

WELCOME TO THE

Sunshine Class



**2023-2024 School Year
Classroom Handbook**

Welcome to the Sunshine Class!

From Teacher Lindsay:

My Philosophy:

My personal belief when teaching your children is that the best learning and development comes from play and self-exploration. We will have plenty of opportunities to explore in class this year, including getting messy and creative! Being hands-on with materials in the classroom and interacting with other children is the best, and often the most enjoyable, way to learn. I also follow the idea of "emergent curriculum" which means I will adjust my lesson plans to follow the interest of my class. Children learn best when they are interested in our themes and activities.

Teacher Info:

I have a wide range of teaching experience, as well as experience with children. I graduated from Portland State University in 2007 with my B.S in Psychology. After graduating, I spent almost a year in South Korea teaching English and conversational skills to children aged 3-18.

When I came back home, I started working in a daycare in Lake Oswego, OR, and I am proud to say I had a huge hand in turning it from a daycare experience to a real preschool experience. I helped design and implement curriculum for ages 3-6. I was there for over 5 years, but left as soon as my youngest was born because the commute was too much for us.

Prior to coming to teach in the Sunshine Class, I served on the board at Little Acorn, and was a frequent substitute teacher before coming on as the lead teacher for Sunshine in 2016.

Personally, I have been married to my husband, Ryan, for 14 years, and we have 2 children together; Audrey, who is 12, and Oliver, who is 10 (both are Little Acorn graduates). My husband and I enjoy traveling and have been lucky to visit Dublin, Paris, and London in recent years. Exotic locales aren't the norm for us, however; usually, we just take small trips to the beach or Seattle.

I'm looking forward to getting to know all of you, and I encourage you to reach out to me through our ParentSquare app (more information to follow) or e-mail (lindsays@littleacornpreschool.com) if you have any questions/comments/concerns. My hope is that we can work together to create a positive classroom experience this year!

Our Daily Schedule

The following is a schedule of our day. Even though we have attached time brackets to the activities, we will follow the lead of the children. If the circle time is going strong, and the kids want another song, that's what we'll do. Although not listed in the daily schedule, we do have time scheduled for bathroom breaks, hand washing time and clean-up.

Sunshine Daily Schedule

9:00 Table Activities

9:20 Table Work/Free Choice

9:50 Clean up

10:00 Morning Circle

10:15 Snack/Quiet Book Time

10:30 Outside/playroom

11:10 Art Activities/Centers

11:45 Closing circle

11:55 Goodbye

Sign In- Sign Out

We will have a sign-in sheet for you to use everyday just outside of our classroom. Please make sure to sign your child in and out every day! If you are having someone new pick up your child, please remind them to bring a photo ID to check at pickup time. This will help us keep your child safe!

Our day starts at 9:00 am 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.

Late Charge

Class starts at 9:00AM and ends at 12:00PM. Our preschool asks that you please be on time when you pick up your child. As the end of their day approaches, there is anticipation among the kids 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 our director 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 needs to be paid within 48 hours (checks can be made out to Little Acorn Preschool). After the 5-minute grace period, we may take your child to the director's office; check in with our classroom first.

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 an extra mask, extra set of underwear (for children who use the toilet) and/or diapers /pull-ups (for those who may need them). An extra set of clothes should also be sent in the backpack, because accidents do happen. As you well know, at this age, there are many times when the kids get too busy playing and forget to use the restroom. There may also be situations when the kids will get wet from playing in the sensory table or from 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's door. At the end of each day, your child may take his or her backpack home- as well as the contents of their cubbies! This will give you the opportunity to refill diapers, and to choose "extra" clothes suitable for the weather. Just make sure that the bag is sent back to school with your child each day!

Cubbies

Your child will have their own cubby in the hall just outside the door. Please check these each day for newsletters, parent handouts and your child's artwork.

Classroom Supplies

We don't have a large 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, a composition notebook, and a labeled water bottle. We also accept donations of frequently used items that count as volunteer time for the year. We will mention these opportunities in the weekly newsletter for specific upcoming projects and events. Thanks in advance for your support!

Emergent Curriculum

Here at Little Acorn we use an "emergent" curriculum. This basically means we take the lead from the children when choosing what to learn about. I have found that children learn and get excited about learning when they can relate it to their own world and when it is something they've already demonstrated an interest in. 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.

