

Annie's Alphabet

Home Childcare and Preschool





Why

Annie's Alphabet Home Daycare and Preschool?

"I am driven by the need to help children feel successful and learn fearlessly. I do that by creating safe, playful, and inviting spaces that are exploratory, tranquil, and nature based." —Annie Look

Welcome to Annie's Alphabet Home Childcare. My name is Annie and I have been in the childcare business for 30+ years. I have been a licensed in-home childcare provider for 24 years. I am licensed for 12 children-ages 0-11. I have a full time employee that works with me. Her name is Korina; She has been with me for 7 years. I have 3 boys; one of which lives with me.

I started working with children when I was 16 at the daycare near my High school. I fell in love with the interaction and found something I was really good at. I worked in several other large childcares in the area and when my first son was born I knew it would be rewarding for the both of us to start an in-home childcare. I am finishing up my AA in Early Childhood at Bellevue College and am going on to study for my Bachelors degree at the University of Washington.

Research shows that young children learn best in a nurturing, child-initiated play-based environment that fosters self-confidence, trust, creativity, autonomy, decision making, social interaction and acceptance of individual differences; those are values I believe in.

My goal as a teacher is to provide children with a rich environment where they feel safe to explore, initiate learning, and feel free to express themselves. I love building environments that cater to a child's wonder and curiosity. At our center, children step into a wondrous world where imagination and self-expression flourish. Many people have walked in and commented on the peacefulness and joyousness of our center. We provide opportunities and expose children to a variety of creative forms of language, art expression, science, math, sensory, and building throughout the day using books, writing tools, print, songs, poems, stories, communication, language, and natural resources.

The things I love the most about working with children are watching them engaged and excited in the learning and discovery process, seeing them become independent little people (and how proud of themselves they are), and playing with, listening to, and learning from them. Being a mom, I know how difficult and uncertain finding childcare for your child can be. Ask lots of questions and never be afraid to speak up! I know your child will love it here!!



A Description of Our Day

Learning Through Thoughtful Play

Stuart Brown says, "For humans, creating such simulations of life may be plays most valuable benefit. In play we can imagine and experience situations we have never encountered before and learn from them. We create possibilities that have never existed but may in the future. We make new cognitive connections that find their way into our everyday lives. We can learn lessons and skills without being directly at risk."

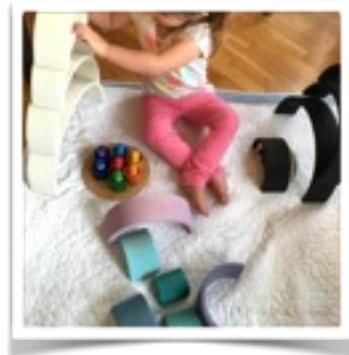
Our classroom is set-up with your child in mind. We change our setting depending on our enrolled children's ages and developmental needs. I provide a variety of age appropriate toys and materials for the children to manipulate and discover with. Children are invited to have their curiosity and imagination sparked through hands on exploration with natural materials. Play is the foundation for a lifetime of learning and our program is play based. When children are excited about a particular idea we brainstorm together and make choices about activities that we can bring in/do to further their understanding of the topic. The room changes every few weeks depending on their interests; this keeps the children engaged and excited.

We make it a priority to know each child thoroughly through observation and conversation. That way we can give each child experiences that go along with their developing abilities as well as challenging their interests and understanding in topics they are interested in. We provide a developmentally appropriate curriculum for all areas of a child's development: physical, emotional, social, and cognitive. Realistic curriculum goals for children should address all of these areas in age appropriate ways. Children's learning does not occur in narrowly defined subject areas; their development and learning are integrated. Each day we create, move, sing, discuss, observe, and read. We do all of this through play.

We are constantly working on the recognition and sounds of letters and numbers through games, chants, flannel stories, sensory materials, puzzles, and songs that may or may not be related to the theme in the room. We also work on colors, shapes, sizes, large motor skills (like hopping, climbing, playing ball, etc) fine motor skills (drawing, stringing beads, tearing, cutting) math, science, language, reading, writing, art, social skills, and most of all fun!

7:30 Arrive/Play/Breakfast @ 8:00
9:30 Group Gathering/Activities/Play.
11:00 Outside/inside large motor activities
12:00 Lunch/Rest period 3:30 Snack/Play
5:30 Close

The days are flexible, and do not always match the "typical day". If you would like to drop by to join our group gathering let me know so I can give you the schedule for the day. Otherwise, you are more than welcome to drop by any time. As a parent of an enrolled child in our in-home childcare, you have the right to access any area used by your child and his/her records during our operating hours.





