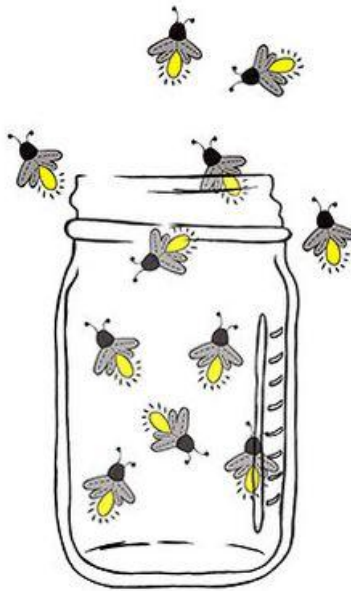


Firefly Classroom

Parent Handbook 2022 - 2023



Little Acorn Preschool and Kindergarten

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"Opening doors for children through play, nurturing, and respect for individual differences".

Kirby Jozwiak-Bain, Lead Teacher

Hi! I'm Kirby and I am so excited to start this year at Little Acorn with your family! This is my sixth year at LAPS, and fourth year as lead in Firefly. This is such an exciting age for development and I strive to help make their first school experience a positive one.

I have a bachelor's degree in Human Development with a minor in Sociology and many credits of Early Childhood Education. I spent my high school and college years working in various nanny positions and childcare centers. After graduation I worked for the Vancouver School District as a paraeducator.

After some time with the school district I took a break from my professional life to start a family. I have 3 amazing children who are all graduates of Little Acorn. They are Nolan, a freshman at Hudson's Bay, Aurora, a 6th grader at VSAA, and Bennett who attends Lincoln Elementary in 2nd grade. We also have a corgi named Hamilton who helps keep us busy! In the rare moments I have spare time I enjoy gardening, embroidery, pottery, cooking, and reading.

I look forward to getting to know each Firefly child and family this coming year.

Please don't hesitate to email me at kirbyjozbain@gmail.com or message me on Parentsquare with any questions or concerns you may have!

Carly Ellis, Assistant Teacher

Hello, my name is Carly! I am the assistant teacher for the Firefly classroom. I am excited to start this new journey with your family.

This is my first year at Little Acorn. I graduated Washington State University in 2006 with a degree in Biology. After that I traveled the United States with my husband who served in the United States Navy. I have been all over this great country and interacted with all kinds of people. I've acquired a variety of jobs from a biochemist to a school teacher.

I am blessed with two wonderful daughters. My oldest is Lily, she is 9 and my youngest is Zoe, she is 4. My oldest daughter has ADHD as well as several sensory disorders. I am very familiar with working with kids who have special needs.

I have worked in several child care facilities and have interacted with a variety of children. I was a substitute teacher for my youngest's preschool, as well as a substitute teacher for my oldest's elementary school. I have taught preschool, K-5, as well as a paraeducator for special needs children.

I am also an online teacher, and have been since 2019. I am an English as a second language teacher for a company called VIPkid. I teach overseas children online ages 2-15. I teach a variety of subjects, from grammar, reading, math, science, phonics and more.

If I am not teaching, my hobbies are hiking and camping. I love everything Harry Potter and went to Universal Studios in Florida several times. My family enjoys traveling and going on adventures. I am artistic and love to draw and paint. I enjoy singing and I am trying to learn how to play the guitar. I own two cats, who have traveled all over the country with us.

I look forward to getting to know you and your children. I enjoy working with preschool age children. It's just a wonderful age filled with discovery and wonder. I am so thankful to be at Little Acorn! I can't wait to meet you all.

Class Philosophy

In Firefly room one of our main goals is to foster a love of learning. For most of the kids coming into Firefly room this will be their first experience in a school setting, so we feel it's extremely important to set them up for lifelong learning and growth. At this age most of that will be done through play, and we'll also introduce basic academic concepts such as colors, numbers, and shapes in a variety of fun and engaging ways.

The other key piece for our classroom will be developing social skills. Being in a classroom setting with so many other children can lead to social situations that they may not be used to at home, so we will do our part in providing them with the tools needed to feel successful. These tools can be everything from turn taking, talking through a conflict, or beginning to learn to identify and express emotions appropriately. Our classroom also gives children the opportunity to begin to see themselves as capable individuals by offering safe choices and teaching beginning self-help skills.

Firefly Class Schedule

This schedule is just a guide for our day and we are always making adjustments. If an activity is going really well and the kids want to explore it further, we will do that, or if there is a special art project we are doing, we will change things around. Flexibility is very important while working with children, especially this age group.

