



Good Shepherd Day School
Classroom Welcome Packet
2023-2024

Classroom curriculum

Our curriculum is based on principals using an integrated inquiry approach, modeled after the Reggio Emilia Approach to children's learning. In this method, teachers teach our Florida learning standards in such a way that the standards are incorporated into topics children are interested in learning more about, or that teachers wish to bring to children's awareness. The curriculum areas that are integrated and explored include math, sciences, language arts, social studies, studio arts, music, gross and fine motor development, health and safety, character, and spiritual development.

We believe young children want and need to express ideas and messages through different expressive ways such as working with clay, paint, drawing, sculpture, construction, music, movement, dance, and shadow play. Children begin to gain new skills with the use of these mediums. The children draw to learn. They revisit and revise their work, moving them to new levels of awareness. We occasionally do worksheets for handwriting or math practice in our classroom, but most of our work happens with manipulatives at school. We value original works of art rather than "copy-cat" types of craft projects, but we will do seasonal craft projects during the year.

Project Work

"A project is an in-depth investigation of a topic worth learning more about. The investigation is usually undertaken by a small group of children, sometimes by a whole class, and occasionally by an individual child. The key feature of a project is that it is a research effort deliberately focused on finding answers to questions about a topic posed by the children, teachers, or parents." -Lillian Katz

The length of the project may vary from a couple of weeks to several months. Project work is one of the ways we integrate the curriculum and state standards. Teachers plan for project study and guide children during project work, engaging them in the process of inquiry. Teachers also provide equipment and resources for the children to carry out their investigations.

Projects are often documented on documentation panels. Documentation panels are created to tell the story of the evolving project. With teacher narratives, photographs, conversations, and sample drawings the history of the project comes alive. Children, teachers, parents, and visitors can see first-hand what the children are learning and how the investigation is proceeding.

Learning Center Exploration

This time gives each child the opportunity to select activities independently, provides time for social interaction development and time for the teaching staff to gather information and insight on skills, interests, and group dynamics. The teachers carefully arrange the classroom learning environment into distinct areas that reflect learning goals for children. Each area has a wide variety of high quality, open-ended materials, which promote critical thinking and creative skills. Teacher-led and child-led activities during choice time are carefully planned for and the children can move through them at their own pace during the week. They can also return to a favorite area or activity at another time. Teachers are stationed at different learning areas facilitating learning, leading a lesson there, or making observations of the children for assessments or documentation boards.

The Creative Process

Creativity is tied into career success and is therefore an important skill children will need to become successful in the future. Creativity includes being able to identify a problem or challenge and then working out the best approach for a solution. These skills are critical for life, both personally and professionally. We encourage children's creativity throughout the day. The following are the steps the teachers use to guide children's creative thinking:

PLAN: Children consider what they are going to do with the materials and how they are going to do it, to build a foundation for setting goals for themselves.

PLAY: Children use materials and make choices in ways that best suits their own personal curiosity and understanding and allows them to experience joy in creating meaning for themselves.

SHARE: Children recall/reflect with others about their experiences, reinforcing their learning in the process and formulating new questions to explore.

REVISIT: Children practice skills and replay their experiences over and over in many different ways and either confirm their understanding or adapt it based on new discoveries. As they explore, their understanding spirals; each new experience building on previous learning.

CONNECT: Children, with the guidance of highly trained teachers, create linkages among disciplines and areas of skill development.

Children involved in a project may work on drawings and paintings over many days and sometimes weeks. We focus more on the process rather than the product in the work the children do. Representational work, such as drawing, painting, sculpting, dramatizing, and building, become the tools the children use for their learning. As children draw, paint, sculpt and work with clay and wire, they begin to represent ideas and their understanding of the world. Children are encouraged to revisit their work, make additions and corrections to their drawings/paintings during the week, so you will find that your child's work may stay at school.

We ask for your support and understanding of this concept, so children do not feel pressured to produce a piece of artwork to take home every day. Our approach is not "a make and take home" practice. We work at slowing children down, helping them see details and how things change over time. In the process, children think creatively, make decisions and problem solve.

