



Ms. Heather



Heather Schuster

Owner, Daycare & Preschool Director  
Full Time

Children have always been a passion of mine! At the age of 12, I started babysitting and volunteering with children throughout high school and college. I taught violin lessons, tutored and mentored dozens of children, and also was part of the Big Brother/Big Sister program and had my own "little sister" during high school. During College, I nannied for two families of 2, was a lifeguard, and volunteered in a local elementary school 2 times per week helping with reading groups. I graduated with psychology degree and then pursued a masters degree in clinical professional psychology. I now have a family of my own. My husband Mike works in marketing at Bulkmatic Transport in Griffith, IN. I have 5 children: Carter (21), Camden (20), Callie (18), Chyler (16), and Cora (14). We try to spend as much family time together as we can, although it doesn't happen too often with everyone's schedules. If we do, we enjoy to travel, try new restaurants, and spend time outdoors. Having a large family has taught me to be very responsible, organized, detail oriented, reliable, and patient. I am very familiar with raising children in holistic, organic, natural, toxic free environment, since that is how I have and am currently raising my family. I definitely know how to make kid friendly healthy meals and am very passionate about teaching children to be strong, self sufficient individuals.

Back in 2019, I started an in home daycare. It was such a rewarding experience to be able to meet new families and provide quality care out of my home. Every family that came to us became a second family to all of us. As my daycare grew, we were able to expand throughout the years into different locations. In May of 2024, we found the Li'l Rascals property and fell in love with it! We did interior renovations, hired additional staff, and put a lot of time and attention into a top notch preschool program. I am so lucky to have found such an amazing groups of teachers and support staff. We have so many fun and exciting ideas for the future of this property and I cant wait to see where it takes us!





Ms. Melanie



# Melanie Scheidt

**Daycare Assistant Director**  
**Full Time**

Hello my name is Melanie Scheidt and I am 34 years old. I grew up in Lowell and have lived there most of my life. My husband and I moved in together in his family home in Shelby for about 6 years before moving to our house in Hebron where we have resided for the past 4 years.

I've always had a passion working with children for as long as I can remember. I've been babysitting since I was 16 years old for family and friends of the family. My senior year of high school I did a school to work program and began working at the YMCA in crown point caring for children ages 3 months to 5 years old while their parents would work out. After I graduated high school I found a job at a local daycare in St. John. I worked there for 7 years while attending College to obtain my associates degree in early childhood education. I worked in various classrooms from ages six weeks to five years old being a lead teacher. Three of those years I worked as an assistant director working closely with families and co workers creating a safe and fun environment. I found myself an amazing family and became their nanny for their two kids which grew into three for close to 5 years. I have 2 children with my wonderful husband. A seven year old boy,

Axel and a four year old girl Bexley. I was a stay at home mom for a few years before going back to work at the local daycare being the lead teacher in the infant 2 classroom until I stumbled upon this amazing opportunity to be an assistant director here for Ms. Heather. I have been here for over a year now and I have enjoyed getting to know all of our amazing families and working closely with all the staff and families to create a fun, exciting, and healthy learning environment. I love seeing all of the kids smiling faces on a daily basis and it makes my heart feel so full! I feel so lucky to be such a big part of this amazing daycare!

In my free time I enjoy spending time with my family. We love to go camping and fishing. We love to spend the nicer days outside playing, swimming in our pool when it's warm enough, going for walks, and having family movie/ game nights! I really enjoy reading books, cooking for/ with my family, and creating fun snack/ dinner boards. Although we don't get to do it often we love to travel and try new foods/ experiences. I am so excited to be here and I can't wait to see what the future will bring!

# Emily Pederson

**Preschool Curriculum Coordinator**  
**& Communications Coordinator**  
**Full Time**

My name is Emily Pederson. I am 24 years old and I live in Dyer, Indiana. I graduated from Lake Central High School in 2019 where I participated in the Best Buddies Program where I was paired with a peer with special needs. Along with that I took a child development class where I learned a lot about how children grow and how their environment can affect their growth. This is where I realized my love for working with children and being a positive influence on their growth. I also completed cosmetology school during high school where I earned my cosmetology license. Although I still love doing hair for fun and for all the daycare kids, I always knew I wanted to work with children. I started by nannying for several years, teaching preschool dance, and I continue to help with the kids program at church. I grew up in a large family of 8! I have 2 older sisters, 2 older brothers, and 1 younger brother. Being apart of a large family helped me mature at a young age and learn a lot of responsibility and social skills. I also have 3 nieces and 1 nephew who I love spending time with when I can. Being an Aunt is my favorite thing in the world! Before working at the daycare I helped raise my now 8 year old niece while my sister worked and got to experience child development first hand.

