

October 2007

# TCS Times

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

## **From the Director**

By Cindy Finch

October at The Children's School marks a time of settling—most children and families have had a month in classes and have developed a sense of routine about the school days, the parent-toddler families arrive to begin their program year, and the leaves on our North End trees begin to change colors and fall into the playyard as a beautiful reminder of the change of seasons. School isn't starting anymore—its here and we're all hunkering down to face whatever the school year brings.

If you are a returning family you know that one thing we anticipate over this school year is an assessment of our accreditation status. If you are new you might want to know that this school community—families, board, and, most especially, faculty and staff—have spent the past school year plus a few more months getting ready and anticipating the culmination of this process. Over the next two months we will have a site visit from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)—may their quick but thorough observations and assessments support our own perceptions and validate the preparations we've made.

As I observe in classrooms and talk with teachers I am aware of how rich children's experiences are during this settling period—already. Learning classmate's names, letting new adults help you, speaking up for yourself in a group, creating something from blocks, negotiating for a chance to use one certain playdough tool, trying to spell a word that is just the one you need to get the idea down on paper, and taking on a new physical challenge on the playyard—each of these experiences represent significant school events that we celebrate for your children.

In many cases, the tasks of a child at school and those at home are different, and often they bring differing responses from adults. Does it make sense to you when you see a teacher responding to your child in a way different from your own response? All of us respect the parent-child relationship and never consider that we are replacing you or competing with you in our interactions with your child. Young children need the absolutely unwavering love that they experience from parents—they need to experience that they are "the best in the west" (as I occasionally referred to my own children when they were much younger) in the eyes of their parents. This total, under-the-skin love that

parents hold for their children is deep, enduring, protective, and very different from teaching.

A teacher can watch and listen with an objective eye and ear while a child moves into the position at the top of the fire pole or asks to be lifted into a climbing tree or struggles to lift a hollow block or can't quite get the pedal to move on a trike. If you can't be objective about these situations with your child, please don't feel alone. No parent wants his/her child to struggle when we can help with a push, a hint, or a lift. A teacher will give a child some verbal instruction, a helpful hint, a description of what seems to work well, or a reminder that "someday you'll be able to do that when your body is ready." We hold a deep understanding, as teachers, that if a child can achieve some of these challenges at a more individualized, developmental pace, the sense of accomplishment will be internal, sincere, and deep, and the child will be safer in taking on the challenge from beginning to end. Development has so much to do with strength and balance—not our adult strength and balance, but helping a young child find it for herself or himself.

In about a month we have parent-teacher conferences. Collect your questions for teachers and ask them. Teachers don't mind talking about why they do what they do—really. And we will learn from you too—as we get to know your child through your eyes, our teaching practices will become even more intentional and specific.

Enjoy these settling months. Read about holiday practices later in this issue, establish your own pace as a family during the winter months ahead, feel welcomed and included as a family at TCS, and join us in appreciating your child's school experience—each of us with our own perspective and our own unique ways of relating to and understanding your children. It may look different at times, but it all fits together in a way that benefits children. And that's what matters most of all.

## 4-5s News: Literacy and Learning

By Betsy Robinson

We feel privileged to work at The Children's School where we feel free and are encouraged to follow the best developmentally appropriate practice for optimal growth in many areas of your child development in the 4-5s class. We believe the best way to stimulate learning for this age is through integrated learning. This means that we are always integrating literacy and math into our day in a manner that is meaningful for your child. We want to share a few ways that we are able to put literacy learning practices into our day in our class.

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*We are still working to fill the last few openings in the 4-5-6s. If you know any families of kindergarten or older 4 year old (5 by February 28, 2008) children who may be ready for a transition to TCS, please send them our way. We always appreciate it when you send your work colleagues, neighbors, or friends our way—your recommendation is our very best advertising. Thanks.*

Some of the best practices for language and literacy development include, face-to-face communication, and repetition and expansion of conversations. Every day at school we have some time to talk to children about their world and what they experience. This time starts when we greet the children and goes throughout the day during meeting time, play time, and snack. We ask open-ended questions and expand on their answers to include the child talking as well as the other children in the dialogue. This listening and reflecting is important as expansion in language development. These conversations are an important part of our day with the 4-5s

We have many opportunities to expand on conversations with the 4-5s during conflicts in play. It is developmentally important stage for this age is to practice resolving conflicts and problem solve verbally. Learning to express needs and wants to others (both adults and children) is an important task as children learn to switch from physical control to trying to control their world with words.

