

Dayspring Kindergarten Parent Testimonials

There could never be enough words to describe how magical the Kindergarten program is at Dayspring. I don't say this because it's all "rainbows and butterflies" ... it's because these children are exposed to an environment that encourages them to play, think outside the box, be true to themselves, create organic friendships, and learn from teachers who love them like their own.

The Dayspring Kindergarten students are learning life and social emotional skills that at a young age are so vital for their growth throughout their academic career. These students are learning to become good humans! The creativity that is allowed in this classroom is, bar none, the best I've seen for a Kindergarten program nowadays. These kids have the freedom to choose activities throughout the day that keep them moving and their brains engaged. This freedom doesn't take away from the academics, it enhances their desire to learn with an open mind and heart.

One thing that sticks out to me within this class environment is the kindness and friendships amongst the kids. Any time a child falls or gets hurt on the playground you will see a swarm of Kindergarteners come make sure their friend is ok. You see all the kids interact with each other and no one is left out at any time! This is a direct reflection of the tone that Ms. Mokwa and Mrs. Carter set for their students.

My daughter suffers from separation anxiety and had a fear of dogs (regardless of the fact that we have two dogs at home) before entering her Kindergarten year at Dayspring. From the first day Ms. Mokwa and Mrs. Carter gave her the support and time needed to warm up to a new classroom and routine. It really didn't take long for her to feel right at home. Also, fast forward five months into the year...my daughter's favorite part of Kindergarten is having the dogs in the classroom! The kids get the opportunity to be the "Helper" with the dogs and they learn responsibility and ownership...more life skills that kids need!

If you have a child at Dayspring you already know how special of a school it is, but the Kindergarten program is like the cherry on top! It's a class that will always hold a very special place in each child's heart, who have the opportunity to attend. Ms. Mokwa and Mrs. Carter are those teachers that will never be forgotten....and these Kindergarten students are so lucky to learn from the best of the best!

"Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for children play is serious learning. Play is really the work of childhood." - Fred Rogers

- Krista P., 2019-20



To sum up Dayspring in one word, we would call it a blessing. It is next to impossible to find a school that genuinely loves, guides, nurtures and invests their energy all in the children, but Dayspring excels at it. It's not just Ms. Mokwa and Mrs. Carter, it's abundant with the administration and the "specials" teachers as well.

The low student: teacher ratio they hold at Dayspring allows Ms. Mokwa and Mrs. Carter to provide an attentive environment that helps each child grow as individuals socially and academically, yet teaches strong awareness and respect for the classroom and others in it.

Our family strongly feels the Dayspring community is priceless. We wish it continued beyond Kindergarten.

- Donna P., 2017-18 & 2019-20



Dayspring Kindergarten is an incomparable program dedicated to the emotional and intellectual growth of children. We had two daughters attend the program and the outcome turned out two well rounded, securely attached, emotionally bonded children that learned to read with proficiency with a desire to devour information. The classroom is structured to provide a sense of calm with natural light, a different classroom dog each day, cohesive friendships and two of the most caring and competent teachers anywhere. Ms. Mokwa and Mrs. Carter are dedicated to their craft and our experience was transformative. Dayspring Kindergarten is giving your child a gift and the best chance at a head start in life.

- Dan & Allison C, 2016-17 & 2018-19



Kindergarten at Dayspring is an amazing opportunity to give your child a personalized learning experience with extra attention and an emphasis on fun, while still meeting all the marks for education. Both my kids were able to make great friends during Dayspring kindergarten that starts their connections for all of their childhood. Our kids not only have fun during kindergarten with play, field trips, and activities - they also learned to read, engaged in science, music, computers, and Spanish. We were very happy with our decision to send both kids to Dayspring.