I currently have over 5 years in daycare experience. Some of my responsibilities at Li'l Rascals include creating all the curriculum and the lesson plans for all age groups in the Preschool classes. I also create the monthly calendars, newsletters, and weekly "Peek at the Weeks" where I'm able to go more in depth on the lessons and activities we did that week. I love doing design work and anything I can to help stay organized. Along with this I am the lead preschool Teacher. I love getting to work with the 3-5 age group and watch them grow into such independent, smart kids. I love challenging these kids to go above and beyond the typical age standards in a fun way. My favorite activity to do with the kids is our music rotation. I've always loved to sing and dance and love getting the opportunity to spread that love with the kids and build their confidence in the process. Outside of work I love to workout and spend time with my family and friends. I love to be outside as much as possible and always take advantage of the summer weather. I also love to travel and go to as many new places as I can. I've been to almost all 50 states, Alaska being my favorite! I am so excited to continue growing with the daycare and can't wait to see what the following years bring.



Ms. Emily





# Veronica Blanco

**Kitchen and Housekeeping Coordinator  
Full Time**

My name is Veronica. I've lived in Hammond, Indiana my whole life. I worked in Chicago for over 20 years until COVID hit and my Dad got really sick. After he was released from the hospital I was his primary caregiver so I took some time off work. In September 2020 I started working at a daycare and found my love of working with kids.

My parents are my world. This December they will be celebrating their 57th wedding anniversary. I have two nephews and one niece. My oldest nephew Jakob (32) is an LC graduate and now lives in Scottsdale. My nephew Duke (14) plays travel baseball. My niece Simone (18) plays travels softball and does theater. Going to their games and shows is one of my favorite things to do.

In my past time I dog-sit, volunteer at Whiting's Pierogi Fest, and help my friend with fundraisers for her daughter's softball team. Every Memorial Day my family puts flags on the tombstone of men and women who served at Chapel Lawn Cemetery. I'm looking forward to what the future has in store not only for myself, but for my coworkers who are now like family to me.

I now have over 5 years of daycare experience. I have loved seeing how much we've grown in so many ways. New students, new staff, and new memories. I am truly blessed to be part of this amazing journey.

# Bri Mota

**Tiny Tot Curriculum Coordinator & Lead Teacher  
Full Time**

My name is Brianna Mota. I am 24 years old and live with my fiancé Matt. We will be getting married June of 2026. I graduated a semester early from Lake Central High School, and walked the stage in 2019. I used to do cheerleading for 6 years, 2 years competitive and 5 years of school cheer. I was pretty active as a child, spending lots of time playing with my older brother Christian (28). My brother and I have that sibling relationship of fighting and arguing but caring about each other at the end of the day. I enjoy hanging out with my best friends Haley (of 11 years) and Marsela (of 24 years). My fiancé and I love to cook, workout, go to festivals and try new food trucks, and hangout with our 2 cats (Trunks and Kai). Matt and I have also babysat together and the kids love playing catch and just being kids with him. We hope to start a family of our own soon, and would love to have 2-3 kids. My family has a tradition to have a game night once a month. It's always a great time being able to see my family and bond with all my little cousins and watch them grow up.

Since I grew up with tons of younger cousins, I was always the one in charge of the kids when at family functions. When I was in middle school I viewed my neighbor as a little sister, and taught her how to swim and ride a bike. I may have been younger than my brother but it always felt like I had younger siblings. During my time of cheering, we would hold cheer camps for younger kids to get a feel of what cheerleading is about. I worked with kids grades K-8. We taught them cheer techniques, jumps, tumbling, and stunts. We taught them a few chants and a dance to perform at the end of the camp in front of all the parents. Over the course of the day, I developed a big sister, little sister relation with a few of the girls. Knowing that these young ladies look up to us high schoolers, felt like an honor. Throughout my teen years, I babysat for neighbors of mine, with ages ranging one to nine. I have been working with children for about 10 years, 4 of those years being a lead teacher here. Some of the responsibilities I have here include creating all the curriculum for Tiny Tots and finding all the crafts for each week and making sure they get prepped. I also send out a weekly Peek at the Week talking about why we did each activity and explain the importance of it. I am so lucky to be able to work with such wonderful kids and staff. Working here at the daycare has taught me so much already and I can't wait to see what the future holds for me here.