Meals

Nutritionally balanced yumminess

We serve nutritionally balanced meals. I have taken classes in nutrition and have my food handlers permit. My employees are also required to have a food handlers permit. I provide Breakfast, Lunch, and an afternoon snack.



Some examples: Breakfast--Hot Cereal, peanut butter toast, waffles, or cold cereal...each breakfast also comes with fruit and milk.

Lunch—Homemade Mac and cheese, Chicken nuggets, turkey wraps, or grilled cheese....each lunch comes with a fruit, a veggie, and milk.

Snack—Banana bread, blueberry muffin, crackers and cheese, yogurt smoothies, cookies, fruit, or veggies, and water.

We eat together as a group and everyone is served the same food. I encourage children to eat what we are eating

however, if your child has dietary differences you may bring food from home. The food brought from home needs to fit into the national dietary guidelines. I provide whole milk. If your child has allergies to milk, you are responsible for bringing in something different.





Encouraging Cooperation (aka: managing behavior)

We encourage cooperation at Annie's Alphabet. It is not going to happen *all* of the time (and that is ok) and with guidance and love the children here work together to solve their own problems rather than relying on us to solve them for them. You will hear us (and hopefully after time, your children) say things like, "sounds like you have a problem. What can you do (or what can I help you with) to help solve it?" We talk together about strategies to help solve the problem. This helps children feel more confident in solving problems which helps minimize many of the problems. It also gives children self confidence and the confidence to help others.

We also encourage cooperation through room arrangement and daily activities that are set up. We keep children active and engaged during the day so they are not bored; which tends to lead to undesirable ways of keeping themselves entertained. We also guide children on the awareness of how they (and the other children) may be feeling when things aren't going smoothly; they get hurt, hurt someone, have a toy taken, take someone's toy, spill things, feel angry, sad, happy, etc. We are like a behind the scenes commentator. EX: You leave after dropping your child off in the morning. Your child is crying. We will go to them and talk them through it. "You are crying then we problem solve together to figure out what we can do to make the situation feel better.

Children are ego to

centric and it is not natural for them to be diplomatic. It takes A LOT of practice! One of our goals is for children to be able to see a 'problem' and feel successful in

problem solving by the time they go to kindergarten. There are some moments when we need a break from the situation, then I re-direct to finding something different to do. Spanking and any other form of corporal punishment is prohibited during my care. By law I am required to report suspected child abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation.





Risk

adventure playground

Children need a chance to practice risk-assessment in order to learn what their body can handle and what it can't. Without knowing what your body can do it can lead to difficulty reading certain situations and having a serious accident.

Children are going to naturally test things out; I want them to be able to do so in a safe environment. Our environment provides a certain amount of risk; they may fall and get scrapes and bruises, but what they are learning about their abilities and bodies will carry them through for a lifetime.

“Appropriate Risk

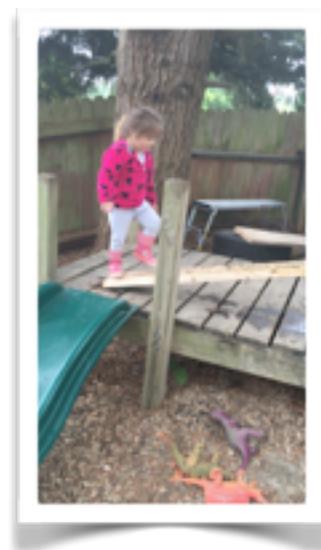
When children are given a chance to engage freely in adventurous play they quickly learn to assess their own skills and match them to the demands of the environment. Such children ask themselves—consciously or unconsciously—“how high can I climb”, or “is this log across the creek strong enough to support me?” They become savvy about themselves and their environment. Children who are confident about taking chances rebound well when things don't work out at first. They are resilient and will try again and again until they master a situation that challenges them—or wisely avoid it, if that seems best.” (<http://www.communityplaythings.com/resources/articles/2013/the-role-of-risk-in-play-and-learning>)

As teachers, we still have some guidelines. We don't encourage children to do things that they are not prepared to do. We also don't hold them back. If they want to try something and 'need help' we will stand close and give our support without actually holding hands. Helping children by using our hands gives a false sense of security and we want them to be able to risk-access for themselves. If they get stuck or scared, we will guide them down. It is natural to want to 'safe' or 'help', however, if we are jumping in to help; they are not learning skills. We are always watching. Oh, it is a little different with the little guys; we may 'save' them from time to time. :)

Studies conclude that the accident record of adventure playgrounds is far better than that of other forms of playgrounds. A wonderful publication is, “Adventure: The Value of Risk in Children's Play,” is available through the Alliance at www.allianceforchildhood.org
The overall message: Provide oversight but let children play freely and in adventuresome ways. They'll become skilled in risk-assessment and have surprisingly few injuries or other problems.

