

# BUSINESS PROFILE

## THE GODDARD SCHOOL OF ROUTE 70, TOMS RIVER

By Robert Verderese

On Route 70 in Toms River, a premiere preschool specializing in early childhood development, The Goddard School offers programs and services for infants, toddlers, preschool, pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, as well as before/after care and summer camp until age 12.

Led by onsite owner, Alisa Khaitan, alongside Educational Director, Lisa Strenkowski, and Jessica Montalbano, Alisa's assistant, The Goddard Schools overarching aim is to foster, in a safe, loving and nurturing environment, the emotional and cognitive development of each child, helping children develop into joyful, confident learners who are prepared for success in school and in life. So what makes The Goddard School on Route 70 stand out from other preschools? For starters, the school places a strong emphasis on family involvement: "a cornerstone of our school is that we are extremely family-based. We coordinate many activities and events that we invite the parents to throughout the year, such as family barbecues, a Not-So-Scary Haunted House, Breakfast with Santa and many other themed-based activities throughout the year," Alisa says.

Indeed, open communication with parents is of the utmost importance at The Goddard School of Route 70. On a daily basis, teachers and parents collaborate with one another to ensure that each child's needs are met with great satisfac-

tion. "Parents are comforted knowing they can always find us here. We are available to help them all the time," Jessica says. This ongoing communication promotes a more positive self-esteem in the children, and ultimately prepares them for kindergarten and beyond.

Another feature that differentiates The Goddard School from other schools is their philosophy that children learn best through play and when they are having fun. Lisa explains the school's play-based approach in the following way: "Our fun-filled learning techniques are effective in that children are more apt to remember lessons if they have fun doing them. Children are more inclined to show eagerness toward learning if they are enjoying themselves." For example, if children learn about the planets by singing a fun song about them, they will likely remember that song and the information they learned. Ongoing research also shows that playful teachers can increase their students' long-term academic performance. At The Goddard School, teachers introduce concepts at an early age, but disguise them as a fun activity. Invariably, the children become engaged and interested in the activity, while also having fun.

Additionally, independent play is a crucial component to The Goddard School's learning philosophy. "We do have some teacher-directed activity, but generally we encourage the children to use their own imag-



Alisa Khaitan, Onsite Owner (center), Lisa Strenkowski, Educational Director (Left), and Jessica Montalbano, Administrative Assistant (Right).

inations," Jessica explains. The Goddard School believes it is paramount to a child's development for them to figure things out autonomously versus when teachers tell them to do something. This practice results in children unlocking their own potential.

By allowing a child's freedom of expression to shine through, teachers make it possible for them to explore the world on their terms. "We may say, 'let's draw A for apple and apples are red.' But it's OK for the children to draw a blue apple and a purple apple and an orange apple," Alisa explains.

The special bond between teachers and children at The Goddard School on Route 70 cannot be overstated: "we're small enough that we all know one another quite well. The children know the teachers, and that makes them feel comfortable and cared-for," Alisa says. This child-centric, intimate learning approach is wonderful in that it helps teachers determine which children need more help, or more of a chal-

lenge. Teachers can customize learning plans not only for specific classes, but for specific individuals.

The concept of love and friendship celebrated this past Valentine's Day provides a wonderful teaching model for the students at The Goddard School on Route 70 in Toms River. On Valentine's Day this year, three young girls listen attentively to their teacher, Ms. Nancy, reading to them a love-filled sentiment sent into the school from one of the children's family members. Some of the notes were composed by parents; some by grandparents; and others by the children's siblings—though all of them were written in the key of love. By having different family members write notes for the children, the teachers hope to demonstrate that even though we are all different, we are all deserving to be loved and cared-for.

The Goddard School preschool system prides itself on its unique dual-management system, a distinguisher in the early childhood education industry. Franchise owners are onsite at each location and work alongside an educational director, whose focus is to communicate and work with teachers, as well as to implement The Goddard School curriculum. This dual-management system ensures a hands-on, commu-

nity-focused approach when it comes to early childhood education. As owner and educational director, Alisa and Lisa, work as a team and are readily available to the children, their families and the teachers. "When splitting tasks between myself as the owner and Lisa as the educational director, the dual-management system allows for me to focus on the business aspects of the school while Lisa can focus her efforts in the classroom," Alisa explains.

Although the program at The Goddard School is for children ages 6 weeks to 6 years, they also provide services for older children. For example, the school offers a pickup and drop-off bussing location for Toms River and Manchester elementary schools. For children, up to 12 years old, The Goddard School's faculty provides supervision, guidance, and help with homework, both before and after school. Additionally, The Goddard School offers camp with daily trips for children up to 12.

The Goddard School located in Toms River is located at 255 Route 70, near Whitesville Road by the Manchester border. For more information on enrollment options available at The Goddard School, or to schedule a tour, please call 732-363-5530 or visit [goddardschool.com/nj-ny/toms-river-route-70-nj](http://goddardschool.com/nj-ny/toms-river-route-70-nj).



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