We also practice dialogic reading when we talk to children about the book we are reading, ask them to anticipate what comes next, and how the characters feel about what is happening in the story. As the story progresses children are asked to anticipate what happens next based upon what we read previously. In many stories there are sentences repeated in the story that the children can anticipate and chant with us. We have been reading stories with an emphasis on rhyming words and compare and contrast various versions of favorite stories. The ability to hear and create rhymes is an important skill in reading readiness. More opportunities to practice literacy at meeting times include reading the surprise partner names, beginning letters and sounds of everyone's name for turns, and share bag time with questions from friends. We also encourage self-created books with both illustrations and words from the children. The children then have an opportunity to read these books during our meeting times.

We also have an opportunity for creative and self-motivated play every day in our classroom. This is true learning through experience. Children try out materials and experiences and manipulate them in new ways. We have silk scarves in our classroom that are used for dress up, capes and skirts, blankets for picnics and babies, and camping. Lately the children are building homes out of blocks for the insects. They are also creating a hospital for the sick insects to take care of them. This is using what they know and expanding on that knowledge in a way that is meaningful for the child. We feel that this is the best way to teach a child to learn. To construct their world, ask questions and try out various solutions.

We hope that as the year continues you will have an opportunity to come and share this rich world with your children. Please don't hesitate to ask us any questions about your child's day.

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*We wish the very best  
to A. S.,  
4-5s class, and her  
parents Brad and  
Johanna as they move  
to Portland this month.  
We were glad to have  
you here and get to  
know you, if only for a  
few weeks.*

## Faculty Biographies: Parent/Toddler Class

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*While we welcome you and support you hanging out on our playyards before, between, and after classes, if you end up in an area where there is a class using the playyard please move to another area. We consider playyard times for children to be as valuable as classroom time. Each class has an assigned time to be on the playyard—just those children and teachers—and it is our anticipation that much of the work (social relationships, problem solving, sharing play spaces, materials, and ideas) of the classroom will continue outdoors. Thank you for giving priority to classes when choosing a play area for you and your child.*



### **Julie Gill - 2-3s Teacher and Parent/Toddler Program Teacher**

Julie is beginning her 15th year teaching at TCS. She has taught in the Parent-Toddler class, Young 3s, 3-4s, 4-5s, All Days, and Extended Day Primary program. Before teaching at TCS, Julie was a teacher at Boise Head Start. She has two children, a current TCS student and a TCS alum. Julie has her CDA, and has studied Elementary Education at BSU and Liberal Arts at Albertson College. She lives with her husband, Al, her two children, and her dog Cinnamon. Julie enjoys spending her time with her children, gardening, swimming and playing in the yard.

### **Melissa Bandy - Parent/Toddler Program Discussion Facilitator**

Melissa Bandy has been in the field of education for over ten years. Melissa is currently conducting professional development trainings and symposiums in the valley as well as nationally. In addition, Melissa is teaching at Boise State University as an adjunct faculty member in the Early Childhood Studies Department. Melissa's experience working with young children includes teaching five through eight-year-olds in a multi-age classroom at the Children School of Boise, as well as owned her own business running and infant and toddler development program. Melissa is also a past Children School Parent. Melissa earned her Bachelor of Arts degree and her Masters degree in Elementary Education with an emphasis in Early Childhood Education/ Special Education from Boise State University. Her area of interest is infant

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and toddler mental health and early brain research. Melissa is married with three boys. In addition to playing with her family, Melissa loves running, hiking, biking and camping.

### **Sarah O'Dell - Parent/Toddler Program Teacher**

Sarah is returning to TCS after 3 years at home with her daughters. Sarah has been involved in the Early Childhood field for 11 years. Before teaching at TCS, she taught all day 3-4-5s and toddlers at a local NAEYC school, where she also participated in the Children and Conflict project as a community participant. At TCS, Sarah has taught extended day Primes, summer Primes, and 3-4-5s. She has a CDA and has studied Elementary Education at BSU. Sarah is excited to return to TCS as a teacher and now as a parent.

Some of our oldest and youngest working on math.

Both classes are working on patterning.

Photos removed to protect children's privacy.

## **Faculty Biographies: Consultant Teachers**

### **Shelley McCarl-Art Consultant Teacher**

Shelley began teaching at The Children's School in 2000. She and her husband Bob, who teaches cultural anthropology at BSU, and their two children, have lived in Boise for over 20 years. Shelley received her BFA at the University of South Carolina, and previously worked in graphic design and packaging design. She also teaches art to children and adults through the Boise City Parks & Recreation Community Center. In addition to teaching art, Shelley paints in pastel and oil, and her work has been included in a number of national and international shows and publications. Currently, she has two paintings in the Pastel Society of the Northern Rockies Annual Show in Idaho Falls, and she recently returned from New York City, where her work was displayed in the annual Pastel Society of America show.