Some Types of Risk

- Play with great heights
- Play with great speed
- Play where children can disappear





School Readiness

What is school readiness?

There are many aspects to school readiness. Recognizing letters and numbers is just a small part of it. Being socially and Emotionally ready is the largest part. At Annie's Alphabet we foster positive relationships and connections through role modeling, problem solving, and group projects. Feeling connected helps children feel safe; when they feel safe they feel more comfortable taking risks; when they feel more comfortable taking risks they share more, engage more, and learn more. Being able to take those risks in a safe and loving atmosphere builds self confidence and compassion for others. We also work at scaffolding children's thinking; Linking prior knowledge, Relating things to the child's life, asking 'who, what, why' questions to further thought process. We make observations, predictions, and experiments. We foster this all day long; during play time, group time, meal time, outside time, and nap time. Combine the social, emotional, and cognitive parts all together; between the ages of 4 and 5 you will begin to see it all coming together. All of the children that have been here since a young age are ready for kindergarten in a well rounded way.

A few rules of our classroom

“You don't learn to walk by following rules. You learn by doing, and by falling over.”

—Richard Branson

- Enter through the front glass French doors. They are the entry to the classroom.
- As you arrive and leave each day, you are required to sign your child in and out. The sign in/out book is located on the table to the right, before you walk into the room. Find the date, fill in the time, and sign with your full signature. This is a state requirement for your child's safety and mine.
- Shoes stay outside! No shoes in the playroom. Shoes bring in dirt and pine needles; we climb and roll around on the floor. Have your child leave their shoes on the railing by their name outside on the deck. Jackets are hung here as well. Thank you in advance.
- Dress in daycare wear. Your child should be dressed for comfort and messy activities. I cannot guarantee that your child will be as clean when they leave as when they arrive. Especially in the rainy months! mud!! :) We do many art activities that are messy and I keep the activities out during the day so they can visit them when they want to and we don't use smocks. Some of our supplies are washable, however, some do stain.
- Keep toys at home. The toys cause issues with the other children and they can get lost or broken. Have them write a story about their toy if they are determined to share it.
- No gum, candy, or money. They are choking hazards.



Health and Medical

- All teachers are trained in first aid and child/infant CPR. In case of accidental injury I will attend the child and then contact you. If it is an emergency, I will call 9-1-1 and then phone you. It is to your child's benefit that you keep me up to date on all phone numbers, emergency numbers, and other pertinent information.
- Your child's health is important to me, my family, and the other kids. To keep them healthy, we wash hands before and after we eat, after we use the bathroom, after sneezing or coughing, and after playing with the animals. I blow noses often so goo doesn't travel, and I wash my hands after all diaper changes and nose blowing. We all know it is no fun to be sick, especially when you are not in the comfort of your own home,
- **Please keep your child home if:**
- They have vomited 2 or more times in a 24 hour period
- They have a fever of 101.5 or higher in the last 24 hour period.
- They are fussy, cranky, and generally out of sorts This means that if your child feels yucky enough in the morning to take cough medicine or Tylenol, they should not be coming to daycare.

If your child should become ill while in my care I will contact you and discuss the possibilities. I will lay them in a comfortable area (my living room) with books, away from the other children.

- I cannot give out prescribed medications and over the counter medications without a signed consent form. This includes diaper cream and suntan lotion. You can find this form on my website under 'forms'.
- I will put all medications up high in the pantry (with my first aid kit) in the kitchen (which has a kid lock on it) or on the top shelf in the refrigerator.

I am always keeping a watchful eye on things around the inside and outside of my home to prevent accidents from happening. However, sometimes I may miss things that haven't been put away by family members. If there is anything you see that is potentially dangerous, don't hesitate to point it out. I also remind the children what is hot (the stove) and what is off limits (different rooms). I keep all cleaning materials up high in the laundry room or kitchen and knives on top of the refrigerator.

Disaster Plan

In case of a major disaster, I keep a plastic bin filled with 3 days worth of food and water in the garage. It also contains blankets, flashlights, a radio and extra batteries. Once a month we practice a fire and earthquake drill. For a fire drill I yell, "FIRE" and we hurry out to the top of the driveway by the gate. We talk about what would happen if you witnessed a fire or if your clothes caught on fire....Stop, Drop, Roll. For an earthquake drill I yell, "EARTHQUAKE" and we get under the big kitchen table. We make it fun, not scary, and the kids like to do it.

