

Welcome to the Butterfly Class!

From Teacher Jaylene:

I am so excited to build relationships with your children! As they grow and learn this year, they are preparing for Kindergarten. It's a big transition to a new phase of life. How exciting!

Our curriculum will be tailored to meet your children where they are and draw them forward. It is not my intention to push kids, but to challenge and encourage them to have fun while learning the next new thing. For example, some children will walk in the door already writing their name, others will not. It is my job to help them take the next steps they need to take as individuals.

As children play, interact, problem solve, create, and form community, they learn. Our room will be a fun, creative, safe, and positive learning environment, full of play and opportunity for children to discover what they love about life and enjoy about learning. As the children build friendships with each other, my hope is that the Butterfly class will be a place where children feel secure to be themselves and gain a sense of independence as they mature and investigate their world.

Our school is a place where children can learn respect for themselves and others. We will have daily opportunities in the classroom to foster our own ideas, as well as learn to listen to others and value a variety of people. At Little Acorn, we value emergent curriculum and take the children's interests into account when lesson planning.

As a class, and as a school, we will have opportunities to interact with our community. We will go across the street to the Kindred rehabilitation facility and sing, as well as participate in varied field trips that will move our learning forward through our exploration of the world around us.

As we get to know one another, it is my hope that the Butterfly families will grow as a community. I am looking forward to getting to know all of you. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to talk to me in person after class, get in touch with me at gathered.garden@gmail.com or call/text me at 360-624-3673.

On a personal note, I am honored to have the opportunity to teach your wonderful children this year. This is my eighth year at Little Acorn, and I am thrilled to be in the Butterfly Class. I hold a BA in Writing and Literature and a minor in Communications from George Fox University. I have experience working with children of all preschool ages and regularly attend early childhood continuing education classes. I have taken ECE classes at Clark College, and hold over 30 STARS education credits. I also have over five years experience leading in a children's ministry program.

I am married to my best friend Erik. We have been married for twenty-one years and have three wonderful daughters: Lily, Nora, and Anni. Lily, a junior, and Nora, a freshman, both attend

VSAA across the street from Little Acorn. You'll probably meet them as they leave in the mornings from the Butterfly classroom to head to school when we open the door. Anni, a fourth grader, attends Truman Elementary. As a family, we love to go camping, play games, garden, and I'm an avid crochet nut. We are also a family of Mythbuster and space/science geeks!

This is going to be an amazing year in the Butterfly Class. I can't wait to get to know each of you!

From Teacher Michelle:

My name is Michelle Klinsing, and I am so excited to be a part of the Little Acorn team! Working with children and families is something I have always loved! I began working with children from the time I was in high school, from here I went on to seek my degree in Early Childhood.

I graduated from the University of Idaho with a B.S. in Child Development and Family Relations. I have spent the last 14 years working with young children in a variety of settings. I have spent the majority of my career teaching in classrooms with the HeadStart and ECEAP programs. In most recent years, I ran my own preschool from home in order to spend more time with my family. It was a great adventure! Watching and facilitating children to learn, grow and develop in fun and new ways is where my passion lies. Helping children to feel successful and foster a love a learning at a young age is something I feel is so important in preschool years! I am also an advocate of play! Giving children the space and time to play, explore, create and build are essential for learning!

I have two children of my own, Shea who is 6 and will be starting first grade and Natalie who is 4 and will be attending preschool here at Little Acorn! My husband Drew and I just celebrated our 12 year anniversary and have lived here in Vancouver for the past 8 years. We are all looking forward to Little Acorn's family friendly environment! I am originally from Lewiston, Idaho where I grew up with my two sisters and large extended family. Here is where I found a love for the outdoors, such as camping, snowboarding, boating and paddle boarding. Our family still loves to spend as much time outside as we can! We also love to travel, whether it be to a new camp site or a new country! Other hobbies I enjoy are ballet, running and yoga! I recently obtained my Children's Yoga Teacher Certification and am looking forward to to using yoga in our classroom, to help create a calm and creative environment where children can grow!