Classroom Wish Lists

As the year goes on, we may ask for specific things that will enrich our program. Teachers, or the GSDS volunteer coordinator will send out requests for these items as new projects arise. Here are some examples that you can start off with:

- Scrap paper, stationary, and envelopes for the writing/communication center.
- Gift Cards to Amazon, Michaels, Wal-Mart, Lakeshore, Jo-Ann's, Target, Dollar Tree, Ikea, etc. for odds and ends.
- The following are items we are always collecting to enhance our Loose Parts Center: Bottle caps, Corks, Wire Ribbon and yarn, Small tiles and/or stones, Buttons, Spools, Mason jars, Glass baby food jars, Cardboard tubes of all sizes, Blank CDs, Clear CD cases, Clear cassette cases, Keys, Broken jewelry and charms, Fabric scraps.

Separation Advice for Parents and Loved Ones

We know that you want to help your child get off to a good start in beginning school. Young children often experience difficulties with separation from their significant adults in new situations. They may cry or cling or behave differently than you are used to. Be assured that this is a typical, normal response and that these behaviors will slowly stop as children (and you) get more comfortable with the new situation. Some things you could do to support your child at this time are:

- Accept and respect your child's temporary unhappiness. Say things such as, "I know you're feeling sad when Dad leaves, but you will have a good time, and soon, you won't be so sad."
- Give yourselves enough time in the morning. Children often get anxious when rushed.
- Have pleasant conversation as you talk about some of the things your child enjoys about preschool.
- Remind your child of the predictability of your pickup arrangements, tying your return with an event, such as after naptime, and then arrive when you have said.
- Establish a pattern of what you will each do when you enter the classroom each day-for example, one hug and one kiss.
- Encourage your child to do as much as he or she can independently during the arrival process-for example, putting their lunchbox in their cubby.
- After you have said you will go, make your goodbye prompt, affectionate, and positive. Do not ever be tempted to sneak away while your child is occupied.
- Have your child's teacher step in to help with goodbyes when you give the sign that you are ready to go. Once you have left, avoid re-entering the classroom.
- Avoid the temptation to pressure your child not to cry or to offer bribes for "good behavior." Learning to cope with sadness is important for your child.
- Let the teacher know if there are routines or objects that bring comfort to your child. The teacher will be helped by this knowledge.
- Understand that the process of learning to trust new people naturally takes time. The teacher will be glad to discuss your concerns with you; together, you can make plans to meet your child's needs.

Lastly, keep in mind that studies show that parents' verbal explanations are the most important influence in how well children adapt to a new situation.

Potty Training Basics

When your child enters The Mangrove, we will discuss with you your plans for potty training. We must make sure all children are potty trained by the time they leave our classroom since The Reef does not have diapering facilities.

Each child will be ready to start the process in his or her own time, but we are always working towards that goal! Potty training is most successful when the child is verbal enough to say they need to use the bathroom. Children are ready to potty train when their brain and bladder neurological connections are fully developed. As much as we may want a child to be potty trained, we cannot rush nature!

We also place a tremendous emphasis on fine motor skills, developing confidence and autonomy in The Mangrove. We encourage children that are ready - or even just beginning to show interest - to go in and sit on the potty several times during the morning. We also change the children standing up rather than on a changing table to help them build the skills to pull their own pants up and down. To help children build those skills and self-sufficiency, please dress your child in easy up/easy down pants for school, and avoid belts, onesies/rompers, and complicated buttons/snaps.

We suggest you move from diapers to thick training pants, skipping pull-ups, so your child can feel when they are wet. Expect your child to have good days and bad days, but consistency is key. Also, not making a big deal of accidents will help your child be psychologically accepting of the process. Some people like to use "treats", but we do not use that practice, unless a child shows that it is the only motivation for them. Playing your part at home to help potty train them during the days and times they are not at school will help the process as well. Please work closely with your child's teachers- and remember, it is especially important that YOU are ready to begin the process!