Transportation



We have a few field trips a year and they are on Saturdays; I do not transport children. If for emergency reasons I would use my 2014 Jeep Cherokee. It holds 3 children and 2 adults. I carry full coverage insurance on my Jeep.

Pets

Right now we have a small shitsu dog named Chompers, fish, a snake, and a bunny. The children love to take care of and play with the animals. It gives them a sense of responsibility, pride, and compassion for the animals. All the animals are well cared for and clean. Chompers is up to date on his vaccinations. I keep the yard free of animal waste. We wash our hands when we are done playing with the animals.



Smoking

There is absolutely no smoking on the premises or out by the road. We are a smoke free environment. Please refrain from smoking and dumping the ashtray (yes, it happens) outside on the street.

Religious Activities and Nondiscrimination statement

Annie's Alphabet will not discriminate in employment practices or clients served. I run an anti-bias curriculum; trying to represent a variety of cultures through pictures, toys, dress up, and activities that we do. I like to incorporate the children's home life by having a picture wall with pictures of their families and their home. We do not practice any particular religion; we may sometimes engage in religious holiday activities such as Christmas, Hanukkah, Easter, and Halloween. The children are not required to participate.

Babies

You are responsible for diapers, wipes, bottles, formula or breast milk, several changes of clothes and a blanket. To help prevent Infant death syndrome, I will put babies to sleep on their back and do not have any pillows, toys, blankets or bumpers in the portable crib. We will give babies their bottles while they are sitting in our lap and will never prop them up with their bottle or put them to bed with a bottle. We encourage babies to start drinking from a cup when they seem ready; around 9 months. I will use cloth or disposable diapers.

We have a changing table that is used to change babies or we use a mat that pulls out from under the changing table. It is near the child sized sink for easy washing of the hands.

I store all their diaper needs in or above the changing table. They have their own cubbies here.

We use the RIE approach with our babies. We never force them to learn new skills (propping them up) we encourage new skills (like crawling) by putting things out of their reach. We talk to and respect the needs of the babies just as we do adults. We let them know we are going to pick them up or change them. This creates a trusting bond and builds vocabulary. We don't use bouncy seats, bilbos, or pillows to prop babies up. When babies cry we will comfort them and we will also help them comfort themselves. You can find out more about the RIE approach by visiting www.magdagerber.org or www.janetlansbury.com.



Enrollment and Admission Requirements

The following forms must be filled out before childcare can begin.

- A completed childcare home register form (all the good info I need about you)
- A completed childcare agreement form (agreement of hours and payment)
- A completed permission form (permission to take photos and such)
- A completed certificate of Immunization form (SHOTS! I have found that Dr. Offices are good at giving this info over the phone. It is a state requirement to keep this accurate and up to date.

All these forms can be found on my website under 'Forms' or I can give them to you.

Tuition and Holiday

Ages 6 weeks-2 years: \$1,200.00

Ages 2 years and up: \$1,000.00

- Tuition is due the 1st day of every month.
- I do not charge for my vacations days, but I do charge for my sick days (I am rarely sick) and my holidays. I will give you plenty of notice for my vacation days. It is usually 2 weeks during the summer and other miscellaneous days here and there throughout the year. Many times I am able to have someone come in and take over, but if not, you are responsible for finding alternative care for your child.
- **There is a two week cancellation notice.** You are responsible for paying for two weeks upon your written notice of cancellation. If I can fill the spots before the two weeks are up we may be able to wave that charge.

Late Fees

I charge \$1.00 a minute for every minute you are late past 5:30. If you know you are going to be late, please call in advance to let me know so I can plan accordingly.

I will be closed on the following holidays:

New Years Eve, and day.

4th of July

Memorial Day

Labor Day

Dec. 24th, 25th, and 26th

The last Thursday and Friday in Oct. for the NAYEC conference

Thanksgiving Day and the Friday after

I may take other days off.....but these are the ones you are responsible for paying for.

What to Bring on the First Day

- Pictures of your family including, but not limited to; parents, siblings, grandparents, close relatives, and pets. Pictures of your house and car.
- Extra clothes. The children get wet outside, painting, eating (spilled milk), potty accidents, and even washing their hands. Please bring 2 days worth. Don't forget if clothes are going home then the extra clothes will need to be replenished.
- A blanket and crib sheet for their bed. and anything else they may want to sleep with.
- Diapers (if you use them) and wipes.
- All your forms
- A check or cash

I hope I have been thorough with the information I have given you. Feel free to ask any questions that you may have. Never feel afraid to speak up. I really think your family will enjoy it here in our home. Thank you!

Annie Look

Annie's Alphabet

425-649-5114

www.anniesalphabet.com

www.annielook.blogspot.com