Ms. Veronica



Ms. Bri







Ms. Mallory



# Mallory Pederson

**Nursery Curriculum Coordinator & Lead Teacher  
Full Time**

My name is Mallory Pederson! I'm 20 years old and live in Cedar Lake with my parents and two of my three brothers. I graduated from Hanover Central High School in 2023, where I was a member of the school's dance team.

One of my favorite experiences was leading mini dance camps with the kindergarteners, which sparked my love for working with children. Seeing their confidence grow as they learned new skills made me realize that this was my passion.

I've always had a natural connection with kids, especially through helping care for my younger brother, Elliott, who is 11 years younger than me. I love spending time with him—teaching him dances, doing crafts, and making memories together. That bond has only strengthened my love for nurturing and guiding little ones.

As the Lead Nursery Teacher, I find so much joy in working with our littlest learners, helping them reach important milestones and discover the world around them. Watching them grow and learn each day truly feels like being part of a big extended family. I also love getting creative and designing their monthly baby crafts—it's such a special way to celebrate their development!

Outside of work, I enjoy reading poetry, dancing, spending time outdoors, going on road trips, and, of course, babysitting. I'm incredibly grateful to be part of such an amazing daycare, and I can't wait to continue making a positive impact on the little ones in my care!

# Brittney Breazeale

**Kitchen & Housekeeping Coordinator  
& Nursery Assistant Teacher  
Full Time**

My name is Brittney and I am 30 years old. I grew up in Schererville, but lived in Florida for a couple years and just recently moved back. I'm a very family oriented person and absolutely love spending time with children. I've been babysitting kids in the family, along with family friends' kids, since 2013. I just recently had a daughter of my own, named Autumn, in April 2023! Watching her grow and learn everyday has been the biggest blessing in life. I really love coming up with little activities to help her develop skills and stimulate her mind.

During my free time, I absolutely love spending time in nature, whether it's camping with my family and friends, going to amusement parks, or exploring a state park! I also have a love for painting, digital art, and photography.

I'm beyond excited to be a part of this warm and welcoming team! I'm looking forward to getting to know all the children and their parents. I'm honored to be a part of kids' lives and to help them learn and grow, while having fun!



Ms. Brittney







Ms. Sarai



# Sarai Jones

Nursery Assistant Teacher  
Part Time

Hi there! My name is Sarai, and I'm a 21-year old student at Purdue Northwest studying psychology. My passion for understanding and supporting young minds has grown through both personal and professional experiences. I've spent years babysitting for family and friends, and I absolutely adore my two God babies – Maddie (2) and Cataleya (1) – who I get to babysit regularly and spend most of my free time with. Whether we're doing arts and crafts, exploring something new, or learning through play, I love watching their little personalities shine!

In my spare time, you'll probably find me listening to music, binge-watching series based on real-life stories or creating my own art (which I love sharing with the kids, too!).

I also have professional experience as a Behavioral Health Technician at a mental health clinic, where I worked with children and teens ages 8–18 with behavioral challenges and autism. That role deepened my love for child development and inspired my dream to one day open my own private psychology practice, focusing primarily on adolescents while supporting clients of all ages.

I'm passionate, patient, and always ready to bring creativity and care into everything I do – especially when it comes to helping children grow and thrive!



Ms. Em



# Emely Orduño

Nursery Assistant Teacher  
Full Time

Hi! My name is Emely Orduño, but I go by Ms. Em at daycare. I live in Hammond, Indiana and I graduated from City Baptist School this year.

I come from a big, loving family, so growing up with my niece and nephew, who are only 5 years apart from me, and with lots of my cousins has taught me the importance of patience, care, and teamwork especially when it comes to little ones! For the past three years and still now, I have the wonderful opportunity to serve in my church's nursery every Sunday, where I care for babies and toddlers, play with them, and help create a fun, welcoming environment. Being part of that has truly made me realize how much I love caring for children and watching them learn and grow. Working with kids brings me so much happiness, whether it's feeding them their bottle, doing crafts, or simply making them smile. One of my favorite things about working with kids is watching their personalities shine through as they discover new things. Outside of daycare, I love spending time with my family, playing volleyball, and baking sweet treats. I'm so excited to be part of a team that helps children feel loved, safe, and happy every day.