### **Lilia Byrd—Spanish Consulting Teacher**

Lilia was born in Texas and raised in Nampa. She has a BA in Spanish and has had the pleasure of teaching in Boise for over 20 years and at TCS since 2002. She believes that learning languages is important for all of us, especially

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***Congratulations, Shelley!***

*One of Shelley's pastel paintings is in the Pastel Society Of America Show in New York, and it won the Pastel Society of New Mexico award. She also has an oil painting in the national parks show, "Paint America's Paint the Parks."*

our children. Learning a second language helps us appreciate and respect our cultural differences. Being bilingual or multilingual allows us to expand our social awareness and prepares us for working and living with people from diverse backgrounds. Her focus has been to help students develop conversational Spanish skills much the same way as most of them have learned their first language. Usually when learning a language we learn to speak it, before we learn to read and write it. We'll spend a lot of time using the language and having fun learning about different cultures that use Spanish as their first language. She is excited to have the opportunity to teach your children and meet you, their parents.

#### **Jodeen Revere—Creative Movement Consulting Teacher**

Jodeen started teaching Creative Movement at TCS in 2002. Her class is a blend of yoga, dance, and dramatic games, all passions of hers. She is an actress who has worked with Boise Contemporary Theater, Idaho Theater for Youth and Open Door Theater. She teaches drama and story theater classes at Idaho Shakespeare Drama School. She has studied yoga for 10 years and teaches Vinyasa Flow yoga to adults as well as a class for teens at The Fulton Street Theater. She has been an assistant teacher in the Primes, Young 3s, and Parent-Toddler Program, and a substitute in every class in the school. Her daughter is a TCS alum. Jodeen loves yoga, cats, really funny people, books, film, artistic endeavors of all kinds, food, walking, gardening, and inclement weather.

#### **Will Martin—Music Consulting Teacher**

Will has been singing and teaching most of his life and has shared his talents with TCS since 2003. He earned a B.A. in Vocal Performance at the University of California at Santa Cruz, where he sang title roles in the very early days of the UCSC Opera Theater. Will earned his Master's degree in Music Education from the University of Oregon, and has taught in public schools in Oregon and Washington, mostly as an Elementary General Music teacher. Will was a conductor with the Oregon Children's Choir for 12 years, where he worked at various times with children from Kindergarten through high school age. Over the years, Will has greatly enjoyed collaborating with many teachers on a wide variety of musical and theater projects and performances, and has done many classroom visits and presentations and school assemblies as well. Will has also taught music workshops for Head Start teachers, and has a level one Orff-Schulwerk certificate.

Will is married to Susan Martin, a professor of Education at BSU. They have two grown children, and three small grandchildren. Will tries to go to California as often as he can. Susan and Will served in the Peace Corps in 1995-1996, helping train English teachers in the Philippines. They created a very successful unit on "Teaching English Through Music and Song," and taught at workshops throughout the country. Will loves baseball, hiking, traveling, and swimming. You can often find him at work in his yard, and especially in his vegetable garden. He cannot resist fresh tomatoes, carrots, or peppers, hot and/or sweet! Will loves working with the teachers at The Children's School, and greatly appreciates the opportunity to teach, learn from, and share Music with your children.

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## Director's Corner

By Cindy Finch

### Work Day Notes

Wonder what a work day at TCS means? It certainly means getting things done—and if you like to putter around with little and big projects, this is a not-to-miss day for you. But, more importantly, a work day provides an opportunity to get to know other families in the school. Many good, enduring relationships among parents have started while working on activities together.

Here's a partial list (I keep one going all the time!) of the projects we'll be working on together on the October 20<sup>th</sup> work day:

- Re-landscape the walnut tree removal area/ rototil area
- Replace tape in the climbing trees
- Replace strips to prevent slipping on the sideyard climber
- Trim 9<sup>th</sup> Street bushes
- Reorganize the garage (again!?! Rich and Kim R. may be saying)
- Winterize the playyard
- Touch-up exterior paint
- Stain climbers
- Tighten bolts on climbers, if needed
- Clean all classroom blocks with Murphy's Wood Soap (we could use a couple of parents from each classroom for this one)

Join me in hoping for good weather! Look for more information from Anne G. and Lacy M., P-TCS Facility co-chairs, as the date gets closer.

