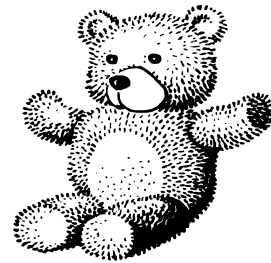


WELCOME TO THE

Teddy Bear

Class



2010-2011 School Year
Classroom Handbook

Welcome to the Teddy Bear Class

From Teacher Denise...

In the Teddy Bear Class our main goal is for your child to learn to **love** school and to be excited about coming to school. Children learn through play, so it is our responsibility to provide an environment that creates opportunities for your child to be open to play and interactions with their peers. We want to create a caring community of learners. We want to build a community within our classroom and our school. To do that we need to build relationships with our families, and hope that they build relationships with each other. I want to thank you for this opportunity to share your child with us. I would like to share a little bit about myself with you.

I have been a Teacher at Little Acorn since March 2004. I have over nine years experience working in a Pre-School setting, mainly with 3 & 4 year olds. I have been attending Clark College in their Early Childhood Education Program. This is truly my passion; I believe that this age is SO important in the BIG picture. It is our goal to guide behavior and encourage problem solving, creating self confidence by doing so.

On a personal note....

I am married to a wonderful man named Darrell. We just celebrated our 23rd anniversary. We have two children, two dogs and one cat. My son, Dakota is serving our country in the US Navy. My daughter, Sierra is a freshman at Hudson's Bay High School. So you may see her around here from time to time. We enjoy fishing, camping and I personally love the beach. There is nothing like a storm on the ocean!

Teacher Jo and I have worked together for several years and are very excited to have the chance to be in a classroom together. We compliment each other in our teaching styles and I look forward to our teamwork in making this a great year. We look forward to a fun and enjoyable year. Communication is vital to good relationships and we look forward ours with you. If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me at teacherdense@comcast.net or (360) 690-0791.

It is our goal to build a strong community within our classroom walls with our families; we value each and every one of you. We can't wait to spend time with you and your child. Thank you for sharing your lives with us.

Teacher Denise

From Teacher Jo....

Welcome to the Teddy Bear class. I am really looking forward to getting to know all of you during the upcoming school year.

Hello, my name is Joanna Willman. I am really excited to be assisting Teacher Denise this year, and we will work together to make this year a great experience for you and your children. I enjoy working with children and can't wait to get started. Watching them learn and grow during the course of the year is why I decided to start a career in teaching. My father was in the military and I spent most of my childhood traveling the world as he was assigned to different duty posts. After my husband, Matt, and I were married we moved to Vancouver and settled down over ten years ago. I think that it is important for us to get to know the area that we live and a little about the world around us and I can't wait to share my experiences with them.

I have been working at Little Acorn for over three years but I was also a parent at Little Acorn for five years.

My daughter Mardee will be in the 4th grade this year. She started at Little Acorn when she was three years old and still loves to come visit whenever she can. My son, Brandon recently graduated from the Little Acorn Kindergarten class and is now a 2nd grader.

I currently hold a Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration and am attending Clark College to earn my Associates Degree in Early Childhood Education. When I am not working, I enjoy scrapbooking, playing games, spending time with my family, and taking my children to Starbucks.

Teaching your children isn't something Teacher Denise and I can do alone. If you have any questions, suggestions, or concerns during the course of the year feel free to contact me. I can be reached via e-mail at Joanna@threepaw.com.

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.

9:00 AM - 9:10AM	Welcome & Large Group Activity (Yoga, Music, Bingo, etc...)
9:10 AM - 9:30AM	Circle Time: Calendar, Weather and Songs
9:30 AM - 9:55 AM	Outside Time
10:00 AM - 10:20AM	Snack Time
10:20AM - 10:30 AM	Reading Time (Silent and Teacher Lead)
10:30 AM - 11:30 AM	Free Play/Art Activities
11:30 AM - 11:45 AM	Word Wall

Sign In- Sign Out

There is a sign-in and 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 just one way that we do that.

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. 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

The morning class starts at 9:00AM and ends at 11:45AM. Our pre-school 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 Maria 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 before your child attends his next class time (checks

can be made out to Little Acorn Pre-School). After the 5-minute grace period, check the classroom for your child then, check in Maria'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 (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 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'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!

