

2009-2010 Parent Training

As we begin our new year, I hope you will enjoy the challenge and the joy of being a teacher in your child's classroom. It is not easy, but it is rewarding. Not only will you be guiding their learning, and modeling behaviors for the children; but you will be learning yourself. Mistakes will be made and there will be many questions. Let's look at mistakes as learning opportunities (for both the children and the adults); and know that it really is true, the only "dumb" question is the one not asked.

Check your school folder in the hallway every time you come to school to keep up to date on info! Also read the whiteboard every morning for reminders!

1. HELPING CHILDREN SELECT AND MANAGE APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES

First 10 Minutes of class

When children are selecting activities from the shelf, help them if they seem uncertain. Sometimes just a comment such as: "This is fun; you have many different colors to create shapes." Or, "It looks like two people are needed for this game, would you like to ask a friend to play or would you like to play with me?". Putting the activities on trays helps to define each child's space and prevents disputes. When a child is finished, help them return the activity to the shelf. Teaching the children to return the equipment is a very important part of learning to be responsible. It does take a while for the children to know they are expected to take responsibility for the environment. Help them by quietly reminding and offering to help carry if necessary.

The sensory table sometimes seems to have a life of its own. The contents, whether liquid or other, can easily spill out of the table. If the adults use the materials in the sensory table correctly, so will the children. The medium in the sensory table stays in the tub with all pouring activities taking place over the tub.

When children become boisterous and excited, use a soft voice to remind them those are outdoor behaviors. Ask children to help clean up the spills they make using a broom or a rag (not as a punishment, but as a responsible act).

As long as your voice is not loud and you are not directing the play, do feel free to interact with the children, supporting their social efforts whenever possible. At Centers, sit down at the table and let the children prepare dinner for you, or lunch or snack. Dress up with them and/or build with them with our wonderful set of blocks. Please help them with the tape recorder - adults need to put the tape in for the children.

THE CHILDREN ARE OUR FOCUS DURING CLASS TIME

Once again, if we all make an effort to model the behaviors we expect, we will have to do less talking to them about what to do in the classroom and we will have more time to support their play and learning. Please hold adult conversations with each other (and with me) before class time or after. The children are the focus during class hours and adult conversations distracts and interferes with our precious time with each child. When support personnel do need to talk to me during the class to help with a child, please double your efforts to stay involved.

3. MAKING CERTAIN TREASURES AND CREATIONS ARRIVE HOME SAFELY

Transporting treasures back and forth between home and school means each child will need something for carrying. Each child will have a cubby to hang up his/her coat and to keep a bag (backpack is easiest). If the backpack is brought each day, the children will be prepared. **Please bring an extra set of clothes for your child in his/her backpack.**

Please do not allow the children to bring to school the following items; guns, ropes, money, valuable objects, candy and gum, and super heroes figures,

The cubbies are for the children's and adult's coats. (Purses go in the classroom closet, on a high shelf.) The 3's class will have their name and picture on yellow paper. The Pre-K will have their name and picture on Orange paper, the mixed age on green paper. (Their picture will be added the first week of school.)

4. THE CLASSROOM JOBS ARE IMPORTANT TO THE CHILDREN

Having responsibilities makes the children take pride in their room and school. Jobs are posted so all adults will be able to help each child complete their tasks. Children take this very seriously.

Each child will have a job each day.

1. Line leader: for bathroom wash-up and to go outside for playtime.
2. Door Opener: for bathroom wash up and to go outside for playtime.
3. Paint Helper: helps put away the art materials and paint at easel.
4. Big Puzzle Helper: Chooses big puzzle for the day.
5. Goldfish Caretaker: Feeds the fish a small pinch of food (hand washing after).
6. Snack Helper: Washes hands, helps Snack Parent at the beginning of class.

