

Greetings Kaleidoscope Families!

It's that time again to reflect on everything Kaleidoscope from the past year! This exercise always leaves me in awe. Mainly due to the sheer magnitude of it all, but also considering the depth by which Kaleidoscope positively affects our island families... it definitely tugs at those heartstrings.

As you sift through all the numbers, accomplishments, smiling faces and personal testimonies, I invite you to consider this report as something further: the End-of-Semester Final Project for the Board of Directors.

Throughout the year we sit in tiny little chairs and discuss very big things; we take minutes and write emails; we have zoom meetings and committee meetings and coffee shop meetings. Each step of the way, we work towards very specific goals. Below are what we call the 'Ends Statements' of our Board Governance Policy. They are the centerpoint of a carefully crafted and ever-evolving rulebook for how we seek to fulfill the vision we have for our community.



Kaleidoscope exists so that our community has:

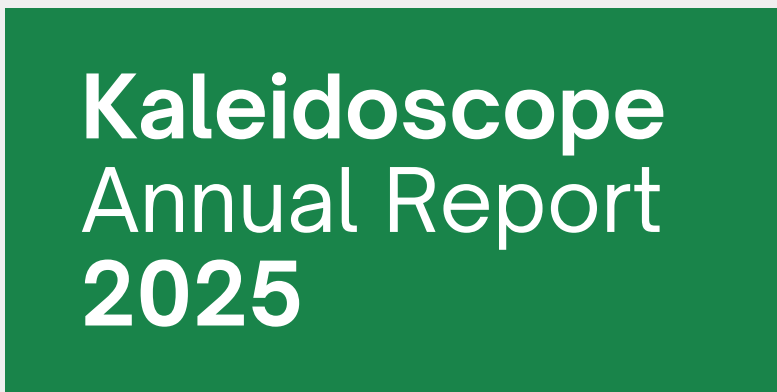
- *An inclusive, Early Childhood Education Center that provides reliable, high-quality childcare year-round, accessible to working families.*
- *Progressive and innovative early childhood education programs that nurture the whole child and foster diverse worldviews.*
- *An empowered network of teachers, staff, and parents that supports family development and community connections.*

Then, once a year, we evaluate our effectiveness in meeting these goals. We put it all down on paper and see if we've done what we've set out to do... and then we share the results with you in this Annual Report.

I share all of this with you, our families- the sole reason this organization exists - to show that behind all the fun and games and smiling faces, Kaleidoscope has very real goals to achieve and that we, as a board, hold ourselves accountable to achieving these goals at every step.

But it's also important that YOU know these goals. I invite you to reflect on them, to ensure they resonate with your family's vision of our community. I ask you to help us achieve them through accountability and action (our "doors" are always "open"). And ultimately, as we strive for these goals, I hope that you can share our pride in what Kaleidoscope does for this island... We couldn't do it without you!

Regan Vaughn
Kaleidoscope Board President
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Kaleidoscope by the Numbers

For the 2024-2025 school year, Kaleidoscope:

- Was open for **248 days**, more than **2,300 working hours** which provided nearly **200,000 hours** of high-quality preschool and childcare services
- Supported over **120 children** from **90 families** who work for **over 100 businesses**
- Set a new personal record for maximum single-day attendance at **103 kids** this summer
- Facilitated **over 1,000 bags of food** from the Orcas Island Food Bank finding their way into island homes (Each week, Kaleidoscope staff pick up the bags from the food bank and arrange them at the center so families can pick them up when they pick up their children on Thursdays)
- Was **1 of 15 programs** chosen from across Washington state to participate in the COMETS study (read more →)
- Received funding for **6,324 hours** of preschool from the Early Childhood Education Initiative (ECEI), a local organization whose mission is to provide all of Orcas Island's youngest learners permanent access to high-quality education
- Served **10,932** wholesome breakfasts, **11,866** nutritious lunches, and **11,370** delicious snacks for a total of 34,168 meals shared across programs
- Provided **10 weeks of Big Kids** programming this Summer (read more →)
- Returned approximately **2,400 golf balls** to Orcas Island Golf Course, resulting in a total of **\$240 in ice cream credit**
- Employed over **30 people**, 5 of which we were able to help secure housing for
- Received over **100 musical lessons** from Music Charly, thanks to the Orcas Island Chamber Music Festival Preschool Music Program
- Sold about **1,000 Orcasopoly games**
(head to *Island Market*, *Ray's*, or *Darvill's* or scan the QR code to the right if you haven't gotten yours yet)
- Received a **level 5 rating** (the highest possible) from Early Achievers (read more →)
- Moved to being open **5 days a week** in June
- Received full funding for our Bringing Books Home program through the Orcas Island Community Foundation (OICF) Give Orcas Holiday Campaign, which will put more than **1,000 new books** in homes across the island



COMETS Study

Kaleidoscope had the privilege of participating in Childhood Obesity: The role of the gut Microbiome, Outdoor Time, and Stress (COMETS), an ongoing research study through Washington State University evaluating the impact of outdoor preschool on children's gut health, stress, well-being and resilience. The kiddos of families that elected to participate wore "superhero belts" for 2 separate weeks to record physical activity, families collected saliva and stool samples, and scientists came to collect the specimens. Only 15 schools across the state were chosen to participate and Kaleidoscope was among them. We are excited to see the scientific proof of what we already know - forest school is cool!