- *Patrick & Lesly K., 2017-18 & 2019-20*



Our son went to Dayspring for both 3's and 4's preschool, but we were sure that we would send him to our highly-rated neighborhood school. We wanted our son to have the "warm and fuzzy" kindergarten experience at our public school to carry forward into the older grades. But - at our spring conference in the 4's class - our son's teacher suggested that our son be a much better fit at Dayspring. We spent *way too* much time thinking over what we would do. Our son is really bright in math, "gets" how things work quite quickly, and can focus for hours; he exhibited much of the same potential as our oldest daughter who is in the gifted program, but reading was just not coming to him. Because reading is such an important part of kindergarten, we discussed giving him an extra year. The principal at our public school told us that we could put him in kindergarten at Dayspring and then decide to repeat kindergarten at the public school or to move him on to first grade. Bingo. That gave us an extra year to see how he would develop. So, we enrolled him for the 2018-19 school year.

Our son *loved* kindergarten at Dayspring from Day 1. In fact, both days that he got sick that year, he tried to convince me to take him to school. In Dr. Leonard Sax's book *Boys Adrift* he discusses how many boys define themselves as "bad at school" by the time they finish kindergarten. Teachers - having rigorous goals to meet and many students that may not be developmentally ready to reach those goals - realize that some kids need more time and may graciously give them more time to enjoy play-based learning; they then focus their efforts on the other children. By the end of the year, kids that simply aren't ready to read in kindergarten will come to think '*the teacher likes the smarter kids better*' or '*teachers don't like me*' and '*I'm bad at school*'. These labels stick with them for their entire education. We become who we think we are, so that label can have profound effects on our children through the years. After reading Dr. Sax's work, we knew that we had chosen the correct kindergarten.

As our son struggled to read the words “it” and “a,” he still felt valued and loved at Dayspring. He had math and science to explore and couldn’t wait for music class and the field trips. Every day felt like a giant play date for him. The year went on, but we still didn’t know which grade we should place him in at the public school. We started to wonder if he was struggling with dyslexia (as his grandfather had), so we got him tested. A week later, he began therapy three times per week. Mrs. Carter and Ms. Mokwa went out of their way to even attend a therapy session with him to better support him in the classroom. Within months, he was reading full books, and it was evident that he would do best placed in first grade the following year.

We just got our son’s report card for the second quarter at public school, and he’s Proficient in nearly every area. With early intervention, he’s reading above grade level. But the biggest success of this story is that - through all of his early struggles - when I ask my son, “Are you good at school? And do you think teachers like you?” he looks me in the eye and says, “Of course Mom!”

- *Laura C., 2018-19*



I am a mother of 2 kids who are now 9 and 11 and both attended Dayspring Preschool and Kindergarten. I grew up in Tempe and remember when all of my friends were having children, they would talk about all of their options and how hard it was to get into Dayspring. I recall at one point a grandparent spending the night to get on the list. So, by the time I got around to having kids, at 37 and 40 years old, I had gotten a lot of advice. I also went to the church on and off, although my mother is a much better “church goer” than I, so she has always kept me in the loop about the goings on at Dayspring.

With my first born we started with the mommy and me type class to ease us both into preschool. I really got to know the teachers and understand how things were done at Dayspring first hand. It was an easy transition for him to attend 3s and 4s without me since he was so familiar with the preschool and it certainly set me at ease knowing what a nurturing environment he was in.

When baby sister came along 2 1/2 years later, she really couldn’t wait to start at Dayspring because she had already attended a lot of the activities her brother was in. They both loved coming to class and I had peace of mind knowing they were learning and socializing in a fun and loving environment. I only work part time so I have picked up and dropped off numerous neighbor kids to other childcare, preschools and after school programs and none came close to the environment at Dayspring.