Every child in the Sunshine class is at a different stage in their interest and development regarding academics. I understand that for some of you, academics are of no importance at this age and others of you are very concerned about the things they are learning. We are flexible. We don't ever force academic learning because children at this age are often not ready. The things they are learning through their play are extremely valuable and we will do our best to facilitate that as well as provide academic learning opportunities that they may participate in if interested. They will have opportunities to grow through art projects, science projects, games, songs, classroom jobs, cooking projects, field trips and through classroom adventures. They will learn things like letters, numbers, shapes, etc... when they are ready to.

However, if there is something specific you are concerned with, please let us know and we'll be happy to look for opportunities to encourage that for your child. For example, one year we had a parent who was very concerned about her child's ability to use scissors. So we looked for opportunities to encourage the child to participate in cutting activities.

Classroom Jobs

Once we get into a good rhythm, we will introduce our classroom jobs. These are small jobs your child can choose to help our class with at some point in the day. They are things like line leader, snack helper, and bell ringer. This really helps the children to feel like a part of our classroom community. They don't have to pick a job, this is optional.

Word Wall/Sharing

Starting in late September, we will focus on a 'Letter of the Week'. We will practice writing the letter, making the letter's sounds, and associating the sound with objects. The kids love being a part of this so we ask that each child bring in an item at home that begins with the letter of the week. We will have a special place in the classroom to store the word wall items for the day; items will be sent back home at the end of class. In each week's newsletter I will let you know what the 'letter of the week' is! Make sure that if your child participates in this activity that their item has their name on it, and that they only bring in one item per day that starts with the letter of the week. **Note: Please leave any share/ toy items that are not related to the letter of the week at home - we don't want to lose them in our classroom!**

Outside Playtime

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 indoors.

Art

During art sessions, we encourage the kids to be individuals. Instead of forcing product-oriented artwork, we allow the kids to be creative. If they want to paint only with orange paint one day, we encourage them to do so. This places the focus more on the process than the product.

Snack Policy

Children are served one snack each day. We serve a variety of fresh fruits, and vegetables, and whole grain foods. Each child is encouraged to join their classmates and teachers at the snack table, but will have the choice of whether or not they will eat. We do not ever force a child to eat with us, and we do not force them to eat any food during snack time that they do not wish to consume. We do encourage children to be adventurous, and to try new foods; but we never force them if they do not want to. All snacks are served with water unless it is otherwise noted.

If your child has any food allergies, it is imperative to let the me know immediately. In that case, we will ask that you bring in an alternative snack for you child, one that is similar to the one we are providing to the other children. This ensures that no child feels left out. Alternate snacks for food PREFERENCES cannot be provided.

Cooking

On occasion, cooking will be a part of our learning activities. We may cook a few times during the year and our menu will depend on the lesson or them of the week. With COVID protocols, our cooking projects may look different this year. We will let you know about specific details in the newsletters or on our message board outside the classroom. We would like to assure you that we will observe precautionary measures for everybody's safety. All cooking activities will be simple and age appropriate (Please let us know if your child has any food allergies.)

Dress

Please dress your child in "play clothes," clothes that are okay to play in the dirt and paint in. We will be doing various activities where something may stain our clothes. We think they're cute no matter what they are wearing! The only day that we encourage them to dress up is on picture day (as soon as we get the dates for that, we will let you know). Other than that day, play clothes are the best. Also, keep in mind when you are picking out their clothes that they should wear clothes that have buttons or snaps that are easy to undo so that when they have to go to the bathroom, they can be quickly undone.

Toilet Training

At Little Acorn, we help your child with toilet training. It is part of growing up and we are positive 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 and underwear/ pull-ups and wipes. If your child is still wearing pull-ups we just ask that they be disposable, as we are not equipped to have cloth diapers in our classroom.

In Our Community

Little Acorn is blessed to be so close to a community park. Shumway Park is right across the street. On occasion we will take advantage of that by walking to explore the park. We try to plan this a few days in advance and will set a note out on the day of the visit. The Director is always notified 24 hours in advance and our class will always be back to the school in time for pick up. Anytime we are off school grounds, we will always make sure that we have a cell phone with us in case a situation arises that we need help.

