



2025-2026



PRESCHOOL

WELCOME TO A NEW SCHOOL YEAR AT WAYA PRESCHOOL!

It is with a wonderful sense of pride and gratitude that we welcome children, families and friends to WAYA Preschool!

Our goal is to provide your child with the very best care and enrichment environment possible. Our program is designed to foster social, emotional, intellectual, and physical development; helping children acquire an understanding of self and others in an atmosphere of warmth, personal respect, individuality, and positive support.

We also seek to help each child develop a positive self-image, teach children to be responsible for their own actions, and provide an early childhood resource to parents.

We urge all parents to celebrate each day with their child – to celebrate their determination, curiosity, capacity to wonder, resilience, successes, and to treasure each moment along this shared journey. We are in this journey together to be there to support, cheer, and praise your child throughout the year.

Here's to a great year!
Sincerely,

Yvette Aguilar
WAYA Preschool Director



Bonnie Gonzales
WAYA Preschool Assistant Director



LEAD TEACHERS

Betsy Davis

Hometown: El Paso, TX

Time at WAYA: 20 years

Fun Fact: I have been teaching in the neighborhood long enough I am on my second generation.

Favorite Hobby: Gardening



Fish Room

Helga Veirs

Hometown: Midland, TX

Time at WAYA: 2 years

Fun Fact: The first concert I ever went to was Elton John.

Favorite Hobby: Reading History Books



Frog Room

Erica Lopez

Hometown: Laredo, TX

Time at WAYA: 5 years

Fun Fact: I like to take photos of gloomy skies.

Favorite Hobby: Finding New Music



Flamingo Room

LEAD TEACHERS

Tula Gidden

Hometown: California
Time at WAYA: 3 years
Fun Fact: I'm a twin!
Favorite Hobby: Running with my sogs
and being a grandma



Baby Shark Room

Shamoya Hill

Hometown: Elgin, TX
Time at WAYA: 8 years
Fun Fact: I'm a Golden Girls fanatic.
Favorite Hobby: Baking



Monkey Room

Daphne Dolder

Hometown: Bastrop, TX
Time at WAYA: 1 year
Fun Fact: I have four fur babies and
Ms.Tula is my mom!
Favorite Hobby: Thrifting and
Spending Time with my Dogs



Honey Bee Room

LEAD TEACHERS

Vanessa Vega

Hometown: Austin, TX

Time at WAYA: 9 years

Fun Fact: My family and I go to a Dallas Cowboys game every year!

Favorite Hobby: Crafting with my Cricut



Sea Turtle Room



ASSISTANT TEACHERS

Bonnie Bratton

Hometown: Austin, TX

Time at WAYA: 21 years

Fun Fact: I like to do half marathons!

Favorite Hobby: Reading and Hanging Out with Family



Brianna Tobias

Hometown: Austin, TX

Time at WAYA: 2 years

Fun Fact: I really like to go out dancing on the weekends.

Favorite Hobby: Shopping



Graciela Salazar

Hometown: Austin, TX

Time at WAYA: 2 years

Fun Fact: I love to crochet and knit!

Favorite Hobby: Playing Video Games



ASSISTANT TEACHERS

Dayanna De Leon

Hometown: Austin, TX
Time at WAYA: 2 years
Fun Fact: I was travelling in Rome when I took this picture.
Favorite Hobby: Coloring



Lauren Jaber

Hometown: Austin, TX
Time at WAYA: 3 years
Fun Fact: I love Chick-Fil-la
Favorite Hobby: Traveling



Maria Duarte

Hometown: Panama
Time at WAYA: 2 years
Fun Fact: I love sugar free drinks!
Favorite Hobby: Walking



ASSISTANT TEACHERS

Ryan Riojas

Hometown: Austin, TX

Time at WAYA: 2 years

Fun Fact: I love all kinds of sports and I also work at Austin FC in guest services

Favorite Hobby: I love to read and watch Texas A&M Football



Sherine Mansour

Hometown: Connecticut & Syria

Time at WAYA: 1 year

Fun Fact: I love to sing

Favorite Hobby: Dancing



Eva Park

Hometown: Austin, TX

Time at WAYA: My 1st year

Fun Fact: I have 16 grandchildren

Favorite Hobby: I love spending time outside and staying active!