7. Water Helper: May fill pitchers for the Snack Center (wash hands first).
8. Calendar Helper: Counts the days and places calendar piece (not applicable to the 3's class).
9. Weather Helper: gives weather report.
10. Table Wiper: helps wipe tables down at cleanup time.
11. Sweeper: Sweeps up around the sensory table as class is putting activities away.
12. Turtle Feeder: Feeds the class turtle with food provided.
13. Plant Tender: Helps me water the plants each day at beginning of class.
14. Attendance Keeper: Counts how many children are present (how many girls/boys)
15. Survey: Student walks around the class asking class mates a survey question; at the end of the class the student then reports his/her findings to the class.
16. Whiteboard cleaner: Cleans the block area whiteboard at the end of center time.

5. HELPING CLASS BEGIN RIGHT ON TIME AND IN A RESPECTFUL MANNER

If there is a red sign on the door of the classroom, this means the classroom is closed and is not ready for your child to come in. Please, if at all possible, say your farewells to your child quickly. The morning routine will be for the children to enter and select their nametags and write a letter on the writing chart and then find a quiet table activity for the first 10 minutes of class. This will give me time to deal with any pressing concerns that may come up at the beginning of class and also time to greet each child individually and the children will have a time to relax for a few minutes and focus themselves in preparation for class.

Please have your child wash his/her hands in the bathroom before entering the class as a preventive measure for spreading germs.

Please supervise your child while you wait outside. It is safer and more relaxing to read the bulletin boards after your child has entered the classroom - it is difficult to supervise and read at the same time. For some children, it is easier to wait in the car - rather than stand in the busy and noisy hallway that is confusing to a child. **The working parents begin 15**

minutes before class. It is the teacher's assistant job to supervise these three/four children while the art and snack parents prepare for the day.

6. CIRCLE TIME SET THE TONE FOR THE DAY

Because the activities in the beginning circle set the tone; encouraging and welcoming each child, is a very important part of the program. Please make every effort to be on time so children feel a part of the group; and you are teaching an important value and adult survival skill. **If you are a little late to school, please help your child enter the circle quietly. If you have a sibling with you, let your child know the name of one of the working parents who will help them find their place, please do not bring the sibling to circle; because it is disruptful when you leave.** If you are late, let your child know I will greet them and he/she can find her nametag after circle. Let them know they will need to wait, but I have not forgotten them. While we know how difficult it is to time everything perfectly, I hope those occasions when you may be late are very few and that every effort will be made to respect the group by not disrupting it.

7. HELP CHILDREN LEARN BY LISTENING

Listening will be one of the most important jobs you will have. When children, just like adults, are listened to, they feel they belong. When you feel that special bond of belonging to a group, there are fewer squabbles and tears and you feel much more capable of solving some hard problems. Whether at snack, the play dough table, at the activity center, the dramatic play corner or on the playground, practice listening. You can help the children practice listening at circle time, by being a part of the circle, modeling quiet behavior and helping those children who are having difficulty by sitting close and being positive.

The tone and volume of your voice is one of the techniques for helping children solve their own problems - it should be a quiet voice, with an encouraging tone (no scolding). As our voices increase in volume, so do the children's; because they feel like they have to shout to be heard. Adults sometimes equate power with loud - but in reality, the quieter you are (as long as you are firm and clear), the more the children will listen. They learn very quickly to know who will shout three or four times and who will remind them quietly just once before asking them to play elsewhere.

8. LISTENING TO CHILDREN HELPS THEM WORK OUT SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Sit down or kneel down to be at eye level with the children whenever possible. Facial expressions, silent nods of encouragement, and understanding eyes are a very important part of the communication process. Repeat what you hear: "I can see two friends are having trouble sharing the truck. What shall we do?"

Then listen carefully to both children and keep summarizing for them. "Oh, so you both came at the same time to play with the truck. We will have to solve this. What shall we do?" Listen again. If they are having trouble coming up with solutions; suggest a few: "We could use a timer, or write John's name on the card so he will be next - What do you think?". Listen again for agreement. Congratulate the children for solving a hard problem.

9. LEARNING PATIENCE AND GOOD NUTRITION

At snack center, please sit down at the table. The trays will be on the table. Interesting discussion helps with the waiting. Good conversation starters include: "I read my favorite book again last night, *I'll Love You Forever*. It makes me think about my family. Did anyone get to read a book last night? What was it? What was the part you liked best?" Avoid quizzing about facts, but it is also fun to ask what they have explored so far today. It is the perfect opportunity to review the choices they made during their work time and the process they went through to make those choices.