Field Trips

There may be a few field trips throughout the school year (depending on current COVID protocols). The preschool has the policy that you, as parents, are responsible for transporting your 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.

Sick Kids

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 school 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. We are enforcing this policy more than ever due to the pandemic. See School Handbook for current COVID protocols.

Covid-19 Policy & 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 the Washington State Department 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. If you or your child have cold like symptoms, but are negative for COVID-19, please wear a mask when in the building.

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

Communication

I can't stress how important it is that we as teachers and parents have open and honest line of communication 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.

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. Make sure you read through this newsletter every week to be well informed. I will send out the newsletter on the ParentSquare app (more information on ParentSquare is under the ParentSquare section of this handbook).

We also have a bulletin board that we keep in front of the classroom with upcoming events. Parents are always welcome to participate in the classroom, volunteer their talents, join us on field trips, or simply get 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 e-mail (lindsays@littleacornpreschool.com) I'd also like to encourage you to message me on ParentSquare, as there may be times when you'd like to discuss things but don't have a chance during school hours. If you need to find information about upcoming events, check our website first. Business-related questions like tuition, tax stuff, enrollment, etc... should be directed to Director Lindsay in the office.

ParentSquare

Our main communication source will be through ParentSquare. You can access ParentSquare through the ParentSquare website (<https://www.parentsquare.com>) and through the app (search for it in your phone's app store). This is a great tool to keep you informed about upcoming classroom events, volunteer opportunities and school closures. I will sign you up during our meet and greets in August; please let me know if you don't receive the sign up e-mail. Make sure to look at the website, and download the app, to stay informed during the school year!

Guidance

Many times, the children will work out their differences when guided by an adult and given the correct tools to resolve the situation. For example, children at this age sometimes hit others instead of trying to work things out by talking. When something like this happens, we find ways for the person who hurt the other child to comfort the one who got hurt (i.e. hugs, ice pack, apology, etc.). Then, we will ask 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 or are taking care of it but we will not be able to discuss other children with you.

Birthdays/Holidays

Children love to have a party! You may bring treats to celebrate your child's birthday (or un-birthday for children with summer birthdays). I do encourage healthy store-bought treat options such as a fresh fruit, muffins, teddy grahams or non-food items such as pencils, stickers or other goodies. We are a completely nut free school so keep that in mind when bringing in treats. **PLEASE NO PINATAS!** If you are planning on bringing something to share for your child's birthday, please let me know ahead of time what day you are bringing it (I may suggest a different day to celebrate). Sometimes we have children who share a birthday, and I want to make sure that everyone gets their own special day! There also may be children in class who have food allergies, so letting us know what you're bringing ahead of time helps us plan an alternative treat for a student with food allergies, if necessary.

If you are throwing your child a party outside of school we ask that you not put invitations in the cubby. Please contact them outside of school, or on ParentSquare, for party invitations. 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!

Tuition

Tuition is due the 1st of every month. You may pay it directly to our director Lindsay in the office, or you can put it in the tuition box outside our classroom door. There is also an option on ParentSquare to pay electronically. If tuition isn't paid by the 10th of the month, a \$50.00 late fee will be assessed.

Book Orders

Here at Little Acorn we offer good children's books at a reasonable price through Scholastic book clubs. Each month your child will receive a flyer in his/her cubby that you may order books from. Make checks payable to Scholastic books. They come here to school and we deliver them to your child's cubby. Ordering books helps the school too! We receive free books and teacher resources for our classrooms when you order from the club.

Parent Volunteering

Little Acorn requires all families to volunteer 3 hours per school year per enrolled child. We have various volunteer opportunities throughout the year such as playground clean-up, auction, and various all school events and activities that are held at the school, as well as a few specific classroom volunteer opportunities. We have a volunteer notebook where you can choose which activity 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. You are welcome to complete all of your required time at an all preschool family event/ special function, but if you would like to split it up you can do that as well. Here is the breakdown if you choose to do so: a minimum of 1.5 hours at an all preschool family event/ special function, and a maximum 1.5 hour classroom support.

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.

Thank you for taking the time to look over the handbook. I look forward to working with you and your child - we're going to have a fun year!