The decision was easy to keep them at kindergarten there because of the class size and the 2 wonderful, experienced teachers that have an effective way of teaching what is expected, but also nurturing a creative mind. The life experiences through field trips and pretend play are amazing opportunities to

learn, but are fun and do not feel like work. I feel that Dayspring Kindergarten more than prepared them for Waggoner 1st grade academically. Socially they really got to experience how it feels to be part of a supportive community. It was taught and encouraged to be this type of person/friend to others. I know this is unique to Dayspring because I have volunteered at schools and have spoken to other parents whose kids went on to public kinder due to convenience and money. When my daughter finished at Dayspring, I spoke with the teachers about moving on to 1st grade at Waggoner or having her repeat kinder at Waggoner because of her young age. They reassured me that even though she was 5 she was ready to move on to 1st grade. I felt confident in their advice and stopped worrying that I would ruin the rest of her life with this one decision. They were absolutely right.

Both of my kids still read the book their kindergarten classmates made about them when it was their turn to be the VIP and I know it still makes them feel important and liked. I cannot tell you how many times we have watched the videos of the Halloween parade and the pet parades at Dayspring and looked at the pictures of all the funny costumes/dress up clothes they would put together. All such sweet memories. I am so grateful for those years and would not change a thing. I wish we could all go back and do it over again.

- Julie K. 2013-14 & 2015-16



I absolutely love and believe in Dayspring's kindergarten program! I have two children that have gone through Dayspring preschool programs, but when it was time to send my oldest to kindergarten, we decided to try our neighborhood Kyrene school. For us, it ended up being a huge disappointment and a real struggle for our child. So, when it was time to send our youngest to kindergarten there was no doubt that Dayspring was the best choice for us.

The fact that there are two teachers and a smaller class size is just one of the countless reasons why I think it's a superior program! The invaluable life skills, lessons and experiences that the children gain prepare them well for the transition into first grade.

My child's confidence level grew immensely during her time in kindergarten. This largely has to do with the teachers who have the time to spend with each child addressing their needs. She made wonderful friendships, learned responsibility, took amazing field trips, had time to play all while learning to read, write and other academics that were advantageous to her entering first grade.

I could honestly go on and on about the program, but I have never once regretted our decision to send our child! It was such a phenomenal experience!!

- Jen S., 2017-18



Our daughter attended Kindergarten at Dayspring during the 2019-2020 school year, and it was our first year as a Dayspring family. We selected Dayspring because, while we wanted our daughter to progress academically and prepare for her transition to Elementary school, we really valued her having a positive Kindergarten experience in a loving and nurturing environment. Mrs. Mokwa really emphasizes social and interpersonal skills, and we were grateful for the experience she gained in being a good friend, communicating with others, and general classroom expectations. The other students in her class are wonderful, and we've met so many lovely families. It is a comfort to know that her first school experience has been so positive. She loves school and is eager to go each day. She talks about Ms. Mokwa and Ms. Carter at home, and has such a deep affection for them. Both teachers are so warm and loving, while also being effective and skilled instructors. We highly recommend Dayspring Kindergarten!

- *Corinna N., 2019-20*



When we enrolled our oldest in Kindergarten at Dayspring, we were both a little hesitant knowing the demands of our public school district. We wondered if she would be able to transition from the Dayspring model to something so different, both academically and socially. Mrs. Mokwa and Mrs. Carter talked to us about it, and with a smile told us they were very confident she would do great. We also had some reservations about the tax credit, as we didn't fully understand it. Ultimately, we enrolled her into Dayspring.

She bloomed in kindergarten. She loved her teachers, she loved the dogs, she loved the activities, and she thrived in the play-based model. She was reading much faster than we expected, which was one of our original concerns knowing she would be moving to 1st grade in a public school. She was active, happy, and learning. If we had any questions both teachers were always available to discuss and were so attentive to her needs and growth.

Ultimately it was time for her to enroll in 1st grade, and within the first week we knew we'd made the right choice. Her education and socialization at Dayspring set her up perfectly to succeed in school. She's now in 4th grade, and her academic performance is excellent. She's a reader in her spare time, and I know so much of that is from the foundation her teachers built for her at Dayspring.