All the classes we will be doing a Snack Center. The snack will be offered as one of the choices at Centers' time. This will give the children the opportunity to choose when he/she is hungry in a 45-minute period and if the child chooses not to have snack (this is a choice) he has to live with the consequence of not eating when it is offered. This is a very concrete experience for the children on making decisions and accepting the consequences of their decisions. Please limit snack to one serving and have children count out a predetermined by you number of crackers, cheese etc. **Please remember it is just a small snack and each child should be at the snack center about 10-15 minutes tops.**

10. SHARING IS ENCOURAGED BUT NOT FORCED

While sharing is encouraged, if a child begins with a reasonable amount, he or she does not have to give it up when others come. It does help to say things such as: "If Marcy had some play dough, I'll bet she would sit with us and play." If that doesn't work, write Marcy's name on a piece of

paper and put it on the table. The next vacancy will go to her.

11. SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S CREATIVITY

Help the children understand the activities by asking questions, rather than telling. "What do you think we will be doing here? If children are having difficulty using the equipment, show them how. Inspire creativity by not showing your model (once in a while if we are making a craft we will model, but rarely) or expecting each child's creation to be the same. Please remember it is the process not the product that helps children to learn. Allow time for children to finish.

The finished product will not be judged by how it looks to you. We do not always have to comment on the children's art work - we want them to begin to depend on their own judgments. If you comment, please keep it on the topic of the process: "Those brushes were very tiny. You used many muscles making those punched holes. I see you were thinking of something special when you painted that." Please don't ask, "What is it?" However, it is fun to write on the back side anything the child wants to tell you about their creation. Do remember to ask the child where he would like his name written on his art.

12. SHARING ABOUT YOURSELF IN FRONT OF A GROUP

Each child of a working parent may bring one (please keep it to one) book that is related to the theme for that week to share. Upon entering school, the book to be shared is put in the sharing box (to keep it safe). Children will have an opportunity to share during circle. It is helpful to talk about this book with your child before he or she shares (title, favorite page to share, what it is you like about this book or page, who gave it to them, where did they get it). A little preparation helps them feel more confident. Children are never forced to share.

Please bring an appropriate book that can be shared with children. No comics, cartoon or TV character books or religious text. Also, remember that you will be reading the book you bring in and you have about 10-15 minutes reading time.

13. WE END THE DAY CALMLY AND HAPPILY BY MENTIONING ALL OUR FRIENDS

At ending circle, we have sharing and sing songs. We sing a good-bye song and as their names are sung the children return their nametags and receive a sticker. The class is dismissed when we are finished singing to

everyone and everyone is back in the circle. If you are not a working parent please wait outside the classroom while the group activities are finishing. Because there are often other classes or activities in the room, all parents (except working parents) are asked to leave promptly with their children. It is the job of the teacher's assistant to read a story to the children of the art and snack parents while they finish their jobs. Watch for additional comments in the newsletter and on the bulletin board. I am open to any ideas or suggestions you may have that may help us improve our program.

14. HONOR THE CHILDREN'S CREATIONS BY TAKING THEM HOME

It is important that you take their artwork home every class day. Over 100 wonderful works of art are created each week and we need to see that they each receive a place of honor in every child's home. Please do not destroy the child's art, but instead make decisions about what to do with it after it has been displayed at home. This shows the child you value what they accomplish at school. Often the art goes along with our theme and it is a great conversation starter with our child about what they did at school today. I will also have a bag of plastic grocery store bags hanging on the end of the blackboard. Please help yourself to one for a picture that isn't quite dry.

15. CHILDREN MAY CHECK BOOKS OUT OF OUR LIBRARY

The bookshelves are full of wonderful books we have gained over the years as you all buy books from Scholastic book club and the others. Your child is welcome to check out books from school and share them with their family.