Emergent Curriculum:

At Little Acorn, we use “emergent” curriculum. This means we take the lead from the children when choosing what to learn about. I want to help your children explore and grow in their interests and learn to value the interests of others. I also believe that a child’s “work” is their play. They learn by doing, touching, tasting, smelling, listening, and seeing. Our environment and our curriculum should create curiosity that sparks natural interest and excitement for learning. We will begin the year with some seasonal, teacher-chosen themes, but as we get to know each other, we will develop our curriculum around their interests.

Every child in the Butterfly Class is at a different stage in their interest and development regarding academics. Since most, if not all, of the children will be moving on to Kindergarten the following year, we will be focusing on the things which will prepare them well to succeed. We will be incorporating the skills needed for Kindergarten readiness in all aspects of our classroom activities.

Reading Readiness:

Many kids are reading or beginning to read as they enter our classroom. We will challenge kids on their individual levels of readiness as we move through the year. Sometime at the end of February or beginning of March, we will start weekly reading groups based on their readiness. This is a great way to introduce something that they will encounter when they get to Kindergarten.

Daily Schedule:

Children thrive when they know what to expect next. The following is a **sample** schedule of our day. We will follow a daily routine, but as we get to know the children, it may change with their needs. Although not listed in the daily schedule, we do have time scheduled for bathroom breaks, hand washing, and clean-up.

9:00am	Door opens, Welcome, Sign-in, Book Return, Choose Jobs
9:10am	Circle Time--Calendar, Weather, Songs, Stories
9:30am	Work Time
10:30am	Outside Playtime
11:00am	Snack Time
11:15am	Quiet Book Time/Book Bags
11:25am	Free Choice
11:50am	Word Wall, Closing Circle
12:00pm	Dismissal

Sign-in/Sign-out:

There is a sign-in/sign-out sheet just outside of our door. Please sign your children in when you drop them off and sign them out when you pick them up each day. We will only allow the people whom you have authorized to pick up your child. If someone other than the people you have listed will be picking up your child, please let us know in writing and have them bring a photo ID. We strive to keep your children as safe as possible, and this is one of the ways we do that.

Our day starts at **9:00am**, and we get rolling with activities right away. We ask you to please do your best to be on time to class so your child doesn't miss out on any of our activities. We will provide lots of fun opportunities for you to come and spend time in our classroom but drop off time is not the best time for that. We highly encourage you to converse with other parents in the hallway and get to know one another but, for your child's most successful adjustment, please say your goodbyes at the door and confidently release your children to their classroom. At pick-up time we will open the door when class is over and release your children to you one at a time by calling their name.

Late Charge:

Our day ends at **12:00pm**. Please be on time when you pick up your child. As the end of their day approaches, the children's anticipation builds to see their parents. If you are late picking up your children, and everyone else's parents have already come and gone, they feel disappointed and start worrying about you. If you know you are running late, please call Katie to let her know, so we can let your child know you are on your way!

Little Acorn has a **five-minute grace period**, and then there is a late fee of **\$1 per minute** you are late. This will be paid directly to the teacher. After the 5-minute grace period, check the classroom for your child, then check in Katie's office.

Backpacks:

What child doesn't love to carry a backpack to school with them? Please have your child bring in a backpack each day with extra underwear (for children who use the toilet) or diapers & wipes (for those who may need them). An extra set of clothes may also be sent in the backpack, because accidents do happen. There may also be situations when the kids will get wet from playing in the sensory table or from juice spills at snack time.

Please make sure that you **write your child's name on everything that you send to school** with them (i.e. backpacks, coats, and other clothing). Coats and backpacks may be hung just outside our classroom door. At the end of each day, your child may take his or her backpack home, as well as the contents of their cubbies!

Cubbies:

Your child will have their own Cubby in the hall just outside the door. Please check these each day for parent handouts and your child's work. We will be saving some work/artwork for the children's portfolios that will go home at the end of the year.