Ms. Demi



# Demi McDaniel

Preschool Lead Teacher

Full Time

Hello! My name is Demi McDaniel. I am 27 years old and a mother of two daughters, 7 and 2. I just graduated spring 2025 from Ivy Tech's Honors college program with an associate's in Elementary Education. Next, I am transferring this fall where I will complete my bachelor's degree. I am the oldest sibling, oldest cousin, and have always been the designated babysitter. When I was growing up I always thought about being a teacher, but as I got older I actually started school for general sonography. After spending a lot of time in my oldest daughter's kindergarten class, I knew I needed to switch my major immediately. The immense amount of joy that happens in a classroom is something that is absolutely unmatched. All I've ever wanted to do since I was a little girl was leave a little bit of kindness in the world. Teaching gives me the ability to leave so much kindness in the world in each student's heart. I recently left a daycare to join Miss Heather's team and it is such an honor to work with a great staff and some great kiddos each day!

In my free time, I love spending time with my family. My daughters are my entire world. A fun day to me is taking them to an arcade, movies, zoo, or anywhere we can make memories. In my alone free time I love to make art. I love painting, and I love making funny things with clay. I also really enjoy building Legos. You can also find me playing video games on my Nintendo switch or on my PC. Laughing and dance parties are definitely important in my life. I can't wait to leave a little bit of kindness with your children and share lots of laughs and dance parties.



Ms. Kortney



# Kortney Cardinal

Preschool Lead Teacher

Full Time

Hi, I'm Kortney Cardinal! I'm 32 and recently made the move to Hobart after living in Wyoming for about 5 years. Originally from Illinois, I moved out to Wyoming in 2020 because I always wanted to live out west, but I missed my family too much to stay that far away! I'm the middle child of four and grew up helping raise my twin brother and sister, who are eight years younger than me. I've always loved working with kids, anything outdoorsy, I'm huge dog and music person, and I'm all about crafts and organizing (I love a good project!).

In high school, I worked as a nanny and took on countless babysitting jobs. After earning my bachelor's degree in Public Relations and Marketing from the University of Arizona, I dove into several different marketing roles. Recently, I realized that I wasn't feeling fulfilled and I wanted something fun where I felt more in my element. I was lucky enough to find my way to Li'l Rascals daycare, where I absolutely love what I do. Now I'm going back to school to earn my master's degree in Elementary Education and I'm so excited about what the future holds. I love getting to see the kids every day and I can't wait to continue growing in my career!





Ms. Kathleen



# Kathleen Hasenjaeger

**Tiny Tot Assistant Teacher  
Full Time**

Hi, my name is Kathleen Hasenjaeger. I was born and raised in Chicago along with my 3 brothers. I graduated from University of Illinois in 1995 with a Master of Social work degree. I worked as a Medical Social Worker for 30+ years and enjoyed every minute of it. I retired from Social Work the end of 2024, but continued to have a desire to work with people and use my skills in a different setting. This led me to the teacher's assistant job at Li'l Rascals. Watching the kids learn and discover something new through play, circle time or during a lesson is such a blessing. In my free time, I enjoy spending time with my family and friends, as well as caring for my 93-year-old mother who resides in a nursing home. I also enjoy walking, reading and listening to music.

# Bayleigh VanderZee

**Nursery & Tiny Tot Assistant Teacher  
Part Time**

Hi! My name is Bayleigh VanderZee and I am 20 years old. I graduated from Illiana Christian High School in 2024 and currently go to IU Northwest in classes for elementary education, hoping to be a preschool/kindergarten teacher in the future! I started babysitting kids at the age of 15, and ever since then, I've fallen in love with being around kids. They bring me so much happiness, and I truly enjoy the joy and responsibility that comes with caring for them. I can't wait to be a mom one day!

I'm a nanny in the summer and babysit here and there still for many families in my community. I previously worked at the YMCA daycare, where I had a lot of responsibilities with children ages 8 weeks to 5 years old. I just recently started here at Li'l Rascals, and I can't wait to grow and learn even more in this role. In my free time, I enjoy working out, cleaning houses, baking, and spending time with my friends and family.