They may take 2 books per week. Please check out the books in the Black Notebook that is located on top of the bookshelves. Write your child's name, the date checked out and when you returned the book. More books may be checked out when others are returned.

16. SPECIAL DAYS ARE A GREAT WAY TO MAKE A CHILD FEEL LOVED

Every child will have a special day. You need to sign up for a day at the beginning of the school year. While we avoid sweets for snack, the parent may bring a special snack such as cupcakes, cookies or ice cream cups if desired by the child on his or her day. While it is not always possible, we welcome parents if they want to be with us on their child's

special day. The children will wear a special crown that day and also their friends may help to draw or write in their. *"It's Your Special Day"* Book. It will help if you can discuss with your child what is some of their favorite things as we will be asking her/him Favorite Questions to help us make their book.

17. WHAT TO DO ABOUT HEALTH ISSUES

Your child will not enjoy the preschool experience if they are not well and the possibility of making others ill is great. Please keep your child home if he or she:

- ✓ Has had a fever in the past 24 hours
- ✓ Has had a cold for less than four days,
- ✓ Has had a vomiting and or diarrhea in the past 24 hours
- ✓ Is fussy, cranky and acting like they do not feel well, even if no fever
- ✓ Has a dry hacking cough
- ✓ Is overtired

The child who has been ill or is vulnerable because of being overtired is the most likely to get even sicker. If I feel that a child is not feeling well, I will ask you to take him or her home. I appreciate your cooperation on this, as it is becoming quite a challenge to fight some of the virulent and contagious illnesses that used to be so mild. Please also keep in mind, that a sick adult is also to make arrangements to stay at home - make certain you know who to call to sub.

18. PORTFOLIOS

We will be collecting samples of the children's artwork, photos, anecdotal records and observations to compile into a book throughout the year. There will be a file folder for each child in a box in the class to collect these mementos.

Parents can help with this process so that we'll have great portfolios that really show how much the children have grown in a year.

19. FIRE /EARTHQUAKE DRILLS

We practice fire drills monthly and earthquake drills twice a year. The procedures and an evacuation plan are posted in the room by the door.

Fire Drill:

- ✓ Smoke Detector will be turned on.
- ✓ Teacher or another adult will call out "fire drill".

- ✓ Parents and children stop everything and line up at door.
- ✓ Head count is taken and compared to room count posted by door.
- ✓ Adult leads children out front door to the far side of the playground.

Earthquake Drill:

- ✓ Teacher or another adult will call out "earthquake drill"
- ✓ Adults and children will crawl under tables - head down touching knees and arms around head.
- ✓ Remain under table until advised to come out. Be calm and quiet.

20. WATER

Our water has been tested and passes with flying colors. We will be using the water from the sink for snack.

21. Parking

Please park on paved lower church parking.

22. Playground

Our playground is for children 2-5 years of age, and all children must be supervised by parent at all times. We have a Bicycle Helmet Policy for riding the tricycles and wagons. You need to bring your child's helmet to school whenever your child wants to ride on the tricycles or wagons.

23. Downstairs

The downstairs of our building is for supervised play directed by teachers only. **Shoes and socks** need to be taken off before playing on the climber.

24. RULES FOR PRESCHOOL

- RESPECT the property, ideas & bodies of others.
- WALKING feet keep us SAFE.
- INSIDE VOICES means everyone can be heard.
- We will learn to TAKE TURNS.
- Our hands are used to EXPLORE and EXPERIENCE.

• Everyone CLEANS

25. The Value of Play

By Miss Rona

I often hear parents say, “My child just wants to play all the time,” or, “my child spends all his/her time in the blocks/dramatic play area and doesn’t do anything else.” I wonder if parents realize the value of play and how wonderful it is to see children extend themselves and take risks in their play.

A long-running study of the effects of preschool programs has shown the benefits of a child-initiated, teacher-facilitated curriculum. The Direct Instruction curriculum which consisted of sequences of academic lessons and teacher-directed activities may seem like the surest path to school readiness and may show a temporary improvement in academic performance but it may be at the cost of a missed opportunity of long-term improvement in personal and social behavior. On the other hand, child-initiated learning activities seem to help children develop their social responsibility and interpersonal skills so that they become more personally and socially competent.