### NAEYC Conference: Who's Attending?

Next month, The Children's School will send four faculty/staff to Chicago to the NAEYC annual conference: Cindy Finch, Director, and Lisa Wirtanen, 3-4-5s Teacher, applied and were accepted to present a 90 minute session titled "Why Relationships Matter: How Conflict Resolution is Central to Appropriate Practice, Effective Guidance, and Satisfying Experiences in Early Childhood Classrooms for Both Children and Teachers"; also attending will be Susan Gardner, Primes Teacher, and Mark Zimmermann, 4-5-6s Teacher. Susan and Mark will be attending with funds they have accumulated in their individual professional development accounts funded by P-TCS at Fall Carnivals. (Thank you P-TCS for making this possible for teachers this year... and others.) Lisa will attend with funds from the sale of the Children and Conflict materials and her TCS individual professional development account, and Cindy will be attending through the administrative professional development funds she has available to her as school director. Look for some insights in a future TCS

**Follow-up: From the Director, TCS Times May 2007**

*"There are only a fixed number of hours that young babies are awake and alert. If the 'alert time' is spent in front of DVDs and TV, instead of with people speaking in 'parentese'—that melodic speech we use with little ones—the babies are not getting the same linguistic experience. . . . Parents and caretakers are the baby's first and best teachers. They instinctively adjust their speech, eye gaze and social signals to support language acquisition. Watching attention-getting DVDs and TV may not be an even swap for warm social human interaction at this age. Old kids may be different, but the youngest babies seem to learn language best from people."*

*Andrew Meltzoff  
University of  
Washington  
August 2007*

Times from these TCS faculty/staff about their experience at the biggest and best national early childhood conference.

## Did you know?

Nine percent of our student population's families applied for tuition assistance for the 2007-2008 school year. Of those applicants, 6 children (about 5% of our student population) are enrolled in classes this year after their family's acceptance of a tuition assistance award. These funds were raised at the 2006 Parents for TCS Spring Fundraiser. Funds raised at the 2007 P-TCS Spring Fundraiser will be awarded to family applicants for the 2008-2009 school year. Thank you, P-TCS, for all your hard work to make these funds available to tuition assistance. And, to the families who enrolled after a tuition assistance award—thank you for applying for assistance and giving us a chance to be a part of your child's education. We value that opportunity.

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### SAVE THE DATE

**Saturday, March 8<sup>th</sup>**

*TCS Annual Spring  
Fundraiser*

*More information to  
come!*

### ***Why do we ask those personal questions on the school update form?***

Here's one reason: "Almost every aspect of child rearing—including feeding, diapering, and toilet training—is influenced by cultural beliefs and values. How we talk to young children, touch them, bathe them, dress them, and see to their napping needs are all cultural behaviors. Over time, children learn who they are and what to do through these experiences—absorbing a sense of their routines, traditions, languages, cultures, and national or racial identities. . . . Some people fear that by affirming children's identities in terms of home cultures and traditions, we may be promoting separatism. That is not the case. The more that children have a solid grounding and understanding about who they are and where they came from, the more they learn to move with grace and confidence among communities different from their own, and the closer we get to building a world of respect, curiosity, sharing, and humanity." *From Bank Street's Early Childhood Professional's Newsflash, Summer 2007*

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### **TCS School Carnival**

**Saturday, October  
13<sup>th</sup>, 3:00-6:00**

*We'll see you there!*

## **TCS Fall Carnival**

By Jane Lambie

The Fall Carnival is this weekend!!!! Bring the whole family and join the fun and festivities!!!!

We would like to say thank you to all the families that have helped out with donating their time, supplies for the games and activities, baked goods and

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## The Children's School

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We're on the Web!  
See us at:  
[www.tcsboise.org](http://www.tcsboise.org)

items for the raffles/silent auction. We really appreciate all the effort that you have put in.

We are still looking for volunteers for some of the games (hint-hint: The Candy Walk), the registration table, working at the barbeque and a few other open spots that we really need to fill in. It only takes an hour of your time. Please take a moment and sign your name up in the hallway.

Invitations went out last week and if you sign up early, you save \$3.00.

Raffle tickets are up for sale. They are \$1 a ticket or 6 for \$5.00.

If you would like to donate a baked good or something for the raffle, please contact Nancy C.

If you have any other questions, please contact Jane L. or Christine P.

