



Kurt and Laura Daniel of South Barrington plan to open a Primrose School in the South Elgin spot formerly occupied by The Goddard School. The Daniels are among the first franchisees for Primrose Schools, a national chain of high-end preschools, in the Chicago market.

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# A new alternative for suburban tots

## Primrose preschool chain poised for area push

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In the suburbs, preschools are dominated by names like KinderCare, Montessori, The Goddard School and The Learning Tree.

Another brand-name preschool is about to enter the market. Primrose Schools, a national chain with franchises from Arizona to Boston, has announced plans for aggressive expansion in the Chicago area.

Primrose, which caters to the high end of the preschool market, hopes to open three to five schools each year in the Chicago area for the next five years. The goal is to eventually have 70 locations in this area, a dramatic increase for a company that now has 223 preschools nationwide.

"We're looking at areas that have similar demographic characteristics," said Darin Harris, chief

operating officer for Primrose, based outside Atlanta. "What we found is a need for our services."

The first three locations will be in Naperville, South Elgin and Algonquin, with each preschool serving as many as 200 children.

Primrose, which mainly serves children six months to six years in age, prides itself on a curriculum that is consistent across its 200-plus locations, with an emphasis on character development and leadership skills.

"We're not just in the business of taking care of children," Harris said. "We want to create a love of learning for life."

Primrose's newest franchisees hope the school's detailed lesson plans and ownership model, which requires the owners to work full time at the preschool, will distinguish Primrose from the numerous preschool options in the suburbs.

Laura Daniel of South Barrington decided to open Primrose Schools in South Elgin and Algonquin after 30 years in the child care field. She said she looks forward to the challenge of being a guinea pig in the Chicago market.

"From being in this industry, I knew of them," Daniel said. "They were so highly regarded. When I heard they were coming to Chicago, I knew it could be a great marriage in a lot of respects."

Dan and Jennifer Fu of Naperville moved to this area to open a Primrose School after their son spent a year and a half in a Primrose School outside Columbus, Ohio.

"By the time he was in (early preschool), he was learning his alphabet, learning some Spanish ... they do a really good job with the social development at well," Jennifer Fu

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said. "I felt confident that going through that program would give him a good solid foundation for entering elementary school."

Laura and Kurt Daniel are hoping to open the South Elgin Primrose School

in May and the Algonquin location in January 2012. Interested parents should call (630) 337-6131 or visit [primrosesouthelgin.com](http://primrosesouthelgin.com) or [primrosealgonquin.com](http://primrosealgonquin.com).

Parents interested in the Naperville location should visit [primroseschools.com](http://primroseschools.com) or call (800) 774-6767.