



# MISS KATE FRERKING



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I have had the privilege of working in childcare for over seven years, and throughout this time, I've had the opportunity to witness the transformative power of education and personal development. Each year of experience has shaped my approach to teaching, refining my methods and expanding my understanding of how children learn. Early on, I realized that teaching is not just about conveying information, but about creating an environment in which children feel safe, supported, and inspired to explore new ideas and develop their own abilities. The lessons I've learned through hands-on experience, observing developmental milestones, and interacting with families have given me a deep appreciation for the individuality of each student.

This journey has led me to my current role at St. John's, a place where I feel I can truly contribute to a supportive learning environment while continuing to grow as a professional. St. John's has provided me with a dynamic community of educators, offering me the opportunity to collaborate, learn from others, and engage in discussions that have deepened my teaching philosophy. The resources and professional development opportunities here have been instrumental in allowing me to refine my practice, and I am constantly inspired by the innovative approaches I see in my colleagues and the students' eagerness to learn.

In addition to my work at St. John's, I am currently pursuing further education at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE). This academic journey is an extension of my commitment to deepening my knowledge of child development, educational theory, and effective teaching strategies. I believe that continuing to learn and grow as an educator is key to maintaining an engaging and high-quality learning environment for my students. My studies are equipping me with valuable tools and a broader perspective on education, which I am eager to integrate into my classroom practices. The opportunity to expand my knowledge and apply new strategies keeps me motivated and invigorated in my work.

Outside of my professional life, I make time for activities that help me recharge and stay inspired. I enjoy spending time at coffee shops, where I can reflect, read, and connect with others. The quiet moments I find in these spaces help me process my ideas and gain fresh insights into the challenges I face in teaching. Gardening is another activity that provides balance in my life. Tending to plants teaches me patience and the importance of nurturing growth—values that translate directly into my work with children. Reading also plays a central role in my life, allowing me to explore new concepts, ideas, and perspectives that keep me curious and engaged.

What I find most rewarding about my work, however, is the moment when a student has an "aha" experience—when a concept that once seemed elusive suddenly clicks, and you can see the understanding wash over them. Whether it's a child mastering a difficult math concept, reading their first full sentence, or grasping a new scientific principle, these moments are the heart of teaching. To witness the pride and excitement in a student's face as they connect the dots is incredibly fulfilling. It reminds me why I became a teacher in the first place: to help students build confidence, to foster their love of learning, and to be part of their personal growth.

Being part of a child's learning journey is one of the greatest privileges of teaching. I cherish the opportunity to help students discover new things about the world and themselves, knowing that my guidance can spark a lifelong passion for learning. Every child is unique, and every moment of discovery is a testament to the power of education. It's a reminder that teaching is not just a job—it's a calling that brings immense satisfaction and fulfillment.

*Miss Kate*

