

January 2007

TCS Times

*The Children's School/ 208-343-6840
Nicole Shadduck--editor*

From the Director

By Cindy Finch

Individual children matter in TCS classrooms. A burst of development or understanding in one child can influence an entire classroom. An experience at home can shape and redirect curriculum in a positive way. Excitement in one child about a new skill or idea can inspire others to try something new or think about something differently.

After the recent holiday break, teacher after teacher talked, with respect and amazement, about how children returned to school. Their comments can be sorted into two categories. The first is about children who made a developmental leap in, for example, writing or socially connecting or showing independence in a self-help skill. The second is about children who had some sort of experience, from football (!) to skiing to travels, that, when shared, captured the interests of other children. As one teacher put it, "My teacher plans are on the counter, but children come through the door with so much to share and process within their peer group that I am adapting my plans on the spot every day."

If this doesn't sound like school the way you know it—it may not be. I certainly don't remember being as excited about school, as TCS children appear to be on a daily basis. I don't remember my ideas or my experiences influencing class discussions, curriculum, and coursework—until, maybe, college classes at a liberal arts college.

So, why structure classes for young children this way? Is excitement enough? Are they learning all they should be—given how important the early childhood years are in education? Here's what I think—children can learn in different ways. We can tell them what they need to know, have them repeat it back, and call it learned. We can isolate every skill, break them into small pieces, take children through sequential instruction, and call it learned. Certainly every educational setting has some of that, and TCS is no exception. However, when we assess children's experiences, excitement, and interests to help in building curriculum we are connecting children to the process of learning in a much more personal and meaningful way. And when children—or any of us for that matter—are connected to learning in personal and meaningful ways we are feeding not only intellectual growth, but growth of the whole person: physical, emotional, social, creative, and cognitive. When the

knowing part of learning is combined with feeling or experiencing in some way, it becomes so much powerful and enduring.

It is significant to me that growth and understanding for some children was noticeable after a break in our routine. What a good reminder that sometimes the best ideas or problem solving happens, for me, in the middle of the night or on an airplane ride alone—time when pressures and immediacy are absent. How hard it has become for schools and families, sometimes, to give children time to, as another teacher said, “. . . sit back and consolidate what they’ve experienced and then take that next step.” If we believe that learning happens through a combination of “instruction” (experiences planned by teachers/parents) and development (the internal process of maturing, making sense of experiences, coming to understand differently) then teachers plan the school day with that in mind, schools plan the school year considering that, and families shape non-school times (the rest of each 24 hours, 7 days, and 12 months) with an eye on the whole picture of a child’s life.

Parents for TCS News

By Lisa Wirtanen

What a great group of parents we have working on P-TCS for the school! Our most recent meeting was productive and fun. Please feel free to join us at these meetings; there are lots of small jobs for parents to take on, especially in the planning of the MARCH 10 PARTY!

Speaking of the party, this year we are taking a new approach. Rather than needing parent volunteers to work like dawgs up until, and all evening at the event, we have been GENEROUSLY granted an event coordinator from the Woodley family, in the All Days. THANK YOU VERY MUCH!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! This fantastic opportunity will assist us in planning and carrying out the event. In addition, our venue has changed. We will hold the fundraiser PARTY at Crane Creek Country Club, where everything will be set up, taken down, and catered FOR US! PLUS there will be a DJ! It is for these extra accoutrements that P-TCS has made the difficult decision to charge more for the party, than in previous years. The cost will be \$40.00 per person. HOWEVER, IF this cost prohibits ANYONE from attending this year-end bash, PLEASE just contact Cindy Finch privately. She has the authority to make arrangements with families so they are able to attend.

And now for news of the COOKBOOK. We are SO ready to receive your favorite recipes to add to our collection. Thank you to all of the 25 families who have contributed. To date, we need to DOUBLE the number of families contributing. Just imagine the look on your mother’s face when she receives the TCS cookbook, and turns to page 20. There is a quote from your child and her favorite pancake recipe!!! So please help us out, and have some fun

**CONFLICT
RESOLUTION PARENT
EDUCATION WILL
CONTINUE (BY
POPULAR DEMAND!)**

SAVE THESE DATES!

