

Mrs. MacDonald's bio:

I have a Bachelor's of Science in Elementary Education from Fitchburg State College in Fitchburg, Massachusetts and a Masters in Education, Computers in Education from Lesley University in Massachusetts. I received a highly qualified status for Elementary Education from the State of Alaska. I have taught K, 1st, and 2nd, grade since my teaching career began. However, the multiage environment at Midnight Sun has proven to be my most educationally and rewarding environment. I began my teaching career in Massachusetts as a Title 1 Teacher. Once I graduated with my Masters in Education, I moved to Alaska with my husband and taught for eight years in a multilingual school in Anchorage. Then my husband and I found our dream home and property in Willow and we made the move to the Mat-Su Valley. I immediately loved the idea of teaching in a multilevel classroom; as well I thought it was a great school for my own children to attend. This is my fourth year teaching at Midnight Sun Family Learning Center and I have learned that change is a wonderful thing.

My mission is to provide opportunities for each student to learn skills, acquire knowledge, and develop character within a rich, diverse, and nurturing learning environment.

Children learn through observing, listening and participation in activities. They don't all learn at the same rate or in the same way. It is my job as an educator to be a role model and to expose my students to as many different learning opportunities as possible. Learning is a life long experience, and I strive to instill in my students the desire to educate them by setting goals that they can accomplish.

Since I know that students are not all in the same place with their knowledge and experiences I use different

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teaching methods so that the audio, visual and hands-on-learners all have an opportunity to be successful. I believe it takes many repetitions before a skill is mastered. I teach, teach again, and revisit the material on a regular basis throughout the school year. There are some basics in reading and math that must be mastered in order for the students to progress into using those skills in higher-level learning. Some students need more one-on-one tutoring, and I use that method of instruction when appropriate and when time allows.

In my classroom, students experience a cooperative learning environment. Research has shown that cooperative learning techniques promote student learning and academic achievement. It helps students develop skills in oral communication. Cooperative learning helps promote a more positive classroom because it helps students' social skills, encourages student self-esteem and promotes positive race relations. We all need to work together when we are in a school environment. It is beneficial for children to know how to be a good team player.

To manage my class I use a number of different techniques. I use chance tickets that my students earn for showing good listening skills, accomplishing assignments and many other positive classroom behaviors. Every Friday, I pull a few students names out of the chance bucket and they are able to choose a prize from my prize box. Students can also earn Funny Money, which they can then save up in their classroom wallet and spend at the school store. Money can be earned for finishing homework, 100% on spelling tests and many other classroom activities. The final classroom incentive we work on, as a class is to fill a large jar with marbles. Once filled the students get to vote as a class

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for a marble party. This is another way I have my class work as a team. I encourage my students by giving them praise orally as well as written and I use these classroom incentives to promote positive improvement. The students are encouraged to help and support others to be successful. Students need similar routines and procedures to help them flow through the day smoothly and to quicken transition time. Good management techniques help to increase instructional and learning time.

Positive and open communication with parents is a vital component to a child's success at school. I make frequent phone calls to parents, send written communication in the form of a class newsletter, have students write to their parents about their school week. I also encourage parents to visit the classroom. Parents are notified of upcoming school and after school events that they might like to attend with their family.

Since many of my students come to my classroom from different cultures and experiences I try to build from where they are and give them the opportunities to ask questions and to learn in a warm and friendly environment where being an individual is important. I teach the students to respect their fellow classmates ideas and feelings. We study about many different cultures and the people who live in all of these different places around the world.

As learning is a life long experience so is teaching. I have been working with children, parents and educators for the better part of 2 decades and I have enjoyed every moment. When I look back at my first educational philosophy I realize that I have learned a great deal more about the teaching profession through my students and my past experiences.