Meet Ms. Krista, Director

I am excited to collaborate with and lead our school family as director at Good Shepherd Day School. As a current parent, I love the Reggio-Emilia influenced learning philosophy and small community feeling when we walk through the door, one of the reasons we chose GSDS for our son. I am passionate about giving back and love to see students grow and I look forward to contributing to the development of all of our students' brilliant minds and supporting our incredible teachers at GSDS. I first dreamed of becoming a teacher as a young child and my career began in various early childhood centers and summer camps which lead to my undergraduate degree in Elementary Education from Central Michigan University. I've spent the past fourteen years teaching at the elementary and middle school levels in Pinellas and Hillsborough Counties as well as teaching abroad in England and Japan. One of my proudest moments was being nominated by my principal and celebrated by my peers for Educator of the year; and selected as a top 10 finalist in Pinellas County. After teaching for several years, I decided to go back for my master's degree in educational leadership from the University of South Florida realizing the potential I had to make greater change through leadership in a school-wide capacity. Personally, I enjoy traveling, crafting, being outdoors and spending time with family and friends. My husband and I live in South Tampa with our son Grayson, who is three and, in the VPK Classroom, our one-year-old son Cole, in the Mangrove classroom, and our dog, Roxy.

Meet Ms. Yordanos, Atelierista



My name is Yordanos and I am the Atelierista at Good Shepherd Day School. My role is to support the classroom teachers and students facilitating learning experiences in process art, loose parts, Yoga and “brain” breaks. My birthday is February 12th. I have been working in Early Childhood for over ten years. I have primarily taught in preschool and pre-k classrooms. I have a National Child Development associate degree and a Director Credential certificate. I just completed my 40 hours of RBT certification- which will further help me help our students as they learn how to cope with their emotions and communication. I have two gorgeous boys that are attending college. Samuel attends USF and Yonathan attends FSU. We lived in Washington, DC before moving to Tampa in 2001. I am so happy to be a part of the Good Shepherd family! I love painting, reading books and cooking. I enjoy working with children because they never stop trying to learn new things. It brings me so much joy helping them learn new skills and see their excitement. Most of all I just love listening to them, their ideas, silly stories and their view on our world.

Get to know your teacher:

Full name (including middle initial): Ms. Yordanos

Birthday (year not necessary): February 12th

My favorite flower: Peace lily

My favorite coffee order: Misto from Starbucks

My favorite restaurant: Olive Garden

My favorite sandwich:

My favorite salad: Greek Salad

My favorite sweet treat: Midtown Boba (Taro Milk Tea)

My favorite gift cards: Target and Amazon

In my free time, I like to... read, ride my bike, shopping

Classroom supply wish list: essential oils, loose parts(new or old) floor pillows(with washable covers).



Meet Ms. Michaela, Office assistant and substitute teacher

One of our Fall USF early childhood interns, Michaela, will be assisting us part-time in the office and substituting in the classrooms. She is currently studying Behavioral Healthcare with a concentration on ABA Applied Behavioral Analysis and hopes to pursue her career in Behavioral therapy.

Get to know your teacher:

Full name (including middle initial): Ms. Michaela A. Tatum

Birthday (year not necessary): June 17th

My favorite flower: White roses

My favorite coffee order: Grande Iced shaken espresso

My favorite restaurant: California Pizza Kitchen

My favorite sandwich: Ham and cheese

My favorite salad: Fuji chicken apple salad

My favorite sweet treat: brownies

My favorite gift cards: Target

In my free time, I like to... go to the beach

Classroom supply wish list:

The Mangrove Classroom (toddlers)



Meet Ms. Samantha, Starfish Lead Teacher

My name is Samantha Langworthy and I am one of the Mangrove Lead teachers and the VPK Substitute Teacher at Good Shepherd Day School. I moved to Florida from Jamestown, New York in 2020 with my daughter, Morganne. I've been working with all ages of children in a school setting for 6 years and have acquired my National CDA credential. My goal is to achieve my director's credentials. My favorite hobbies include listening to Broadway musicals, singing and painting. We have 2 cats, Severus and Rhodie, and two dogs, Luna and Liam. I'm really excited to get to know and learn more about all of your families!