Cubby Cans

Your child will have their own "Cubby Can" in the hall just outside the door. Please check these each day for newsletters, parent handouts and your child's artwork. I like to put a photo of each child along with their name their cans. Please bring a photo of your child for their can. This helps with name recognition and is very cute, too.

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 have 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 Teddy Bear 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 whenever possible.

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 inside (since we are in Washington!).

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.

Cooking

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.)

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. Children who are worried about getting their clothes messy aren't going to open to being themselves. 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.

In Our Community

Several times a month, we take the children across the street to visit the "Grandmas" and "Grandpas" that live at Vencor. The kids always seem to enjoy spending time visiting with them! We usually sing songs with the Grandmas and Grandpas then, we spend time shaking hands and exchanging smiles! Children may or may not want to shake hands; we do encourage them to be friendly and to bring their smiles with them. ☺

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 our walkie talkie and a cell phone with us in case a situation arises that we need help.

Field Trips

There will be a field trip approximately once every other month. The pre-school 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.

Class Pets

We have several classroom pets, we have a beta fish and a guinea pig named Pumpkin. Our guinea pig goes home with me everyday, we get her out and the children can pet her but I always hold her. The children love having classroom pets to care for and are encouraged to bring in treats to help them feel connected to them.

Sick Kids

PLEASE do not bring your child to school if they have had a temperature of 100° or above, or if they have 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 pre-school, 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.

Communication

I can't even stress 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 make sure you read through this newsletter every week to be well informed. Another great place to receive information is our classroom Facebook. I only invite families that are currently enrolled to be Teddy Bear Class friends on Facebook. This site will contain a link for new photos on a weekly basis as well as keep a running list of upcoming class themes and events. We also have a white board that we keep in front of the classroom with upcoming events. We will provide the info and you will want to do your part to keep up with it so that you don't

miss out on any special things. Parents are always welcome to participate in the classroom, volunteer 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 teacherdenise@comcast.net or my home phone number (690-0791) because there are 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 or Facebook first. Business-related questions like tuition, tax stuff, enrollment, etc... should be directed to Maria in the office.

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.

Parent - Teacher Conferences

We would like to set up two parent- teacher conferences with you for the year. The first will be toward the beginning of the year, and the second will be held before registration for the next school year. During these conferences, we will discuss a "student profile," talk about our observations of your child in a classroom setting, and answer any questions you may have.

Birthdays/Holidays

Children love to have a party! We would like to encourage parents to bring in **Food Free Treats** such as pencils, stickers or something else small to give to the children or even better bring in a game to play with the children. You may bring a healthy treat 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!

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. Children are encouraged to bring items that relate to our theme anytime during the year. We do a **Word Wall** that highlights a letter for each week that I ask the children bring in items that start with the letter of the week. We usually do the word wall the last circle of the day and the items are put away in our pelican until the children share their items.

Book Bags

At the beginning of the year we decorate book bags. The children can take home a book from our library to share with you at home. They can trade their books every day they come to school or keep them for a while if they would like. We don't have an official check out system but as long as your child brings their book back they can pick out a new one.

Word Wall

We have a word wall that will feature a new letter each week. I encourage you to help your children find words that begin with the letter of the week and they can bring them into share with our class. This helps the children to start thinking about beginning sounds and they can have a lot of fun with it. It also gives them an opportunity to share with their friends, which can help with their confidence in speaking in front of others.

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.

Teddy Bear Facebook & Online Album

The Teddy Bear Class has a Facebook and I will invite you to be our friend after the year starts. No pictures or private information will be shared just classroom happenings and information. Throughout the year I will keep a photo journal of all the fun our class has together! You can view this online journal on Snapfish. I will do my best to keep this updated weekly. We will have a classroom album at www2.snapfish.com. You will have to sign up for a Snapfish account to be able to view the photos. I will provide you the password at the beginning of the year, I want to make sure that only people that we know are viewing our photos. You may purchase any of the photos anytime online through the links I will provide on our blog. Prints are usually around \$.12 or you can order the whole album.