



Gymnastics Coastside

Dear Parents,

Welcome and congratulations! Your child has successfully completed the Gymtowne Gymnastics Coastside Preschool Program and is ready to begin classes in the School-Age Program. This program offers school-age children an opportunity to build their gymnastics skills in a non-competitive, yet challenging format. The following information explains how the Level One - Four Program is different from the Preschool Program and what your child may expect when transitioning to a Girls or Boys Level One class. More detailed information about each of these points is presented at the end of this letter.

- The Level One - Four classes are much more focused on specific skill mastery than the Preschool Program, in which curriculum is determined primarily by age-appropriate readiness.
- The Girls and Boys Level One - Four classes meet and practice in the large gym.
- A student will remain in a Level One class until all the Level One skills are mastered.
- Children enrolled in the Level One - Four classes are evaluated every 8-10 weeks and earn ribbons based upon their performance of certain skills.
- The Level One - Four classes are segregated by gender so that the skills, techniques and development for each gymnastics apparatus may be introduced more formally to girls and boys separately.
- Girls will practice each week on the 4 events used in women's gymnastics: vault, uneven bars, balance beam, and floor exercise.
- Boys will practice each week on various combinations of the 6 events used in men's gymnastics: floor exercise, pommel horse, rings, vault, parallel bars, and high bar.
- Trampoline will be used in the lessons less frequently than in the Preschool Program.
- The gymnastic skills defined in the Level One - Four Program are not easy. They take time and practice, and often require a certain amount of strength or flexibility. Encourage your young gymnast to keep trying, explaining that her efforts will pay off if she remains determined.

If you have any questions about the Girls and Boys Level One - Four Program, please ask to speak to its program manager, Krista Enos. We look forward to continuing to help your young gymnast develop strength, coordination, flexibility, independence, self-esteem, and gymnastics skill in the School-Age Level One - Four Program.

Sincerely,

Gymtowne Gymnastics Coastside

- The Level One - Four classes are much more focused on specific skill mastery than the Preschool Program, in which curriculum is determined primarily by age-appropriate readiness.

The expectations of performance are higher, and students move from level to level based upon their mastery of a carefully designed program of certain progressive skills, regardless of age.

- The Girls and Boys Level One - Four classes meet and practice in the large gym.

As children enter first grade, their bodies require more physical practice space and are better equipped to use the standard-sized gymnastics equipment. Student-teacher ratios for all Level One - Four classes are 8:1 with the possibility of 9 children per instructor in the event that a make-up student is scheduled. These classes use a circuit-training format – similar to that in the Preschool Program – but students are often expected to remain at their practice station for several attempts, requiring more self-discipline and self-motivation than what had been previously expected of them in the Preschool Program.

- A student will remain in a Level One class until all the Level One skills are mastered.

The length of time spent at each level is unique for each child and solely dependent upon how long it takes each individual to master the required skills.

- Children enrolled in the Level One - Four classes are evaluated every 8-10 weeks and earn ribbons based upon their performance of certain skills.

A progress report copy of the skill chart is sent home after each evaluation period with notes from the teacher about which skills have been mastered. Before the gymnast is invited to move to the next level, he or she must earn three ribbons, which represent a total of 36 skills to be mastered for girls and 42 skills for boys. These skills form the fundamentals of basic gymnastics technique on each of the apparatus. For your reference, the skill charts and ribbons for Boys and Girls Level One - Four are posted in the main gym.

- The Level One - Four classes are segregated by gender so that the skills, techniques and development for each gymnastics apparatus may be introduced more formally to girls and boys separately.

- Girls will practice each week on the 4 events used in women's gymnastics: vault, uneven bars, balance beam, and floor exercise.

Girls will have lessons tailored to developing the grace and poise required for the dance elements of the floor exercise and balance beam. They will share the same lessons used by the boys for vault and basic tumbling skills.

- Boys will practice each week on various combinations of the 6 events used in men's gymnastics: floor exercise, pommel horse, rings, vault, parallel bars, and high bar.

Boys' lessons will tend to include less focus on dance positions and more on conditioning exercises that build the upper body strength required to practice the pommel horse and rings.

- Trampoline will be used in the lessons less frequently than in the Preschool Program.

Boys have chart-skills to master on trampoline, while girls' classes will use the trampoline only as a means to train aerial awareness and coordination. The skills and progressions necessary

for learning the artistic gymnastics events leave little time for trampoline as a separate discipline, however trampoline may be used from time to time as a fun extra-curricular activity.

- The gymnastic skills defined in the Level One - Four Program are not easy. They take time and practice, and often require a certain amount of strength or flexibility. Encourage your young gymnast to keep trying, explaining that her efforts will pay off if she remains determined.

Your children, having come directly from the Preschool Program, may find that they learn skills more quickly than the average 6-year old Level One student who has never taken a gymnastics class before; however, they may also be somewhat surprised by the amount of practice that some new skills will take. Remind your child some things may be trickier and take longer to learn than what they were required to do on the “little kids’ side” of the gym.