ECC) in September, 2013. Iannotti enrolled her two other children, Riley and Derek, into another preschool. She soon noticed a difference in how the children were learning.

“Grayson knew his alphabet and letters and sounds and the others didn’t,” Iannotti says. She made the decision to enroll Riley and Derek at the ECC and the two children entered the school last February. “After a month and a half at the ECC they knew their letters too. It was amazing,” she says. Iannotti believes the program at Mill Neck is great and that all three of her triplets are thriving because of it.

The Early Childhood Center, established in 1991, is a preschool providing early and intensive assistance to hearing children, ages three and four, with a range of special communication needs. These needs include speech and language delays and disorders, cognitive and motor deficits, and autism-related disorders. After completing the program, most preschoolers will attend kindergarten in their home school districts.

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There are two types of classrooms at the ECC, which are full day and offered five days a week. Self-contained classrooms are available for children experiencing delays. Like preschool programs at other schools, music, art, and computer skills are incorporated. Children in self-contained classrooms also receive the services they need, such as speech, physical and occupational therapy.

The other classrooms are integrated, meaning they are comprised of children who have communication and language delays and their typically developing peers. These classes allow students with special needs to learn, play and socialize with typically developing children. “We believe kids can learn from each other whether they have special needs or not,” says Suellyn Giserman, ECC’s principal. “At our preschool I see very happy children making lots of progress academically, socially and emotionally.”

Grayson began at the ECC in a self-contained classroom, but soon joined his sister Riley in an integrated one. “In the integrated classes they don’t hold kids back at all,” Iannotti says. “The teachers push the kids as far as they can without frustrating them. At Mill Neck they work with the children one on one so they know what the kids need help in, even if it is personality-wise, like my quiet son Derek.”

Giserman attributes the ECC’s success in part to the format of the school day, saying, “The children’s entire day is structured and they have more of a schedule.” She adds, “The ECC is really a very happy place with a dedicated staff.”

Grayson would agree. In fact, Iannotti says each morning he can’t wait to go to school. “He gets up each day and makes his lunch and is ready to go and I have to tell him that there is still a half hour before we can leave for school,” she says, smiling. “I’d definitely recommend that others enroll their children at the ECC. They will go to kindergarten with a great foundation and a love for learning.”

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At the ECC, it's three times the fun with the Iannotti triplets!

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