**FEBRUARY 15th*

**MARCH 1st*

**MARCH 15th*

**MARCH 22nd*

*12:00-1:00 at the Smith
House
Sign up in the Front Hall*

with food! Send your recipes to katiewalther@cableone.net or to karendxu@msn.com RIGHT AWAY. THANK YOU IN ADVANCE!

And speaking of cooking, please join us for a **Family Cooking Demo with John Berryhill**. It will be held on Tuesday, February 27 6:30 pm. Join other TCS parents for an evening without the children at Berryhill and Co. Pick up great ideas for healthful and easy family meals while you enjoy a glass of wine and great food! This event is adults only. No childcare provided. Demonstration food is provided and should be sufficient for dinner. You may also order off the menu and order drinks at your own cost. Continue to watch for more information in your mailboxes and around the school.

And Finally, P-TCS meeting dates and times have changed. The meetings will be held the FIRST FRIDAY of every month from 1:30-3:00 PM. Location is 1902 W. Washington Street, unless otherwise noted. Phone 724-4903 for directions or if you have questions. We hope you will join us!

Thank you to ALL parents of The Children's School, you really do rock!

Accreditation News

By Cindy Finch

Assessment is coming together at TCS and we want to tell you about it. Look for information from teachers at the winter conferences (we are preparing an information sheet) and look for a display in the school that will give you in depth information on the "how, why, and when" of assessment of children at TCS.

Medication reminder: if you ask that we give your child *non-prescription medications* on occasion, we need your signature giving us permission to medicate your child and dose instructions, including time of last dose. In addition, we need the medication left at school in the original packaging so that we may verify dosage information for your child. If the packaging does not indicate a dose for your child's age, we will need written, faxed, or telephoned dosage information from your child's physician. *Prescription medications* require that we have your written permission and instructions, as well as medication in the original container with doctor instructions, name of medication, and expiration date printed on it. We have locked storage areas in the school for medications, so please take medications to the office to facilitate communication, recordkeeping, and safe storage. Thanks for helping us meet local and national standards in this area.

We have a new Primary Extended Day teaching schedule this semester.

Mark will be teaching on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday (with thanks to Lisa Wirtanen for teaching Tuesday and Thursday while Mark finishes the 4-5-6s class). David will teach Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.

Please note that we have lots of room for children on Wednesday whose families choose to use this "after school" program on a regular or occasional basis.

We have been running quite full in this program and were even turning families away at times. The change from one to two teachers on Wednesday will help us accommodate more students than on other days.

Sign up in the office for this class.

Thanks to ...

By Cindy Finch

Karen Fournier for planning a successful bake sale. Parents for TCS raised \$1,000. Thanks to all the bakers—everything was beautiful and scrumptious looking.

Bonnie Noonan (Board member and alumni parent), Robin Salathe (alumni parent), and Mary Griffin (3-4s teacher) who alerted me on a recent weekend about graffiti on the building. Thanks to Ken Smith (Cindy's husband and alumni parent) and Bonnie, we were able to paint over the offending marks before we opened on Monday morning. By the way, you 83702 families . . . if you ever see any signs of vandalism on the school grounds, please feel free to call me at home so that, whenever possible, we can take care of the situation quickly and during non-school hours.

Cold or Flu?

Children get 8-10 colds per year.

Here are some general guidelines to help you decide what actions to take with your child.

Flu Symptoms—

Symptoms come on quickly and consist of a fever, body aches, dry cough, and extreme tiredness.

Cold Symptoms—

Symptoms are less severe and people experience a stuffy nose, productive cough, slight tiredness and limited body aches.

Source:

www.flufacts.com

Please take some time to acquaint yourself with our illness policy here at TCS. It is posted in the front hall.

Enrollment Notes

By Cindy Finch

I know that many families are beginning to consider next year's class or school placement. Here are a few things that we (the TCS faculty and administration) want you to know and consider as we enter this season of decision-making about school enrollment for the 2007-2008 school year.