9:00-9:15	Arrival - Welcome time. Children can choose an open area to explore and take a little time to adjust to being at school.
9:15-9:45	Art /project - Children will come to the table to do a class project. This may be art, fine motor, or a game. This may be done as a whole group or in small groups depending on the project. When children aren't working on the project they may go to any of the open areas to play.
9:45-9:55	Circle Time - Calendar, weather
9:55-10:00	Bathroom Break - Go to the bathroom/diaper changes, wash hands, get ready to go play.
10:00-10:30	Play Outside - If the weather is bad we will play at our indoor play area. Wash hands when we get back to our classroom.
10:30-10:40	Song/Story Time - We will sing a song and read a short story about our theme for the day/ week
10:40-11:00	Snack Time - Eat snack. Children may look at books and do puzzles until everyone is finished
11:00-11:30	Sensory/Free Choice - We will open our sensory table and other areas for children to explore/play. The sensory table and toys will be rotated on a regular basis to correspond with our weekly theme.
11:30-11:45	Bathroom Break - Go to the bathroom/diaper changes, wash hands
11:45-12:00	Closing Circle - We will talk about the day and do our letter of the week basket. Children will be dismissed one at a time as their name is called during our goodbye song.

Drop off/Pick up

The sign in/out sheet is just outside our door on top of our cubbies. Please do not forget to sign in/out during drop-off and pick-up. We only allow people on your authorized list to pick your child up. If someone other than the people listed will be picking up, please let us know when you drop them off. We require a photo ID from anyone we do not recognize, please let them know this in advance.

Classroom jobs

After the first couple of weeks of school we will introduce our classroom jobs. These are things like weather monitor, snack helper, and bell ringer, and there are enough jobs for everyone to have a job each day. This is a fun way to make our classroom feel like a community.

What to wear

Just remember play clothes! This is the best outfit for your child in school. There will be a lot of playing and running so we want them to be comfortable and to have shoes that stay on their feet! There will also be painting, gluing and project making, so please make sure it is okay to get dirty. Also, please know we aim to go outside everyday so please send weather appropriate clothing!

The one and only exception to this is picture day. We will send home information in advance as to the date for pictures.

Toilet Training

At Little Acorn, we help your child with toilet training. It is part of growing up and we keep a positive attitude when assisting with toilet training in the classroom. When accidents occur we will try to use it as a learning experience. We will encourage them to keep trying and reward them with positive praise each time they succeed. Make sure to provide plenty of extra clothes (maybe even socks and shoes!) and underwear/ pull-ups and wipes. **If your child is still wearing diapers we just ask that they be disposable, as we are not equipped to have cloth diapers in our classroom. We also ask that if your child wears pull-ups they have velcro sides, not just the pull up/down style.**

Backpacks

Please have your child bring a backpack to school everyday, labeled with their name, containing the things that they may need during the day. Extra warm clothes perhaps on cold winter days or extra underpants or pull-ups in case the need to change arises. Also, please try to remember to put their coats inside their backpack before hanging it on the hooks outside of our classroom. Keeping coats in backpacks is not only a great space saver, but also helps prevent the spread of lice, just in case the issue were to arise. Children at this age sometimes are not sure which coat or backpack is their own so it's really important to **Please label their backpacks and coats!**

We also have a cubby labeled for each child in the bathroom where we will keep a supply of pull-ups and wipes as well as extra clothes for easy accessibility for changing purposes. Please make sure to label each diaper and/or package with their name, so they do not get mixed up. We will send a note home with you when your child is in need of more diapers or wipes. An easy way to store the extra clothes is in a large Ziploc bag that is labeled.

ParentSquare

We use the app ParentSquare for parent communication. Any important dates/deadlines will be posted there, and I also post weekly photos so you can see exactly what your kiddos are doing in class! ParentSquare is secure, only parents from our class will have access to photos/info posted. Please make sure to sign up right away so you can be in the know!

Newsletters

At the beginning of every week, you will receive a newsletter to give you an overview of the themes and activities during the week. We send the newsletters via ParentSquare and they are also posted on our school website.

Communication

Please do not hesitate to send me a ParentSquare message or stop me when you are dropping off or picking up your children if you need to let me know something. It is good to know if your child had a rough night sleeping or if anything else is going on that may make their day a little tougher. I can then address your child's needs in a more appropriate way.