Ms. Bayleigh





# Bella DiTola

**Preschool Assistant Teacher  
Full Time**

Hi! My name is Bella, and I'm so excited to be part of the team! I grew up here in Saint John, Indiana, and graduated from Lake Central High School. Before joining this program, I worked at Saint John the Evangelist Preschool for two years and also spent time babysitting for families through the church. My favorite part of working with children is having real conversations with them—getting to know each of their unique personalities and enjoying their company every day. Outside of work, I love playing piano and doing a bit of coloring to relax and get creative!

*Ms. Bella*



# Karen Morgan

**Tiny Tot Assistant Teacher  
Full Time**

Hi, I'm Karen Morgan, but I go by "Ms. Gabby". I am Heather Schuster's mom. I am excited to start a new journey in Indiana and working for my daughter. I previously worked as an activity aide at a senior living facility in Huntley, Illinois. I ran the crafts, games, "cook & tastes", and much more. I was there for 3.5 years. Before that I worked with a boy who had special needs for 4 years until COVID hit. I enjoy working with people no matter the age and love staying busy. I know this will be a great fit for me!

*Ms. Gabby*



I also dog-sit and have been loving that for almost five years! After my first dog passed, this was the path I took to get my dog fix and help others along the way.

My favorite thing to do in my spare time is spend time with my family. I especially love watching my grandkids in dance competitions, swim meets, track, and football. Now, I'll be able to do much more of it! Friends are very important to me also. I have stayed close to many of my high school and junior year friends and even have a few from elementary grades! I try and see them as often as possible even though they live all over the country now. This is such an exciting new chapter for me and I can't wait to meet all of the new families!





Ms. Daviana



# Daviana Garibaldi

**Assistant Teacher**  
**Part Time / Seasonal**

Hi! My name is Daviana Garibaldi, and I'm 18 years old. I started working at Li'l Rascals in February of 2025. I currently attend Indiana University, but love spending my summers and school breaks here at the daycare.

My love for working with children started with my two little cousins and only grew through my time as a children's swim class instructor and working the Summer Kid's Club at LOFS Pool. I realized how much joy helping children to learn while having fun brings me and I knew I wanted to do it year-round. I feel so lucky that I found that in Li'l Rascals.

Even though I've only been here since February, it already feels like home. I absolutely adore every single one of the kids I work with. There's nothing better than making new mini best friends and being greeted at the end of a long school day with a big hug and an even bigger smile. Those little moments fill my heart and remind me just how blessed I am to be here. I'm so thankful for the bonds I've built in such a short time, and I can't wait to make even more memories as the daycare continues to grow.



Ms. Kylie



# Kylie Bell

**Assistant Teacher**  
**Part Time / Seasonal**

Hi my name is Kylie Bell and I am from Griffith Indiana. I am 21 years old and currently a student at Indiana University, Bloomington. I am majoring in Early Childhood Education and Special Education with a minor of Children's Psychology. On my breaks I will be working at At Home with Mrs Heather and I have loved getting to know and be with your kids! My whole life I've loved working with kids and have always wanted to become a teacher. In high-school I worked two years as a cadet teacher in a second grade classroom, and still currently love babysitting! I'm so lucky that I always get to come back and work in this amazing environment and be in each of your kids lives! I can't wait to see all the kids grow and have fun with us all!

In my free time I love hanging out with my family and friends. I am a big sports fan and I love watching soccer and basketball! I love to travel and explore new places. I also do some babysitting at school of kids of all ages. In the future I can't wait to work with kids and have a classroom of my own someday!





Ms. Callie



# Callie Schuster

Assistant Teacher  
Part Time / Seasonal

Hi, my name is Callie Schuster. I am 18 years old. During high school I was enrolled in multiple clubs including N-teens, Class Cabinet, Academic Letter winner, and National Honors Society. These clubs are where I showed my leadership, achievements, and also where I spent many hours volunteering. I started as a babysitter helper at age 10 and have been babysitting ever since. This past summer I nannied for a family of 5. I grew up in a big family with 3 brothers and a sister. This has allowed me to learn responsibility at a very young age. I have helped my younger siblings with homework, watched over them, and hope I am a role model for them too!

I am currently studying Early Childhood Education at the University of Wisconsin Madison! I love working at Li'l Rascals on my school breaks and over the summer. I love the friendly, welcoming environment at At Home with Ms. Heather, and I have become very close with all the staff and consider them my second family. I have known most of these kids for while now and I love each and everyone of them. They always brighten my day. I am so glad I am able to work for such an amazing place. I cannot wait to see what the future brings!

# Li'l Rascals

ACADEMY

Newly Renovated