ASSISTANT TEACHERS

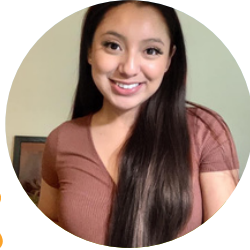
Valentina Salazar

Hometown: Austin, TX

Time at WAYA: 2 years

Fun Fact: My birthday is Valentin's Day

Favorite Hobby: I love doing puzzles



Jazmin Saenz

Hometown: Austin, TX

Time at WAYA: My First year

Fun Fact: I love animals! I have a dog named Bailey and a cat named Luigi

Favorite Hobby: Making pottery





2025-2026 CALENDAR

2025-2026 School Calendar

June 9th (Monday)	1st Tuition Installment Due
August 4 th - 8 th	Last Week of Summer Adventure Camp
August 11 th - 15 th	Preschool Closed
August 18 th - 26 th	Preschool Closed: Teacher Work Week
August 25 th & 26 th	Meet the Teacher <i>(for Enrolled Families)</i>
August 27 th	First Day of School
September 1 st	No School: Labor Day
October 6 th (Monday)	2nd Tuition Installment Due
October 13 th	No School: Indigenous Peoples Day
November 6 th - 8 th	No School: TXAECY Conference
November 24 th - 28 th	No School: Thanksgiving Week
December 22 nd - January 6 th	No School: Winter Break
January 5 th & 6 th	No School: Staff Development
January 5 th (Monday)	3rd Tuition Installment Due
January 7 th	First Day of Spring Semester
January 19 th	No School: MLK Jr. Day / WAYA Staff Development 2026-2027 Registration <i>(Current Students & Siblings)</i>
February 16 th	No School: Presidents' Day Adventure Camp Registration <i>(Current Students & Siblings)</i>
March 16 th - 20 th	No School: Spring Break
April 3 rd	No School: Good Friday
April 6 th (Monday)	4th Tuition Installment Due
April 17 th	No School: WAYA Family Day
May 21 st	Last Day of School / Pre-k Graduation

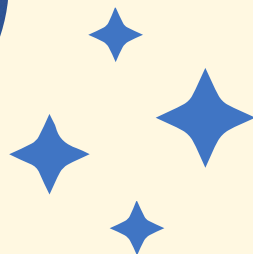
PRESCHOOL PARTNERS



Mr. Will
Musical Guest



Miguel Mendez
Custodial Staff
Member



PRESCHOOL PARTNERS



Life Ki-do

sportball

CHAMPIONSTX

WAYA STAFF

Melissa Greenwood Morrow

Hometown: Houston, TX
Time at WAYA: 12 years
Fun Fact: I like to play soccer and volleyball on the weekends.
Favorite Hobby: Hiking with my Husband and three dogs.



Executive Director

Rich Morrison

Hometown: Neodesha, KS
Time at WAYA: 10 years
Fun Fact: I am an identical twin.
Favorite Hobby: Competing in local 5k, 10k, and obstacle races.



Director of Operations

Suzanne Starkey

Hometown: Dallas / Austin, TX
Time at WAYA: 21 years
Fun Fact: This year I will attend my 40th Texas / OU game in a row.
Favorite Hobby: Cooking



Finance Director

WAYA STAFF

Jana McSwain Crews

Hometown: Austin, TX
Time at WAYA: 9 years
Fun Fact: I am a huge Justin Timberlake and NSYNC fan!
Favorite Hobby: Crafting



Communications Director

Andy Felix

Hometown: Rio De Janeiro, Brazil
Time at WAYA: 2 years
Fun Fact: I won my high school talent show with my best friend rapping to "Can I kick it" by A Tribe Called Quest.
Favorite Hobby: Working On My Car



Facility Director

Emily Freeman

Hometown: San Angelo, TX
Time at WAYA: 8 months
Fun Fact: I was a competitive Highland Dancer when I was younger.
Favorite Hobby: Reading



Development Director

WAYA STAFF

Laney Ramirez

Hometown: Rosenberg, TX

Time at WAYA: 6 years

Fun Fact: My mom named me after the movie "She's All That," the main character's name was Laney Boggs.

Favorite Hobby: Playing Sports



Athletic Director

Brandon Allen

Hometown: East Lansing, Mi

Time at WAYA: 4 years

Fun Fact: I have a twin sister.

Favorite Hobby: Playing Golf



Assistant Athletic Director

Tess Friedman

Hometown: College Station, TX

Time at WAYA: 1 year

Fun Fact: I am a vegetarian!

Favorite Hobby: Running and Traveling

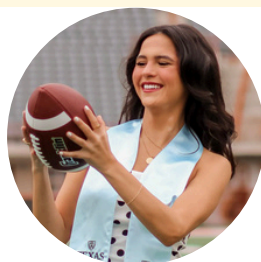


Assistant Athletic Director

WAYA STAFF

Karissa Martinez

Hometown: San Antonio, TX
Time at WAYA: 1 year
Fun Fact: I was a manager for the Texas Women's Basketball team!
Favorite Hobby: Thrifting



Assistant Athletic Director





Parent Communication!

Procare App

You can message teachers daily and see activities. Yvette and Bonnie will also send important information through the app.



Email

Information will be sent from preschooldirector@waya.org, assistantdirector@waya.org,

Monthly Newsletter

Newsletters will be sent from West Austin Youth Assc. Developmental Mornings



Parent Information board on preschool door



Monthly Calendar

printed out and sent home





Check out our 2025-26 Handbook





2026 Family Day
Friday, April 17th
4:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Save the date and plan to join us for a fun-filled evening as we celebrate our wonderful community at the 2026 Family Day! Family Day serves as WAYA's flagship fundraiser. Funds raised play a vital role in supporting our mission to provide opportunities for Austin kids to thrive through play.

WAYA Preschool uses the funds raised from Family Day to provide:

- Mariposa Teachers
- Music with Mr. Will
- Teacher Training
- Classroom Supplies
- Benefits for Lead Teachers
- Student Scholarships

Thank you for supporting WAYA Preschool!

Sincerely,

Emily Freeman
WAYA Development Director

Learn more about
Family Day





Thank you for supporting
WAYA Preschool



Donate
to WAYA!



Preschool
Forms