*Editor's note—A big thanks in advance for all of your support. Your work allows us to attend conferences, local and national, university classes, and a variety of other professional opportunities at no or reduced out-of-pocket costs to us. It really makes a difference to TCS teachers and your children,*  
--Nicole

## Important Dates

- \*Tuesday, October 9<sup>th</sup>, P-TCS meeting, Kira P.'s house
- \*Thursday, October 11<sup>th</sup>, 3-4-5s Class Lunch Program begins (enroll in the office if you plan for your child to participate)
- \*Saturday, October 13<sup>th</sup>, SCHOOL CARNIVAL 3:00-6:00
- \*Saturday, October 20<sup>th</sup>, Fall Work Day 10:00-2:00
- \*Friday, October 26<sup>th</sup>, Conference Preparation, **NO 3-4-5s and 4-5-6s CLASSES**
- \*Wednesday, October 31<sup>st</sup>, Conference Preparation and Parent-Teacher Conferences for 3-4-5s and 4-5-6s, **NO 2-3s, 3-4s, 4-5s, 3-4-5s, 4-5-6s, Primes closed at NOON, ONLY ALL DAYS AND PRE-ARRANGED CHILDCARE OPEN**
- \*Thursday-Friday, November 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup>, Parent-Teacher Conferences, **ONLY ALL DAYS AND PREARRANGED CHILDCARE OPEN**
- \*Wednesday-Friday, November 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>, NAEYC Conference, Chicago, Professional Development for Teachers
- \*Tuesday, November 13<sup>th</sup>, P-TCS meeting, 1:30-3:00, Elaine D.'s house
- \*Wednesday, November 14<sup>th</sup>, The Learning Express Fundraiser

## Holidays with Young Children, part 1

By Cindy Finch

Many families begin to consider the role of special events, celebrations, and holidays in children's lives this time of year. Here are some thoughts about Halloween, our school approach to holidays, and some ideas for creating meaning with children around holiday celebrations.

### Halloween at school

It may appear that we minimize celebrations and holidays in our classrooms. However, we have talked as a staff about the insertion of Halloween into classroom activities and have determined that many aspects of this time of year enrich children's experiences at school. For example, pumpkins are prevalent in stores and gardens, reflect a real harvest going on in our community, and can be made into both food and decorations in the classroom. Instead of bringing many commercially produced things into the classroom, children begin to create masks or costume pieces and wall/window decorations as part of their day at school and as a way to play with the powerful emotions that may occur during holiday seasons. Some classes will do special things with children around this and other holidays; other classes will have regular days for children as a way to counteract the excitement outside the school walls that children are experiencing. In both cases, teacher's decisions about daily classroom experiences will reflect their understanding of the individual children and families involved in the class.

All of our decisions about what to do in the classroom around holidays are filtered through the school framework. TCS classroom experiences are planned:

- \*to nurture and stimulate thinking;
- \*to accommodate and support children's development; and,
- \*to provide a comfortable, reliable, and predictable environment to help children clarify, order, and make sense of the world.

### Halloween at home

What do you know about your child and his/her enjoyment of this Halloween season? For some children Halloween is the best holiday of the whole year. It involves pretending and dressing-up—activities young children are drawn to in daily life. It involves some playing around with scary ideas. Most young children have some fears. For some children playing with fear makes it more manageable and feels good. For others it is easy to go too far with scary images, stories, and sounds. Either response is reasonable and appropriate in young children. Many children will be uncertain about whether the scary images, sounds, and stories so prevalent this time of year are real or not, a reflection of how young children try to make sense of new or abstract information. An understanding of how your child experiences, with joy or dread, this season will help you make decisions about family celebrations.

Do you feel compelled to do what you see others do during this holiday season? I hope not. At TCS we hope families will create ways to celebrate holidays, including Halloween, that **considers the age of your children** (young children may find trick or treating fun—but may not be able to do it with more than one immediate neighbor; costumes can be elaborate or very, very, very simple) and **reflect the things you value for your children** (if you hate the candy overeating but love the pumpkin carving, put your emphasis on what you love about the holiday and don't worry about trying to do it all).

The fall and winter holidays can be a busy time for parents of young children. It is easy to fall into the trap (I know I have at times) of thinking that we have the responsibility to provide every experience for our children this year. If you start to feel overwhelmed by holidays, your child is probably feeling that way too. The holiday season can be a joy to share with young children, especially when the emphasis is on **creating meaning** with your children about the holiday through a few simple, shared experiences and on **developing family traditions** that your children learn to associate with this time of year.