We now have our youngest attending as well, and she comes home every day with the same excitement about her teachers and friends and, of course, the dogs.

Also as a side note – the tax credit is legitimate and extremely simple, and my wife and I plan to continue donating even after our family graduates from Dayspring.

- *Brendan M., 2016-17, 2018-19, 2019-20*



I can't say enough about Dayspring's Kindergarten program, the teachers are amazing with their ability to teach both academic and social skills in such a caring environment. The low student to teacher ratio allows for individualized learning and one-on-one reading time, and the students enjoy baking, monthly field trips, and enrichment classes that include library, computers, Spanish, movement and music. Both of my daughters truly enjoyed going to school and learning in a fun way each day.

- *Chrissy S., 2014-15 & 2015-16*



I very highly recommend Dayspring Kindergarten. Our oldest child attended two years ago, and our youngest attends now. A number of things make Dayspring Kindergarten a truly special place. First is Ms. Mokwa and Mrs. Carter. They are exceptional teachers who are caring, warm, and firm. They make kindergarten a structured, warm, creative place. Second is the focus on play-based learning. The classroom is full of opportunities for creative play (and very little technology). Our children developed very strong imaginations during kindergarten here. Third is the shared focus on academic and social learning. The teachers make sure the children learn how to be part of a community and how to be a good friend. They also make sure the children develop a love for learning and a love for attending school. Finally, the children have numerous and interesting field trips throughout the year that expose them to the world outside of school. Dayspring Kindergarten is a magical place, and we are very grateful our children could attend.

- *Ryan P., 2016-17 & 2019-20*



We could not be happier with our decision to send Ellie to Kinder at Dayspring. Having the opportunity to remain in this warm & nurturing community for another year, when our daughter still seemed so small & the other schools seemed so big, was such a blessing. While the academic standards are high & we have no doubt that she will thrive in first grade elsewhere, the TWO teachers are also amazing at developing relationships, teaching empathy & caring, & truly nurturing the social & emotional health of our children. They have the time to do this because the student to teacher ratio is so small; this is nearly impossible to find in other public & charter schools. Dayspring's Kindergarten program is phenomenal - academically challenging, developmentally appropriate, individualized to each child's needs, & warm & fuzzy all at once. Now when will Dayspring launch its First Grade program?!

- *Katie G., 2014-15 & 2017-18*



Dayspring Kindergarten is amazing. It is almost too good to be true, but it is true. My daughter had two 30-minute recesses, a day that is about an hour shorter than most school's all day kindergarten, a dress up center, a book loft, a building area & the list goes on. Throughout the day the children are nurtured by two teachers who get to know each of them so well. All the time that this fun developmentally appropriate stuff is going on the children are learning to read, write & do math. I haven't even mentioned the dogs, Spanish & music.

- *Marsha S., 2014-15 & 2016-17*



As a former teacher it was really important to me to send my children to a Kindergarten that values play and recognizes all the learning opportunities that come from playing. I was looking for teachers that teach the whole child and not just the academic piece. My daughter, like all children, deserved a learning experience in Kindergarten that was positive and developmentally appropriate for her. My biggest priority was finding a school and teachers that had these same beliefs.

Ms. Mokwa and Mrs. Carter are seasoned teachers who understand how children develop and learn best. They allow children to learn through hands on experiences, exploration and play. My daughter absolutely loved going to school everyday and learning new things because the teachers made learning exciting and fun. Ms. Mokwa and Mrs. Carter understand how to balance teaching the academics the children need to be prepared for first grade along with the

social/emotional skills their students need in order to navigate life. I am so happy with my choice because attending Dayspring Kindergarten not only prepared my daughter for first grade in the Kyrene school district, it more importantly, instilled a love of learning in my daughter. I have a three year old as well and we will be bringing her to Dayspring's Kindergarten when she's ready. Our family loves Dayspring and the Kindergarten teachers!