Get to know your teacher:

Full name (including middle initial): Ms. Samantha J. Langworthy

Birthday (year not necessary): June 18th

My favorite flower: hibiscus

My favorite coffee order: Carmel ribbon crunch frappe

My favorite restaurant: Kona Grill

My favorite sandwich: Roast Beef sub with spinach, provolone cheese and mayo

My favorite salad: Southwest Chicken Salad

My favorite sweet treat: white fudge covered pretzels

My favorite gift cards: Old Navy and Amazon

In my free time, I like to... spend time with family, hiking, yoga

Classroom supply wish list: paint sticks, stickers, clothes pins



Meet Ms. Holly, Otters Lead Teacher

I grew up in Tarpon Springs and now reside in St. Petersburg, I have my Bachelors in Elementary Education and have experience teaching First and Third grade here in Hillsborough County. I am so excited to work with Toddlers this year in a Reggio Inspired School! I am recently married and love spending time with my husband and family. Luckily, both of our families live close by! We love taking our three pups over to their homes, grilling out and playing games.

Get to know your teacher:

Full name (including middle initial): Ms. Holly S. Bavender

Birthday (year not necessary): December 22

My favorite flower: orchid

My favorite coffee order: Mocha cappuccino

My favorite restaurant: Rusty Bellies

My favorite sandwich: Cuban

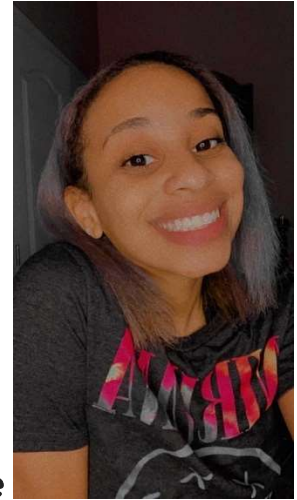
My favorite salad: Greek Salad

My favorite sweet treat: cheesecake

My favorite gift cards: Amazon

In my free time, I like to... play with our dogs, cook

Classroom supply wish list: stickers, sharpies, pens



Meet Ms. Jasmine, Starfish Assistant Teacher and Extended Care

I'm 24 years old I live in Florida Tampa I was born and raised in Tampa, Florida.

I love just hanging out with my family and on the weekend, I love spending time with my grandma. I love spending time with my Osito and going roller skating. I've worked in childcare for 6 years now. I was in an early childhood preparatory program in high school. I love learning and growing with my students!

Get to know your teacher:

Full name (including middle initial): Ms. Jasmine S. Clark

Birthday (year not necessary): August 13th

My favorite flower: rose

My favorite coffee order: Double chocolate chip crème blended

My favorite restaurant: Chipotle

My favorite sandwich: Veggie sandwich

My favorite salad: Cesar Salad

My favorite treat: Pretzels and popcorn

My favorite gift cards: Amazon and LuLu lemon

In my free time, I like to... hang out with family, spend time at the pool and workout.

Classroom supply wish list: books and stickers



Meet Ms. Linda, Otters Assistant Teacher and Extended Care

She has many years of experience teaching in South Tampa preschools, her most recent position in a 3's classroom. She is originally from Honduras, and has a large family, one dog, and 3 birds. When she's not teaching she likes to spend her time at home with her family. She loves cooking and listening to old music. Ms. Linda also enjoys traveling and is looking forward to getting to know our students and families.

Get to know your teacher:

Full name (including middle initial): Ms. Erlinda E. Martinez

Birthday (year not necessary): January 27th

My favorite flower: all of them

My favorite coffee order: cappuccino

My favorite restaurant: Carrabba's, Chic-fil-a

My favorite sandwich: Cuban, Veggies and chicken

My favorite salad: All and any, just no mushrooms

My favorite sweet treat: ginger candies, dark chocolate

My favorite gift cards: Publix, Walmart

In my free time, I like to... read, cook, listen to music

Classroom supply wish list: musical books



Meet Ms. Vanessa, Mangrove Assistant Teacher

I am a Christian, I was born in Colombia Cartagena, I immigrated to this country USA 14 years ago, of which I have worked with children for over 5 years. I love and I enjoy that they teach me new things every day, with this experience I have learned to be more patient, and I have grown as a person. I am very excited to be part of the Good Shepherd Day School.

Get to know your teacher:

Full name (including middle initial): Ms. Vanessa Sosa

Birthday (year not necessary): December 10th

My favorite flower: Roses

My favorite coffee order: Black coffee with coconut milk

My favorite restaurant: Bahama Breeze

My favorite sandwich: Cuban Sandwich

My favorite salad: Cesar Salad

My favorite sweet treat: Tres leches cake

My favorite gift cards: Macys

In my free time, I like to... Walking and spend time with family.