*Process of Re-Enrollment—*We are preparing enrollment materials now. On January 30th these materials will be mailed to the homes of current families. Enclosed in these materials will be an intention form for you to return to the school office by February 27th indicating your class choice for the upcoming school year. In March we secure enrollment with a contract (see your annual calendar for specific contract dates this spring).

*What should I do between January 30 and February 27 to help me make a decision—*We have several steps we hope you will take during this deciding month. First of all, conference with your child's current teacher on our early February parent-teacher conference days. We want to hear from you about what you are thinking about for the upcoming year, and we want to share with you our recommendation for your child's next class based on our experiences with your child in his/her current class. Second, observe in classes available in the school if do not have first hand information about next year's classes. Schedule observations in the office. Third, attend the Open House on February 15th. This will be another opportunity to see classrooms and the best time to talk with this year's teachers about the classes they teach. Fourth, schedule some time with Cindy (or Andrea) to talk about next year. We anticipate that, at times, families will want to discuss their child and family

individually, and we enjoy the opportunity to talk with you about your specific needs.

What should I be doing now if I need tuition assistance—Our tuition assistance application process is managed by the National Association for Independent Schools. Applications are online and can be accessed at www.nais.org/financialaid/sss. Our school code is #4112. A small TCS committee who confidentially reviews our school's NAIS reports makes final decisions about awards. Families wanting to be considered for tuition assistance for the 2007-2008 school year should apply by February 12 so that the committee has the information needed for timely decisions.

How are enrollment decisions made by the school if too many people want one class or if I have a younger child I want to enroll—Our first commitment in enrollment is to current students whose families want to keep them in the school. If too many families request one class Cindy will communicate with families individually and/or collectively. In most cases another option in the school will be available. In some cases the school will take steps to adapt to enrollment needs of current families. We will know if either of these options is necessary after February 27th, when all the current student intention forms are in the office.

After current students we offer enrollment to siblings of current students, then alumni families, and, finally, we go to the waiting list to fill classes. Within each grouping, including current students, we use original application date to the school to make decisions about enrollment opportunities.

When will I know which teacher my child will have next year—Teachers and Cindy are beginning the process of planning for next year. This process will continue over the next several months until a formal plan is posted later this spring (at least by April 30th) for the upcoming school year. It is most helpful to consider the schedule and age make-up of the class, as well as continuity of positive peer relationships, in thinking about class placement for the upcoming school year. It may be helpful to remember that TCS has, for the past 6 years, enjoyed a high level of teacher consistency. Early indications are that this trend will continue in the upcoming school year.

When and how should I talk with my children about next year—Since we offer mixed-age classrooms, not all children face transitions each school year. However, many of our families will ponder continuity or change for their child's education in the upcoming school year. We think the following guidelines can be helpful.

*Remember that next year's placement is a long way away for your child—they still have over 3 months in their current class and all summer.

*Young children live in the here and now.

*Assure children that they have a long time to be here (in this year's class) with their friends and teachers.

*It is often best not to share your decision-making discussions about next year with children because school and class transitions are adult

**Good News for
Parents of Children
Enrolled in Early
Childhood Programs!**

In general . . . "good early [early childhood education] experiences can set in motion a chain of events that pervades the child's life through high school and beyond, increasing the quality of his/her life experiences along the way."

Source:
(School Improvement
Research Series,
www.nwrel.org/scpd/sirs/3/topsyn3.html)

decisions.

Final note—We know that families talk with each other during this season of enrollment about their experiences and hopes concerning their children's education. Family to family communication is one of the most enduring ways that families learn about TCS and various classes, and we appreciate the informal marketing that occurs on our behalf everyday. That said, we also think it is valuable for families to talk with school personnel and observe around the school—with your individual child in mind—to ensure a good fit for your child and your family in the upcoming school year. We are committed to good communication with you during enrollment and everyday at TCS, so please bring your questions and concerns to the office whenever possible so that we may answer you directly or help you find answers to your questions.

Why Outdoor Play Matters!