The Return of Big Kids!

This summer, Kaleidoscope gathered school-aged groups for 10 weeks to explore the forest, collaborate with friends, learn about nature, and chill in the hammock. Many of them were Kaleidoscope alumni so it was awesome to reconnect with those families and get to know these new, larger versions of the kiddos we already love! We also made some new friends along the way and look forward to doing it again next summer.

Early Achievers Level 5 Quality Rating

Our center successfully participated in Washington's Quality Recognition & Improvement System (QRIS), otherwise known as Early Achievers. Scores are calculated in 5 areas: Learning Environment, Child Outcomes, Interactions & Curriculum, Family Engagement & Partnerships, and Professional Development & Training. An early learning program's quality level is determined by points earned throughout the three-year Quality Recognition Cycle (QRC). We were awarded a Level 5 rating - the highest achievable!

Other Fun Facts and Updates

Cultivate Learning identified Kaleidoscope as an outstanding early childhood education program and spent 3 days in our classrooms taking photos and videos to use in educational materials for early childhood educators.

Amber Paulsen, our director, testified at the Senate hearing in support of House Bill 1351, which would adjust the age requirements for accessing Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), *and it passed unanimously*.

Our composting toilet systems are up and running in all 3 of our Forest "classrooms." Like all things preschool, we love talking about anything poop-related and we are excited to have one more reason to talk about POOP!

Did you know that more than half of our teachers and 25% of our families speak Spanish? We have a Spanish-speaking teacher in every group and prioritize bilingual opportunities daily, including in the books we send home with our Bringing Books Home program.

Kaleidoscope helped connect families to local resources, such as Orcas Community Resource Center (OCRC), OPAL, San Juan County Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), Orcas Lions Club, American Legion, Early Childhood Education Initiative (ECEI), Orcas Island Community Foundation (OICF). We value our Community Connections!



We love getting photos and videos from the Kaleidoscope staff throughout the day. Recently, I received several clips of Etolin singing at the top of her lungs—they had me laughing out loud! Not only was she belting out tunes, but she had climbed to the highest spot she could find and was rallying her friends to join in for a singalong. I shared the videos with our whole family, and everyone got a great laugh!

- Mandy

I love getting to hear about how Beau loves playing with his friends!! Jackson loves finding things hidden in the forest and loves the coloring and building!

-Alicia

Forest school has been the best for our little guy Zae Zae. He is constantly wanting to go to the forest with his friends and loves his teachers. He has improved with communication skills and gained so much independence.

-Cynthia & Zack

My son knows the names of the trees and can identify them by their leaves (or needles), all at 3 years old! As an adult I still struggle to identify the beings all around me. It makes me so happy to see that he is learning who and what makes up this world around him!

- Phoebe

Thank you everyone for all the love, care, support and so much more that you have done for my girl Ellie, for my family and for the community. I am so lucky to have had Ellie attend your pre school for the past 3 years, it is bittersweet watching her grow and move into the big school next year!

-Alenna

Orry was having a rough morning sometime this spring; it was rainy, cold, and he'd slept in and didn't want to get up, so it was a recipe for a tough drop off. However, teacher Oscar was exactly what Orry needed. He offered a hug to Orry and I watched him crouch patiently for a full minute, arms wide open with a sympathetic smile, as Orry crept closer, leaned in for a hug, then turned to smile and wave goodbye. I can't describe the sense of relief I feel whenever Orry is greeted to warmly and carefully by his teachers, starting his day off with moments of connection and love!

- Merlin

We were on a walk and my son looked down at a mushroom and said "an elfin saddle!" I looked it up and he was correct. So grateful he's learning everything from the magic of fungi identification to the joy of being in the woods with friends.

- Megan

Kaleidoscope was my son's first experience in care. My mama heart was so nervous. All the "what if" thoughts and wondering if I was making the right choice. The friends he has made, the skills he's developed, and the fun he has had have been beyond what I could've imagined in those first days. It brings tears to my eyes to imagine him in a decade or even two talking about the friends he has had "since Kaleidoscope" or even "since the Waddler room." It really embodies the stability and roots I've been able to give him which I never had myself. Thank you, Kaleidoscope!

-Becca

You have built something really special and great and we will be forever grateful that Meris had the opportunity to experience the beauty of forest school.

- Jenny

Thank you so much for having Jayden. He has been having such a wonderful time. You and your team and the kids have made him feel so safe and comfortable.

- Patricia



The Kaleidoscope Team

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Amanda Caps - Betsy Wilson - Chris Adams - Dillon Betts - Mandy Niehoff
Megan Vock - Regan Vaughn - Renee Racik

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Amber Paulsen - Brandon Seaborn - Breena Sunn - Daria Allen - Eava Wood - Eliot Paulsen - Emma Orantes
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Oscar Schragel-Rietz - Rebecca McDowell - Robyn Gordon - Rook Vergen - Shannon Quishenberry
Shelbi Rogers - Shelby Sanders - Tommy Sprenger - Yanni Ibarra - Yossi Carroll