



Allen Creek's Fives Class:

What parents are saying about the Purple Room

"After the Red Room [Allen Creek's Senior Preschool class], everybody agreed that our daughter was ready for Kindergarten. She has a March birthday, was ahead of the curve academically and had no trouble making friends throughout her time at Allen Creek. We made the decision to stay at Allen Creek for Kindergarten and can now see that this was the absolute right decision for us.

While our daughter did very well academically and socially, she was still having issues with separation, even in the Red Room. It was important to us to be in a place that was not only sensitive to this kind of issue, but that could help us to continue to work with her to resolve it in a healthy way. Staying in the small, warm and caring environment that she was used to allowed her to feel comfortable and to focus on being a Kindergartner rather than having to worry about being dropped off in a big new school. Having the extra year at Allen Creek really did wonders for her emotional development and self-confidence. A year later when she was starting first grade she was a much different child and was in a better place to make a transition. Our daughter is now a second grader and is doing very well. Allen Creek really prepared her for first grade and beyond." – Mike and Maggie Marcantonio



"Francesca had a wonderful experience at Allen Creek. She learned to express her feelings in a very positive way. The environment was very nurturing and gave her the confidence to immerse herself in a bigger world. She has an October birthday so the 5 year old program was a perfect fit. She now is a thriving Kindergartener at Emerson School." – Anna Weller

“For us, the Purple Room was the obvious choice. For the most part, we enjoyed our experience in the Red Room and wanted very much to stay at Allen Creek. Lesley, Trisha, and Michelle Graves were big draws. Julian loves all the teachers at Allen Creek, especially those three. He had a wonderful experience in the Purple Room. The small group setting, Trisha’s amazing ability to maintain a calm, productive learning atmosphere and superb rapport with the children, and the contributions of our family consultants kept our family quite happy throughout the school year.



Julian is now in Kindergarten at Emerson and loving it. I think the social skills he learned in the Purple Room have helped him tremendously. He adjusted to the larger class size easily.

We have heard from several faculty members at Emerson that they are always especially pleased with children coming from Allen Creek.” – *Hanna Song*



“Last January through May was a time of angst for us as we tried to figure out what to do about Kindergarten. In a community like Ann Arbor, with so many options, the decision takes much time and energy. We knew Jed was academically capable and could manage the longer week, but we also knew that getting adequate attention from a teacher and feeling heard was important, and we weren’t sure he could get that in a class of 18 to 24 other children. After numerous school tours, roundups, research, and consultation, we chose the Purple Room. We made financial sacrifices, and felt good that it met key indicators of future academic success, including:

- A low teacher-student ratio (we found that experts recommend 1 : 9 or less for ages 4 ½ - 6)
- An emergent curriculum
- A skilled teacher in a warm and caring school environment

I knew, unequivocally, that we made the right decision, when Jed couldn’t wait for school to start. When other families had traumatic first days and separations, Jed hugged me and said, “Bye, mom!” easing into the format. He’s experienced joy *every day* this year – no exaggeration! He is writing and reading with pleasure, but not pressure. He’s doing math and even early aspects of multiplication, counting by fives and more; the activities are fun and incidental. In his small classroom he gets to *lead* the calendar exercise almost once a week. What a rare opportunity to learn something in depth in a safe and encouraging space.



I have compared my experience with those of several moms who have gone on to other public, private and charter schools. Each has expressed having at least one tough or painful week or month (not eating lunch, conflict with a teacher, dread for school, or a tired response to the noise level and schedule). I don’t mind facing large

classes and managing relationships when Jed is 6, but for now I prefer this concept of a true Kindergarten experience that is more developmentally appropriate. Some of Jed’s classmates are going on to first grade. We will go on to Kindergarten just because everything I’ve read says it’s a good idea for future academic success. (And frankly, I like the idea of having an extra year to save for college.)” –

Constance Colthorp Amrine



“My son Simon attended the Purple Room in 2008-2009. It was a wonderful experience for him. In particular, he had the opportunity to “learn how to learn” in a small, protected classroom setting with only 6 other children with whom he had the luxurious time to develop friendships. The full range of curriculum (reading, writing, art, physical movement, music) along with his favorite “free time” provided him with a wide exposure to many things, and the field trips gave him confidence to



look outside the classroom for exciting learning with his school friends.

This year he is attending a full-day Kindergarten, and he started the year fully prepared for the larger classroom, progressive curriculum, more complex and full school day, and bigger social group that his present school offers. I would highly recommend the Purple Room for anyone wanting a gradual, gentle transition from a small preschool into the larger elementary school setting.” – *Susan Torrible*



“We had a fabulous experience in the Purple Room at Allen Creek Preschool in the 2007-08 school year. Trisha Miller, Olivia's teacher, was simply the best teacher she has ever had. Trisha is smart, kind, compassionate and firm. She is loving, and emotionally available and humorous. She responds to each child's uniqueness and supports their strengths and challenges their weaknesses.

She has a resilience and optimism that is nuanced and complex and which never fails, through thick and thin. She was Olivia's second great love (after me, her mother) and Olivia grew in so many ways as a result of her relationship with Trisha. Olivia would concur with this, and often still thinks of Ms. Miller. The classroom was safe and challenging. The kids were supported emotionally in a sophisticated way that helped them to love learning, and to look forward to school each day with passion. They learned how to be part of a community, how to express their feelings and how to resolve their differences. The class environment is rich academically with a diverse array of learning tools and challenges. The art teacher, Mrs. Criscenti was also amazingly gifted and intuitive.



My child loved school, loved the way she felt at school, loved what she was learning and how she was learning it. The Purple Room parents, meanwhile, formed a community, too, as a result of our twice-monthly Wednesday night meetings. At these meetings, which were led by two child psychologists, we talked about the challenges and joys of parenting. The psychologists observed in the classroom weekly, and grew to know our child well. We pooled our wisdom to collectively support each other and developed our own compassionate view of our kids' struggles and triumphs. The Purple Room experience was priceless for us and for our daughter. – *Cathy Weinert*

