

Carolyn Wirkman, Director



With a music degree from Ithaca College and a teaching degree from Seattle Pacific University, Carolyn headed off into the world of education! She taught upper elementary at John Muir in the Lake Washington School District and has been on the teaching team at Kirkland Preschool since 1978. She has been the school's director since the mid-'90's.

When Carolyn is in the classroom she loves singing a silly song with the kids and then calming down with a quiet song. Collages with plenty of odd things to add are a favorite art project because they truly bring out each child's imagination and creativity and no two projects are alike! She also loves singing, "Listen to the Water".

A great favorite to read with the children is Abiyoyo, as told and sung by Pete Seeger. Its rhythmical pattern is quick to catch onto and the illustrations and characters bring the story to life! One of her favorite recommendations for parents to read is Raising Your Spirited Child written by Mary Sheedy Kurcinka. She often refers to the table in which the author redesigns the labels which someone may give to a child. For instance, the old negative label of "stubborn" is now turned into a positive of "assertive, willingness to persist in the face of obstacles". Truly a fun way to shift the way we view all children.

Working as the director of Kirkland Preschool has allowed Carolyn a wonderful opportunity to support the incredible teaching staff, meet new families coming for visits, and still interact with the children on a daily basis. Carolyn loves watching the creativity, diversity, enthusiasm, experiences and fun that each teacher brings to the school. She finds that not only can she help the team grow as teachers but they also help her grow as a director.

Every year Carolyn looks forward to the end of the year field trip to Saltwater State Park. This has been a Kirkland Preschool tradition for over 25 years! The beach offers both sandy and rocky areas, tide pools and a large amount of different wildlife for the families to experience and see up close. Being able to watch families slow down and enjoy a day together with picnic lunches, beach exploration, roasting marshmallows, and in some years puddle jumping is the perfect way to wrap up the school year and kick off summer.

Carolyn and her husband of 40-years, Vince, reside in north Kirkland. Her husband works for Boeing, but also does a lot of the handiwork around the school. As a Christmas gift not only for Carolyn, but also our community, Vince bought the property on which Kirkland Preschool resides thus ensuring the future of our school! Her son Eric, who attended Kirkland Preschool and his partner Laura reside in Seattle with their two wonderful dogs Huxley and Sophie. Carolyn's daughter Jennifer, who also attended and who works at the school also lives in Seattle with her partner Jon, and Carolyn's two even more wonderful grandchildren Kaylin & Kamden, both of whom also attended.

When Carolyn is not working at the preschool she is often volunteering for Girl Scouts of Western Washington as a Volunteer Learning Facilitator. Carolyn also is a season ticket holder to the Seattle Opera and enjoys music, reading and spending time with her family.