Work Time:

We will have a block of teacher directed work time each day. Some days we will divide into small groups and rotate through the activities they will be working on. Other days, the children will choose which project they want to do first. Grouping readiness levels together makes it easier to challenge those that need more and to focus on skills that need practice, while letting students choose where to start allows for independence and individual preferences. Let us know if you have any questions about this part of our day.

Outside Play:

We will try to have an outside playtime each day. If it looks like it may be cool during the day, please send a warm jacket and gloves/mittens. In the winter season, **please** don't forget those mittens and even a hat. We do go outside even if it is cold. It is important for the kids to get outside for fresh air whenever possible. There is a playroom inside for when the weather forces us to stay inside (since we are in Washington).

Cooking Projects:

We will be having a cooking project once a month in our classroom. We will cook something, as a class, that is simple and age-appropriate. I like to introduce the concept of following a recipe as we cook. So I use simple, step-by-step cooking projects. As the dates approach for these projects, we will let you know more specific details. **(Please let us know if your child has any allergies).**

Dressing for School:

We will offer painting projects daily and go outside whenever possible. Please dress your child in clothes that can get dirty and are weather appropriate. Kids of this age generally should be able to put on their own jacket or coat, please send them in one that they can take care of themselves. If you would like to leave an extra change of clothes at school for your child, please send them in their backpack.

Bike Helmets:

When the weather is appropriate, we will have bikes and scooters out on the playground to enjoy. We require that kids who ride bikes or scooters on the playground wear bike helmets. If your child would like to join in this activity during play time, they must bring their own helmet from home that fits them correctly. Please label it with your child's name. They can be left here at school on the coat rack outside the classroom.

Classroom supplies:

We don't have a list of specific supplies that each child will need, but do ask that each family bring in a white, 2-inch binder for their child's classroom portfolio. We also accept donations of frequently used items that count toward your two hours of volunteer time for the year. These items/instructions are listed on the website, as well as outside our classroom. We may also mention in the weekly newsletter items that are needed in the classroom for specific upcoming projects and events. Thanks in advance for your support!

Classroom Library/Book Bags:

In our classroom, the children will have an opportunity to borrow a book from the classroom bookshelf. They can only choose one book at a time, and they must return the book to borrow another. We will be decorating during the first week of school for them to take/bring back the books. This helps introduce responsibility and how to take care of books. Book bags will begin coming home sometime during the second or third week of school.

Field Trips:

We will take field trips approximately 3-4 times per year. Preschool policy is that parents are responsible for transporting their own child to and from field trips. Teachers may **not** transport the children. If you cannot transport your child, then you may authorize another parent to do so. This needs to be done in writing.

Word Wall/Sharing:

We will not have a scheduled "sharing" day or time in class. I suggest leaving toys at home. At school, they could easily be lost or broken. We will have a **Word Wall** that highlights a letter for each week, and each child will be given a letter bag to bring back once that week with something that begins with the week's letter. We usually do Word Wall the last circle of the day, and the items are kept in our special basket until the children share their items.

Illness:

PLEASE do not bring your child to school if they have had a temperature of 100° or above, or if they have had a cough, diarrhea, or a green runny nose in the last 48 hours. This policy exists to protect your kids and to keep yucky germs from spreading. If your child has any of these symptoms while at the preschool, we will call to have them picked up to go home. I know that your children hate missing school (and we miss them too!) and will often want to come even when they are feeling badly, but please, for the sake of our teachers and the other children, don't bring your child if they are sick. Please text me at (360)624-3673 or call Katie Coop in the school office at (360)693-5614 to let us know your child will be staying home.

Birthdays/Holidays:

Children love to have a party! We would like to encourage parents to bring in healthy snacks or food free treats, such as pencils, stickers or something else small to give to the students to celebrate your child's birthday (or un-birthday for children with summer birthdays). Just let us know in advance.