Playing is learning for children. What appears to adults as aimless pattering about with paints, sand, water and blocks, in activities centers with other children (socio-dramatic) or by themselves-helps preschoolers develop control of their bodies; investigate causes and effects, and follow-up on the innate human curiosity that is at the root of all high achievement. A good preschool program will permit children to explore their environment without fear of failure, without imposed adult expectations and adult learning priorities. This kind of curriculum encourages young children to develop a self-confidence and pleasure that provide the best possible motivation for formal schooling. Many educators around the country cannot say enough about the benefits of play for young children.

“Playtime just doesn’t get enough respect. Play gets overlooked. Society doesn’t value it. Play is fun but equally important, it can make kids smarter. Play benefits especially in terms of later development – especially when we look at creativity, flexibility and ability to cooperate. Kids who have had a great deal of play are more able to function socially, emotionally and physically as they move forward in school and

life. Parents who want smart kids should realize that rolling around in the dirt is just as important as scoring well on standardized testing.”

- Edgar Klugman, Professor of Education

Here are a few guidelines to help promote learning through play (child-initiated activities):

1. Don't hover over child.
2. Respect their uniqueness. Let them do it themselves.
3. Don't say messy. Allow children to express themselves in *their* way.
4. Honor each child's timetable for growth.
5. Do not model for children; allow opportunity for risk, to be different.
6. Give the child tinkering time, time to put things together and take it apart.
7. Let them be problem-solvers, negotiators.

Remember it's not a race for information, it's more a matter of who keeps going, who perseveres. If we want to prepare our children for a successful life, we need to give them a sense of self, balance and confidence.

“When I examine myself and my methods of thought, I came to the conclusion that the gift of fantasy has meant more to me than my talent or absorbing Positive knowledge.”

- Albert Einstein –

“Play is an essential function of the passage from immaturity to emotional maturity. Any individual without the opportunities for adequate play in early life will go on seeking them in the stuff of adult life.”

- Margaret

Lowenfield

Special Events for 2009-2010

October	Pumpkin Patch at Terry's Berries	3's and Mix Age, 10:00 Oct. 8 PreK, 12:30 Oct. 8
	Fall Walk at Wright Park – Oct. 29 –	Mix Age, 10:00 and PreK, 12:30
November	Metropolitan Market	Nov 17 – 3's, 10:00 Nov 18 – Mix Age. 10:00, PreK – 12:30
December 13	Dash Point Tree Lighting Sing along	All classes, Dec. 6 or
January	Ted Brown's Music Store	Jan 7, Mi Age – 10:00, PreK – 12:30? Jan 8, 3"s – 10:00?
	Tacoma Art Museum	Feb 1,3 or 4, Mix age – 10:30, PreK –12:00?
February	Brown's Pt Fire Station Visit at school	Feb 25 , Mix age – 10:00, PreK – 12:30? Feb 26, 3's, 10:00?
March	City Bus Ride	March 18, 19?
April	Nature Center	April 8, Mix age 10:00, PreK – 12:30?
	Parrot Lady Visit	Week of 19 th ?
	Beach Day	Week of the 26 th change to afternoon Class times due to high tide.
May	Family Night All School Picnic	May 6 at Gym, 7:00 pm May 17 at Palisades Park, 10:00-3:00

2009-2010 Curriculum Themes

Our classroom environment is rich and stimulating, designed to promote exploration by all of our children. A theme is used to help design learning experiences, however I try to be flexible and offer a variety of activities that are determined by the children's interest and opportunities that may arise.

MONTH	THEMES
September	Routines and Rules, All About Me
October	Fall, Weather, The Five Senses
November	The Five Senses, Harvest, Thankfulness and Family
December	Winter Celebrations around the World
January	Rhythm Band, Music, Dinosaurs, Chinese New Year's
February	Shapes, Addresses, Community Helpers
March	Japanese Culture, Transportation
April	Insects, Recycle, Rain Forest
May	Seashore, Summer, Hawaiiana