*Here are some reasons—
Children's pretend play
outdoors in natural
settings tends to be more
complex/therapeutic than
indoors.*

*Play and interaction with
the natural environment
and materials helps
develop cognitive, social,
and emotional skills.*

*Nature education is crucial
for preserving the culture,
community, learning,
healthy being, and world
habitat.*

*Source:
ChildCareExchange.com*

Did your child make a 'crazy clothespin decoration' for our windowbox?

*Bring it in if your child is
able to part with it. For
more information, look for
signs in the front hall.*

2-3s News

By Tonya Palsulich

The 2-3s class is the very first school experience for our students. They arrived in September wide-eyed and curious. What is this place called "school" like? The children began to explore. They liked playing with the playdough and painting at the easel. Several of them enjoyed putting puzzles together. Others spent time playing with the pretend food and dishes in the house area.

The children didn't know each other's names and had limited interaction. Teachers called each child by name and we sang songs like "Who is Sitting Next To You?" and "The More We Get Together". Gradually, the children learned the names of their classmates. The playdough table began to be a social gathering place where children liked pounding and rolling the playdough together. They started asking each other for lumps of playdough. One or two children would be busily setting out food and dishes in the house area. Within minutes, five or six kids would be over deciding what to "cook". Children also began to ask to paint beside another child at the easel, giggling as they painted together.

We are halfway through the school year. At this point if a child is not at school, everyone notices. They say things like, "My friend is not here today." They specifically mention the name of the friend and wonder if the friend is ill or just having a "home day". The playdough table is still a popular place. Children often talk together about what they are making. Those who painted side-by-side at the easel now enjoy fingerpainting at the table or playing in shaving cream together. The house area play has expanded from playing with the dishes and food to dressing up in an array of vests, shoes, dresses, necklaces and sunglasses. They also rock the baby dolls, dress them, feed them and put them to bed. It is amazing to see so much growth in only five months. Just imagine what Spring will bring!

The Children's School

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We're on the Web!
See us at:
www.tcsboise.org

Save the Dates!

February 27th –Cooking Demo with John Berryhill

March 10th—Spring Fundraiser

Parent Evenings planned by Parents for TCS

The Fiesta Bowl

By A., B., and S. (students in Primes Class)

On New Year's Day the Fiesta Bowl happened. The Fiesta Bowl is a bowl game played in the top ten for college football. The Broncos played the Sooners in Phoenix, Arizona. It was very exciting. The first half of the game the Sooners couldn't score. The Broncos were first beating the Sooners, 14-0, then the Sooners tied the game. They went to overtime. On the Sooners first try, they go a touchdown (then it was 42-35). The Sooners were in the lead. Then the Broncos got the ball, got a touchdown to make it 42-41. They did a fake play next (called the Statue of Liberty) and went for two points. They got the two points and won the game!!!

Ian Johnson, the star running back for the Broncos, proposed to his girlfriend Chrissy (who is the head cheerleader for the Broncos).

Jared Zabransky got the MVP-offense. Marty Tadman got MVP-defense.

The Broncos finished with 13-0 this year!!

Here's what happened when some Broncos came to visit the Primes and All Days!

Photos removed to protect children's privacy.

Photos removed to protect children's privacy.

Important Dates...

*Tuesday, January 30th, Enrollment information for 07-08 school year mailed. Please see enrollment article for information regarding financial assistance.

*Friday, February 2nd, Parents for TCS meeting, please see P-TCS news article for more information about meetings.

*Wednesday, February 7th, **No 2-3s, 3-4s, 3-4-5s, 4-5s, 4-5-6s classes. Primes 12:00 release. Prearranged Primary Child Care and All Day Class open.** Parent-Teacher Conference Preparation

*Thursday-Friday, February 8-9, Parent-Teacher Conferences, **Prearranged Primary Child Care and All Day Class Open.**

*Monday, February 12th, **No 3-4-5s**, Parent-Teacher Conferences

*Thursday, February 15th, Open House and "Look Ahead to Next Year" Evening

*Monday, February 19th, Presidents' Day Holiday, **SCHOOL CLOSED**

*Tuesday, February 27th, Intention Forms Due in Office by 1:00 PM. Contracts prepared and mailed by March 6th. Tuition assistance decisions finalized.