- *Heather V., 2018-19*



I had 2 of my 3 children attend Dayspring from the time they were 3 years old thru the Kindergarten program and had an amazing experience. My oldest went to another preschool that just wasn't the same... The Dayspring community is as lovely and experienced as their Teachers.

Having two teachers in Kindergarten made sure my kids got plenty of attention academically and socially and getting to go on field trips monthly helped grow strong relationships that have lasted years. I would highly recommend Dayspring to everyone!

- *Dawn & Torren S., 2015-16 & 2016-17*



Here are the obvious reasons the Dayspring Kindergarten program is the best: the teacher to student ratio is the best around; their beautiful and big classroom is filled with play-based learning opportunities (not just desks and chairs); their classroom lies within the small and supportive Dayspring community; parents drop their children off in the classroom and are welcome to observe and help out in the classroom (this is not so true for public school); and the therapy dogs are a gentle and calming presence that give the kids a chance to take on care-taking responsibilities. Here are the not so obvious reasons: Susan Mokwa and Kathy Carter aren't just preparing my son for first grade. They are also instilling a love of learning in him and making sure he is making appropriate choices for himself and learning from his interactions with his peers. With a kind and firm approach, and many out of classroom activities and field trips, they are helping their students to feel confident in themselves and their abilities, and encouraging them to try new things. We truly are spoiled by them.

- *Julie B., 2014-15 & 2016-17*



Dayspring Kindergarten is a hidden gem!! My daughter has absolutely flourished since she graduated from Ms. Mokwa and Mrs. Carter's class in 2016, she is now a 3rd grader at Waggoner. The teachers love for teaching and zest for life are apparent in their daily interactions with the children. Their patience, firmness and caring are truly appreciated. My daughter had an incredible year and learned so much. All the fun activities like baking and gardening were her favorites and so much to be said about all the amazing field trips that were taken throughout the year. Mrs. Mokwa and Mrs. Carter have had such a positive impact on my daughter and we are forever grateful!

We give Dayspring Kindergarten a perfect 10!!!!

- *Jamie H., 2016-17*



We are thankful for a program that understands the power of play as it relates to learning. We are thankful that our child is seen and known (for his strengths and weaknesses) in part, due to an excellent teacher/student ratio and also because of the teachers.

- *Katie & Andrew S., 2019-20*



We have enjoyed our experience at Dayspring Kindergarten. Our oldest daughter attended in 2016/2017 and our youngest daughter currently attends the 2019/2020 kindergarten class. The program and teachers have helped our children grow and have a rich kindergarten experience. We chose Dayspring for our children because of its well-rounded curriculum, age appropriate environment, and dedicated teachers.

For us, it was important our child had an opportunity to play in kindergarten and participate in a variety of activities in the classroom. Dayspring Kindergarten classroom has many activities to encourage growth through play and imagination. My oldest daughter loves art and made countless drawings and art projects during her kindergarten year. My youngest daughter loves playing with dolls and having dolls in the classroom helped her transition into kindergarten from preschool.

As parents, we also appreciate how accessible the teachers and classroom are at Dayspring. Teachers greet families in the morning so parents can check in or ask questions. Parents get to be involved by going on field trips, driving to library, leading art masterpiece or even just stopping in to give an extra hug. Parents come in the classroom with students during drop off which allows children time to adjust and also an opportunity for parents to see artwork or projects going on in the classroom. Our daughters were always excited to show us their newest art pieces and the science table was also a big hit with them!

The teaching can be individualized because of the teacher to student ratio. Children are allowed to move at their own rate in reading and given extra attention when needed academically or behaviorally because an "extra teacher" is always available. The teachers encourage cooperative play and inclusion at all times. They are quick to stop any teasing or other forms of bullying so that it is never a problem in the Dayspring Kindergarten class. The children grow in their independence and confidence as a result of the Dayspring Kindergarten staff's caring attitudes and commitment.