Classroom supply wish list: bottled water

Mangrove Daily Schedule

7:30-8:25	Arrival handwashing Table activities/ Free Play Bathroom checks and clean up
8:30-9:10	Starfish Outdoor Classroom Otters stays inside. Teacher-directed small group activities Circle time welcome songs, calendar, weather, Storytime
9:10-9:15 9:15-9:30	Handwashing/Bathrooms Whole Group Snack
9:30-10:10	Otters Outdoor Classroom Starfish Circle time welcome songs, calendar, weather, Storytime Teacher-directed small group activities
10:10-10:35	Starfish Driscoll Hall for indoor gross motor and learning centers Otters Free Play And teacher-directed activities
10:35-11:00	Otters Driscoll Hall for indoor gross motor and learning centers Starfish Free Play And teacher-directed activities Clean-up
11:00-11:25	Music and Body Movement
11:30-11:35	Clean-up/handwashing/bathrooms
11:40-12:10	Lunch
12:05-12:30	WG Outdoor classroom
12:30	Half day student's dismissal
12:25-12:35	Full day students wash hands
12:35-2:35	Naptime/Quiet time
2:45-3:15	Independent books Handwashing/Bathrooms Snack
3:15-3:45	Outside Classroom Afternoon Pickup
Extended Care 3:40-5:00	Free Play- Mangrove classroom/Driscoll Hall/ Playground for pickup



Meet Ms. Kelly, PK3 Lead Teacher

Hello Reef families, my name is Jessica, but I go by Kelly. I am recently married, and I have 4 children, two boys and two girls ages 21, 18, 12, and a one-year-old. I was born and raised in Tampa, Florida and am one of the eldest of 11 children. I have been in Early Childhood for over 20 years and graduated with my Bachelor of Science in Human Services and concentration in Early Childhood Education in May 2023. Once I have completed my bachelor's, I will continue into grad school pursuing my Master's in Child Development. A fun fact about myself is that I lived in Alaska for 10 years, and I enjoy the cold.

Get to know your teacher:

Full name (including middle initial): Ms. Jessica Nicole Rjley (goes by Ms. Kelly)

Birthday (year not necessary): July 25th

My favorite flower: orchid

My favorite coffee order: Cinnamon dolce latte

My favorite restaurant: Olive Garden

My favorite sandwich: Turkey, Swiss and avocado

My favorite salad: Chicken Cesar

My favorite sweet treat: chocolate covered almonds

My favorite gift cards: Target and Amazon

In my free time, I like to... travel

Classroom supply wish list: colored card stock, small canvases



Meet Ms. Kelli, PK3 Lead Teacher

I'm Kelli, and I was born and raised here in south Tampa and graduated from the University of Florida. I have over 17 years' experience in teaching infants and toddlers to middle schoolers with the Hillsborough County School District. I stay busy as a mom of 3 kids-ages 7, 10 and 19!! In my spare time, I love being with my large extended family who all live here as well. We love going to all our Tampa professional sporting events-Go Bucs, Rays and Lightning!

Get to know your teacher:

Full name (including middle initial): Ms. Kelli Q. Landkammer

Birthday (year not necessary): June 17th

My favorite flower: Sunflower, Daisy

My favorite coffee order: Salted Carmel Cream Cold Brew with sugar free vanilla syrup and a pump of caramel syrup

My favorite restaurant: Olive Garden, Outback, Fresh Kitchen

My favorite sandwich: Cuban Sandwich, chicken salad

My favorite salad: Olive Garden, any with bacon- Cobb

My favorite sweet treat: gummy bears/worms, chocolate and peanut butter, smoothies

My favorite gift cards: Target, Amazon, UberEATS, Publix, Lulu Lemon

In my free time, I like to... spend time with my kids- I am a "dance mom", movies with my son, Sephora and spas!

