

Community Special Edition 3. Connections

The Gervais Early Learning Center Mix Fall Festivities and Learning!

This fall, preschoolers at the Gervais Early Learning Center embraced the season with a memorable trip to a pumpkin patch hosted by Gervais High School's FFA students. On October 29th, eight parent volunteers joined the young learners for a walk to the high school, where an exciting day of activities awaited. Each child picked a pumpkin to take home, enjoyed face painting, played games like beanbag toss, and interacted with farm animals, including rabbits, goats, pigs, and guinea pigs. Treat bags filled with goodies added an extra layer of delight to the experience.

Back in their classrooms, the pumpkin fun continued. Students painted pumpkins, explored their textures while separating seeds

from the "guts," and even tasted roasted pumpkin seeds. These hands-on activities connected to a deeper story of growth, as the pumpkins originated from seeds the students planted last year in front of the preschool. This seasonal tradition not only fostered learning but also brought the community closer together, with parents, teachers, and high school students working hand in hand to create a magical experience for the children.

The Gervais Early Learning Center, home to 51 preschoolers, is more than a place for seasonal fun—it's a vibrant community where young minds and hearts are nurtured every day. The school offers 47 Preschool Promise slots alongside a few migrant-funded and private pay opportunities, ensuring

access for families from diverse backgrounds. The center operates three classrooms, each led by a dedicated teacher, with support staff fluent in English, Spanish, and Russian to reflect and embrace the diversity of its students.

At its core, the center believes that young children learn best in a nurturing, play-based environment. Through intentional, child-led activities, students explore their world, build relationships, and develop essential skills in an inclusive setting that celebrates diversity in age, ethnicity, language, and ability. The curriculum incorporates Creative Curriculum and Second Steps, focusing on the whole child.

Preschoolers at Gervais learn to identify and manage emotions, resolve conflicts, and build empathy while developing physical skills like handwashing, brushing teeth, and managing classroom materials. Early academic foundations are nurtured through phonetic awareness, storytelling, group reading, and math and science exploration. Activities such as creating art, imagining stories, and working together help children learn critical problem-solving and social skills, preparing them for future success.

Parents play an integral role in this journey. The center values the partnership between families and educators, knowing that collaboration is key to helping children reach their full potential. Together, they create an environment where every child feels valued, supported, and inspired to grow.

From pumpkin patches to phonics, the Gervais Early Learning Center is a place where community and curiosity come together to build bright futures for its youngest learners.