Also, if you have any questions or concerns, please let me know! Working together to address any issues is the best way to ensure your child has a great year in Firefly

Outside Play

We will be playing outside daily, as long as weather permits. Even on cold days, we still may go outdoors to play. So please make sure that your children are dressed in clothing appropriate for the weather.

Should the weather be really bad, we will spend our outdoor playtime in our playroom. We have age appropriate play structures in the playroom for children to safely get some energy out.

The playground has pea gravel so please make sure your children's shoes are comfortable for them to play out there. Sometimes sandals get little gravel pieces stuck in them, and children become frustrated.

Field Trips

We have one school-wide field trip each year. Each Fall we visit a pumpkin patch as a group, and we may potentially have one more field trip in the Spring as well. It is Little Acorn's policy that you transport your child to the site and remain with your child for the entire time. You are responsible for your child. If you are not available for the day, you may authorize other parents to transport your child. That parent is then responsible for your child. When field trips sites and dates are confirmed, we will let you know in the newsletters and have reminders for you as well. We also ask that you let us know if you will be attending.

Show and Tell/ Letter of the Week

Show and tell is a fun time for the kids to show off a piece of home. Your child is welcome to bring an item from home to share during circle time at the end of the day. Each week we will focus on a different letter. Children may **bring an item that starts with the letter that we are studying that week**. There will be a letter of the week basket to place our show and tell items in. They will stay in that basket until sharing time at the end of the day. I will let you know what letter we are exploring each week in our newsletter.

Parent Teacher Conferences/Progress Reports

Progress reports are sent home twice a year. Conferences are scheduled on an as-needed basis by parent or teacher request.

Positive Reinforcement

We believe in positive and gentle behavior management. If disagreements and/or hitting arises we will use positive redirection and model appropriate ways to resolve disagreements in the class. We encourage them to verbalize their feelings and to use their words as much as possible.

Late Charge

Please be prompt in picking up your child after class. Your child looks forward to seeing you at the door when class is done. They may feel worried and anxious that you won't come and that can cause anxiety during drop-off. There is a 5-minute grace period, then a charge of **\$1.00 per minute**. After that, we may need to take your child to the director's office so please first check the classroom for your child, then the office. You can also call/message us to let us know if you are running late so that we can tell your child that you are on your way. You will have 48 hours to pay after the late fees have incurred.

Parent Volunteering

Little Acorn requires all families to volunteer 3 hours per school year per enrolled child. Volunteering may be completed in the following ways: classroom support (cutting projects, etc), playground clean-up, helping out with our Pancake Breakfast, Carnival/Silent Auction or Family Fun night events at school. We have a sign up sheet where you can choose which activities/planning committee you would like to volunteer for. Parents may opt out of the annual volunteering commitment by donating \$150.00 per enrolled child directly to the school.

Birthdays

If you would like to bring a store purchased treat to your child's classroom to share with classmates, please let us know ahead of time. We want to celebrate each individual child so we may suggest a different day, depending on if they share a birthday with a classmate! Also, please let us know what you are planning to bring so that we may find an alternative for students with allergies if necessary. And please remember we are a NUT-FREE school!

Also, we recognize this is the age when many children start to have birthday parties with friends outside of school. **If you are not inviting the whole class then please refrain from placing invitations in children's cubbies.**

Sick Policy

It is inevitable that germs will spread in a preschool setting, but we ask that you PLEASE do not bring your child to school if they have had a temperature of 100.4° or above, or if they have had a bad cough, diarrhea, or a green runny nose in the last 48 hours. This school policy exists to protect as many kids as possible. If your child has any of these symptoms while at preschool, we will call to have them picked up to go home. We know it can be hard for kids to miss school, but home is the best place for them if they are not feeling well! Also, please contact me on ParentSquare or Lindsay in the office via phone (360) 693-5614 or email directorlittleacorn@hotmail.com to let us know if your child is staying home due to illness.

Covid-19 Policy and Procedures:

The health and safety of our children and families is of the utmost importance at Little Acorn Preschool. We are currently using the guidelines set forth by Washington State Dept of Health for schools and childcare with regards to masking, quarantine, and isolation.

There is no longer a requirement to quarantine or test if you are exposed to Covid-19, provided you are symptom free. If symptoms develop, please test immediately.

For positive Covid-19 cases, the quarantine period is 5 days. After 5 days, children may return to school but must mask on days 6-10. Additionally, if you or your child have cold-like symptoms, but are negative for Covid-19, please wear a mask in the building.

Little Acorn preschool is unable to refund tuition for missed schooling due to illness.

Thank you for reading over the handbook! Please let me know if you have any questions!