Classroom supply wish list: acrylic paint, baby wipes

Sea Turtles and Angelfish Daily Schedule

7:30-9:00am	Morning Drop-off: Wash hands, free-play, learning center exploration.
9:00-9:30:	Wash Hands and Snack is offered.
9:40-10:00:	Morning Meeting: calendar, phonics, story
10:00:	Clean-up, bathrooms, transition to outside
10:15-11:00:	Outdoor Classroom
11:00-11:50:	Small groups/Courtyard Exploration/Driscoll Hall gross motor play
11:50-12:30:	Wash hands, bathrooms, Lunch, independent book time *Pickup for half day students
12:45-2:30pm:	Nap/Rest time
2:30-3:00pm:	Wake up, bathroom, wash hands, Snack.
3:00-3:15pm:	Music and Movement
3:15-3:30pm:	Afternoon story time/ End of day reflection
3:30-5:00:	Extended care children remain in classroom for free-play transition to Driscoll Hall/ Outdoor classroom depending on weather.



Meet Ms. Maria, Blue Dolphins AM Lead Teacher

I have worked in childcare for ten years I am also fluent in Spanish. I enjoy watching children learn and blossom throughout their time with us. I'm extremely excited to be one of your child's teachers and look forward to working with you in achieving your goals with your little ones. I'm originally from New York and my parents are Puerto Rican I have three beautiful children two girls 27 and 19 and an 12yr old boy. I enjoy gardening, arts and crafts, and going to the beach in my spare time.

Get to know your teacher:

Full name (including middle initial): Ms. Maria E. Viruet

Birthday (year not necessary): July 7th

My favorite flower: Peace lily, gardenia, any house plant

My favorite coffee order: Carmel latte

My favorite restaurant: PF Chang's

My favorite sandwich: Chicken pita from Little Greek

My favorite salad: Greek Salad from Little Greek

My favorite sweet treat: milk chocolate

My favorite gift cards: Target and Amazon

In my free time, I like to... Go to the beach

Classroom supply wish list:



Meet Ms. Leslie, VPK Lead Teacher

My name is Leslie Barton. I am the Dolphin's VPK Teacher. I am from Kansas City, Missouri. I moved to Tampa, Florida with my mother and sister. I have a beautiful seven-year-old daughter who loves the water and outside adventures! I enjoy going to the beach and spending time with my family in my free time. I have been in the early childhood field for about ten years. I have my child development associate and I am currently receiving my bachelor's degree in early childhood education at St Petersburg college. In high school I volunteered at a school that was based on the Reggio Emilia approach and I loved watching the children explore their ideas, which is why I decided to teach in schools that recognized the Reggio approach. Teaching has always been a passion of mine and I enjoy watching children construct their own learning and expressing themselves in a fun play-based environment.

Get to know your teacher:

Full name (including middle initial): Ms. Leslie J. Barton

Birthday (year not necessary): 12/29

My favorite flower: sunflower

My favorite coffee order: vanilla latte with vanilla sweet cream cold foam

My favorite restaurant: Texas Roadhouse

My favorite sandwich: Chicken pita

My favorite salad: Greek Salad

My favorite sweet treat: any soft cookies, brownies

My favorite gift cards: Target

In my free time, I like to... shop!

Classroom supply wish list: colorful beads, Velcro dots, small sticky notes, small sharpies

Blue Dolphin Daily Schedule

7:30-9:00:	Morning Drop-off: Wash hands, free-choice table centers and teacher directed activities.
9:00:	Bathrooms/Wash Hands
9:00-9:15:	Snack is offered.
9:15-9:30:	Music and Movement
9:30-10:30:	Exploration Centers/Small groups (Courtyard/Classroom/Driscoll Hall)
10:30-10:45:	Morning Meeting: calendar, phonics, story
11:00-11:40:	Outdoor Classroom
11:40-12:05:	Wash hands, bathroom, Lunch
12:05-12:25:	Quiet Time/Yoga/Breathing exercises with Ms. Yordanos

VPK SCHEDULE:

12:30-12:50:	Circle Time: Question of the day, Literacy/Phonics Activity large group
12:55-2:15:	Academic Centers Exploration: Art, STEM, Literacy Small Group, Math, Carpet (Blocks, Loose parts, puzzles) and writing
2:15-2:30:	Music and Movement
2:30-3:00:	Outdoor Classroom
3:00-3:20:	Wash Hands/ Snack and Story/Games
3:20-3:30:	Closing Circle time/ Afternoon Reflection