Both of our children became confident learners during their time at Dayspring. Our oldest had all the academic tools she needed to transition into 1st grade at an advanced paced traditional school. She has continued to excel academically. We have no doubt that our second child will also be able to transition well into 1st grade having had the extra time to be nurtured by Dayspring Kindergarten.

- Jen & Marc G., 2016-17 & 2019-20



My two kids have been Dayspring kindergarteners. My daughter is now in the 3rd grade, and my son is in 1st at Waggoner. Academically, I know my children were prepared for public school. They came out of kindergarten knowing how to read and were competent in writing and math. They were not accustomed to standardized testing, so it took a few times before their test scores reflected their actual abilities, but as a parent, I knew their capabilities and was not worried. Today, they are both straight "P" students and enjoy school.

I feel that the real magic of Dayspring kindergarten comes in the socialization aspect. Ms. Mokwa and Mrs. Carter are the dream team of kindergarten teachers. Together, they teach the children the importance of sitting quietly and listening to others, taking turns, helping friends, all while having fun

and enjoying the learning process. They teach the kids that they are all friends in kindergarten, and the children all take it to heart. Through their very active schedule, including music, computers, Spanish, baking, science, math, reading, etc., the children have many different opportunities to interact with one another. The monthly field trips expose the children to so many exciting new things and bring the community even closer together. The play-based curriculum is one of the most special things about Dayspring. The children have the freedom and time to play with toys with their friends, and build and draw and pretend. The teachers even sometimes allow the children to keep an involved city made of building blocks up for the next day to continue playing. It is the sweetest thing. Even how the children and teachers all eat lunch together in the classroom adds to their community feeling. I have popped into the classroom at lunchtime and was always impressed with how quietly the children eat and talk together, they all seem so comfortable and happy in their classroom. And who can forget the dogs? My kids still talk about the kindergarten dogs and debate about which one is the best. They can never arrive at a decision, because they love them all. The dogs serve as yet another way in which the children learn to be caring, considerate, and responsible. The dogs add to the homey feeling of the classroom and are reliably there to hug on a rough day.

A bonus perk of our experience at Dayspring is all the wonderful families we have met. We are still very good friends today with families from my daughter's kindergarten class, as well as my son's class. We have met other parents that we relate to, and can trust with each other's kids. We keep an eye out for each other, and that sense of community is so valuable going forward.

I strongly feel that Dayspring is a very special place because of the dedicated teachers and administrators and parents. I love that so many teachers have been there for a long time, because they are happy with their jobs and are happy to interact with our children. In a world where people are increasingly more distracted and pulled in too many directions, Dayspring is a breath of fresh air. The people make it special, and the experience of the teachers is priceless. I trust these kindergarten teachers. They are easy to talk with and take the time to learn who each child is, inside and out. I cried on my son's last day of school, because I knew that a very sweet chapter in our lives was ending.

Today, my children still talk about how much they loved kindergarten. Even my 3rd grader says she wishes she could go back. They carry with them the lessons they learned about being a good friend, a helpful person in the classroom, and how to be responsible for themselves at school. Kindergarten taught them to enjoy school, which is something I dearly want them to hold onto.

I can't say enough wonderful things about Dayspring kindergarten. I absolutely believe that Ms. Mokwa and Mrs. Carter were instrumental in teaching my kids to be the good students they are today, and I cannot thank them enough for their dedication.

