



A CONVERSATION WITH JOANNE NELSON

Founder of Brighton, formally Bright and Early

HIGHLIGHTS

JoAnne is gifted in both business and education. She had a vision and brought that vision to life. She created Bright and Early after taking a preschool teaching job at Evergreen School in Shoreline.

Bright and Early became Brighton in 1995 after a former student, who had moved on to Lakeside in 5th grade, mentioned that she felt it sounded like a "baby school".

In my conversation with JoAnne, I was struck with how much the core of who Brighton is, has remained. She wanted to create a school with students and staff who love to be here and thrive. I felt honored to be carrying on this tradition 40 years later.

THE WHY

JoAnne Nelson started Bright and Early in January of 1982 after graduating with a double major in Special Education and Elementary Education. She wanted to create a place for individualized learning for all students.

THE HOW

At just 24, JoAnne visualized herself with 6 preschool students in a classroom. She made that happen by renting a classroom from Edmonds Elementary in January of 1982 and opening Bright and Early School!

From there, Bright and Early naturally grew as students stayed year after year. Until 1996, Bright and Early ended at 4th grade. The first 8th grade graduating class was JoAnne's oldest daughter's class in 2000 whom had started as infants in 1986.

JoAnne's vision was to be "Nordstrom not Kmart" and created a school where individualized learning could happen for everyone. She also shared that she wanted a place for students to feel cared for and safe.

NOTABLE EMPLOYEE

Wendy Dalton

First employee hired in 1982 and is still teaching at Brighton!