If you are throwing your child a party outside of school, we ask that you not put invitations in the cubby cans. Please contact them outside of school for party invitations. We do put together a class directory for those who want one with addresses and phone numbers of classmates. We understand that different families celebrate different holidays in different ways. If you have special holidays you celebrate in your family, please let us know. We're open to your ideas and family traditions as we plan on celebrating various holidays.

In Our Community:

Our school is lucky to be right next door to a facility for seniors--Kindred Transitional Rehabilitation Facility. Once a month, as a school, we take the classes over to "sing to the Grandma's and Grandpa's". This has been very rewarding to the kids and the seniors. We spend about 15-20 minutes singing, saying good morning and sharing our smiles. Parents are always welcome to join us!

Little Acorn is blessed to be close to a community park. Shumway Park is right across the street. When weather allows, we will plan a park visit in advance, as well as set out a reminder note day-of. The Director is always notified 24 hours in advance to our park play times, and our class will always be back to the school in time for pick up. Anytime we are off school grounds, we have our cell phones with us in case a situation arises for which we need help.

Volunteer Time:

Each Family is asked to do some volunteering at our school. This is a great way to build community and demonstrate to your child that their school is important to your family. 2 hours per enrolled child are required and can be done during a fundraiser event, playground clean-up, or family fun night. As a family you may opt out of this commitment by donating \$100 per child. Volunteering your time in the classroom may be used for one hour of your total time; the other hour must be during an event or fundraiser. Please don't let this discourage you from spending time in our classroom. We love help, and it gives you a chance to see your child interact with their peers. You may also donate snacks/supplies for up to one hour of your time. The instructions for these donations are on our website, as well as posted outside our classroom.

Parent/Teacher Conferences:

Our first parent/teacher conferences are held in August before school starts, which gives us an opportunity to get to know each other, talk about any concerns you may have, and ask questions before the school year gets rolling. Our second conference opportunity is before registration for the next school year. In January, we can talk about readiness for Kindergarten and your child's progress.

However, if at any time you have concerns or questions you would like to discuss, I am available. I value your input and would like to resolve any issues as soon as possible. You can catch me after class, reach me at gathered.garden@gmail.com, (360)624-3673, as well as call the school and leave a message for me. I will return your email or call promptly.

Guidance:

We will not use "time out's" in our classroom. When conflicts arise I like to let the children attempt to work thing out on their own, while I observe. If they need help, I will step in and offer ideas on working together to find a solution. Quite often, children will work out their differences when guided by an adult and given the correct tools to resolve the situation. This may involve asking them how they could have handled the situation better. We often practice with a "try it again" scenario. We want to encourage kind and respectful behavior of everyone in our class.

Please keep in mind that we are not able to speak with you regarding the behavior problems of other children. Your child may at times come home and complain of a situation that happened in the classroom. Please know that we are aware of it and have either taken care of it, or are in the process of doing so.

Communication:

I want to emphasize how important it is that we as teachers and parents have open and honest conversation with one another. **PLEASE**--if you ever have a question or concern, come directly to me and talk about it. We are very open to hearing from you. We promise to be respectful of your thoughts and feelings, and we ask that you do the same for us. Communication is a two-way street. I will provide a lot of opportunities for you to be up to date on what's happening at Little Acorn and in our class. Every week you will receive a newsletter that will include lesson information, as well as upcoming events. Please read through this newsletter every week to be well informed. We also have a whiteboard outside the classroom that will keep you informed on upcoming events.

Parents are always welcome to participate in the classroom, volunteer talents, or simply get down on the floor and play with the children. Contact with parents enhances the entire classroom's learning experience, and we would love to have you as part of our "team." I am always available by email at gathered.garden@gmail.com and (360)-624-3673. I know there are times when you'd like to discuss things, but we won't have a chance during school hours. If you need to find information about upcoming events, check out our website at www.littleacornpreschool.com. Any questions regarding tuition, taxes, enrollment, etc., should be directed to Katie in the office.