- Christina A., 2016-17 & 2018-19



The idea of sending our son to kindergarten at Dayspring entered our consideration during his year in the 3s class. As a public-school special education teacher, I hadn't previously considered anything other than our neighborhood public school. His class had a couple families with older siblings in the kindergarten class. These parents spoke about opportunities for free play, community experiences, monthly field trips, daily specials, classroom dogs, two teachers with lots of experience and expertise, researched based instruction, and practically unheard-of teacher to student ratios. Our interest was piqued. As the school year continued and we fell in love with the Dayspring community, we more seriously considered sending our son to kindergarten here. We met with Lori to learn about the tax credit and started contributing toward tuition. Now that he is halfway through his kindergarten year, to say that we are satisfied with his experience would be an understatement. Mrs. Mokwa and Mrs. Carter are a team that works together for the success of each child. They meet kids' individual needs and tailor instruction according to each child's ability level. Our son is reading not only sight words but also leveled readers. He is adding and subtracting. He is learning how to interact with peers, resolve conflict, practice kindness to all, make mistakes, gain confidence, and be a good citizen. He has many opportunities throughout the day to exercise his imagination. We always considered him to have a creative side, but this year he has blossomed in this area. At one moment in time, we thought by sending our son to Dayspring for kindergarten, he would have one more year to be a kid before entering the rigorous elementary school setting. But this year has been so much more than that. He has acquired the academic skills being taught in other kindergarten settings (public, charter, and private schools) and is being exposed to rich experiences that I haven't seen advertised in other kindergarten programs. Our son loves going to school every day. We cannot promote this kindergarten class more strongly. If only we could figure out a way to convince Sally and Kim to add a first-grade class...

- Jenn C., 2019-20



Next year will be our third and final Dayspring Kindergarten year as we send our youngest daughter to school in August. We are so full of joy, comfort and optimism knowing that this magical institution (with its extraordinarily gifted and devoted teachers) is still an option for our youngest daughter. We discovered Dayspring 7 years ago after moving to Arizona from out of state. Dayspring was recommended to us by a complete stranger who overheard us expressing our dismay over preschool options. We called the school that day for a tour and simply fell in love with the community, teachers

and families. We enrolled our oldest daughter on the spot and have stayed here ever since. Our oldest daughter (who is now 11) attended Dayspring from the 4s class through Kindergarten and our 9 year old had the opportunity to attend 3s, 4s and Kindergarten at Dayspring.

We've since moved from Tempe to the Gilbert area but have been happily making the drive each day since. While the drive is longer, we knew as a family that each of our kids was deserving of the same high-quality, developmentally appropriate, nurturing and wonderful environment for their first year of Kindergarten and we will continue to make the drive each day next year for Lennon (who has been walking her big sisters to the upstairs classroom since she was born!)

Ms. Mokwa and Mrs. Carter, together with an exceptionally supportive administrative staff, have created what we feel is the perfect Kindergarten environment for the youngest "students" in the K-12 space (we continue to lobby for a Dayspring K-3rd grade for what it's worth).

In regards to Dayspring Kindergarten specifically, we've concluded (and evidence-based research supports this) the ideal Kindergarten experience should be experiential, developmentally appropriate, discovery-based, fluid in terms of a student's particular interests and rich with opportunities for friendship, play, movement and make-believe. The Dayspring Kindergarten successfully marries all of these elements together with a school environment where the students' academic skills can naturally emerge in all core areas including language arts, reading, mathematics and science. Students leave Dayspring exceptionally well-prepared for 1st grade, yet they aren't rushed into a world of homework, sitting at a desk, behavior charts, and exams (which many public Kindergarten classes have incorporated into the "new norm" for 2020 and beyond). In fact, both of our girls left Dayspring and entered rigorous academic environments with a virtually seamless transition. They have both thrived socially and academically and they continue to be straight A students in accelerated classes. More important than grades, their social development was guided, reinforced and supported by Ms. Mokwa and Mrs. Carter and they were sent into first grade modeling behaviors of kindness, respect, good listening and study skills, and a calm and confident approach to their new schools. Their teachers continue to comment on their mature behavior and natural leadership skills to this day and we are confident that our decision to slowly transition from preschool into grade school has been a key component to their success as scholars and young people.

While Dayspring Kindergarten will offer families the same academic enrichment found at other traditional public and charter schools (including specials like Spanish, music theory and PE), you will find that Dayspring doesn't sacrifice happiness, play or childhood wonder in order to do so. Dayspring Kindergarten teaches letters, reading and numbers in a way that instills confidence and wonder in your child (instead of the frustration, boredom and tears so often seen when young children are thrown into environments that they just are ready to thrive in at 5 years old). More importantly, you will find a classroom that is consistently joyful and calm with students who are learning, playing and engaged with their teachers and each other. Also, you will find the Dayspring classroom to be one in which constant discipline, behavior charts, tears and kids being "sent to the hall" simply does not occur. Ms. Mokwa and Mrs. Carter have natural gifts when it comes to

classroom management and I don't think I've ever heard either of them even raise their voice a little when corralling or re-directing 20 busy little people (I would still like to know their secrets!)

In addition to school readiness and an amazing classroom filled with books, blocks, dress up, shells, art supplies and several amazing dogs, the Dayspring students have the opportunity to go on exciting field trips with their teachers every single month (museums, plays, the recycling plant and of course taking the city bus out for an ice cream trip were some of my girls' favorites...they still talk about their Dayspring memories all the time).

In closing, our family really cannot recommend the Dayspring Kindergarten enough. We encourage all families to trust their instincts when it comes to enrolling their precious little ones into their first year of "real school" and (based on our years of sending kids off to their first school, playdates, camps and sports etc.) the experiences your child will have this year will really shape their attitudes, confidence and approach to learning for years to come. We know we've given our girls the best possible start to a life of learning and growth and we are so proud and grateful to Dayspring now as we see them thriving and engaged in all aspects of school and extracurricular life (academics, artistic, social and athletics). The Dayspring Kindergarten classroom is truly a special place that celebrates childhood and offers your kids a once in a lifetime experience to engage in a year joyful learning and friendship (and to create memories that will last forever). We truly believe that entire communities could be transformed if more Kindergartens were created in the Dayspring model. Every kiddo deserves this kind of start in life.

- Michelle & Aaron B., 2014-15 & 2015-16



Both of my children attended kindergarten at Dayspring – my daughter in 2014 and my son in 2016. They are now in 5th grade and 3rd grade at Waggoner, and they are absolutely thriving, both academically and socially.

My children are very different in the way they learn and the type of students they are, but they both had an absolutely incredible experience in kindergarten Dayspring. Ms. Mokwa and Mrs. Carter are veteran teachers who know how to motivate and reach all children. The teacher: student ratio makes a huge difference in terms of the level of attention each child receives. I am so grateful that we had the opportunity to allow our kids to have one more year of play-based learning in such a nurturing environment. I can't recommend Dayspring Kindergarten highly enough!

- Emily B., 2014-15 & 2016-17



We have had two children complete Dayspring Kindergarten with Ms. Mokwa and Mrs. Carter. With the help of Ms. Mokwa and Mrs. Carter, my children exceeded all academic standards for kindergarten. During kindergarten they improved dramatically in all aspects of their education and, when they advanced to first grade, both were immensely capable of meeting and exceeding every academic standard.

Quite unexpectedly, the greatest benefits Ms. Mokwa and Mrs. Carter bestowed upon our family are entirely unrelated to academics. Our children advanced in ways we could never have imagined. While in kindergarten we witnessed our children transform from clingy (and sometimes unruly) children into thoughtful little people ready to take on any challenge. Beyond academics – after one short academic year with Ms. Mokwa and Mrs. Carter we witnessed our children change:

Their manners improved,

They learned how to make friends and develop friendships,

They began showing more self-discipline,

They recognized rewards and consequences for their choices,

They developed a love for reading, and

Most importantly, they learned the importance of being good people.

Our family is forever grateful to Ms. Mokwa and Mrs. Carter for not only the academic advancements they provided for our children but for their amazing ability to make our children good citizens. They are, quite frankly, miracle workers!

- Tracy G., 2016-17 & 2017-18

