

August/September
2008

TCS Times

The Children's School/ 208-343-6840
«GreetingLine»--editor

From the Director

By Cindy Finch

Welcome to a new year at The Children's School. As we open the doors this September we begin our 29th year of educating young children. We are so glad you are here!

Being ready for a new school year means preparing the facility and classrooms, and it means building the relationships that are so central to our work. We have received new materials for all classrooms—thank you, P-TCS fundraisers and those who gave at the Spring Auction. We have painted many of the school surfaces, repaired the parking lot and playyard surfaces, and much more. We have talked as a faculty about all the details that go into making the school work well for young children. But *mostly* we are getting to know you and your children—reading the information you have already provided to us and visiting with your child at home and/or school.

I know that for many of you there are conversations taking place right now among TCS faculty/staff and families about children starting school and what these first few weeks of school can mean to classroom community and family life. We hope that you will use the resources that the school provides—our experienced faculty and our parent library—to help you see this start of school through the eyes of your child. Entering a classroom is hard work. Learning to be a part of a community—expressing yourself, listening to others, entering social play situations, learning classroom routines, and complying with school rules—is challenging for everyone, but especially for young children. This hard work at school may ripple through your family time. If you find that your child appreciates more routine or needs more rest at home than usual, that is to be expected. Children will need extra family support during this transition time.

If you are a new to the school community, I hope you will attend our October “New Family Orientation” and talk with me about the school's history and philosophical foundations. One of the things you will learn at this evening is that I KNOW that this school works for children. I know from the perspective of being a studied educator—the literature points to the strength of this model. I also know from the perspective of being a parent—I still see strengths in my children that I know are TCS-based. The evidence is clear to

The Children's School is looking for:

**Washer and Dryer*

**A "gently used" or new computer and/or monitor for the bookkeeper. System requirements are 1 GB processor, 500 GB memory, and Windows XP. Please talk with Clint Tate, Treasurer.*

Remember that donations to TCS are tax deductible. See Andrea for this information.

me, and I love to talk about it (although I must admit to being a bit shy at times and you may wonder if I really do like to talk).

Recently I read an article from **Education Week** that outlined the five ingredients of early childhood programs that produce a lasting impact on participants' lives. These five points reminded me of the foundational work that The Children's School is built on and that we reconfirm in our beginning days each school year. A school with a lasting impact for children and families:

1) Includes children who may otherwise be at risk of school failure, not just to benefit the children who otherwise may struggle in school but for the benefit of all children.

2) Has qualified teachers who have ongoing support, meaning that teachers come to their work highly qualified and continue to grow and learn individually and collectively.

3) Uses a validated, interactive child-development curriculum that children and teachers can impact, such as through the development of classroom specific projects—teachers and children working side by side in a rich learning environment.

4) Has teachers who spend time with parents through informal daily communication and the formal processes in place such as parent-teacher conferences and parent education sessions.

5) Continually assesses the school and children's development in relation to the goals of the school and future school readiness—meaning that the school faculty looks inward and outward of the school walls, considering children as individuals and as members of a society with certain educational expectations, in thinking about children's school experiences.

We will be asking you how we are doing several times during the school year—when we get together for conferences and when we survey families about the school year next spring. I hope you will familiarize yourself with what we hope to do and then compare your child's experience against those goals we have for ourselves.

From my perspective this year is looking like a great one in TCS's history. We are starting strong as a school. We are so ready to fill our halls and classrooms with children and families who have chosen to be a part of our community. And, we are ready to experience the school year—knowing that we can't control or predict all that will happen over the next few months—but confident that our strong history and philosophy will support us in our work with children, your family and the greater community.

Yes, we are ready in our facility, in our faculty, and in our expectation that the school year that we are about to spend together will make a lasting impact on us all.

Director's Corner

By Cindy Finch

A Family Handbook Preview

Family Handbooks are being revised and reprinted. They will be available to families in early September. New to the school families will be asked to read the handbook; returning families will be asked to review revised sections. All families will be asked to sign that they have read TCS's Family Handbook and are familiar with the information contained in it. A few highlights for these early days of school are:

Late Pick-Up from School: "Families who pick up children late from classes will be assessed a fee of \$5 for the first ten minutes and \$5 for each five minutes thereafter. Each family may use a grace period of up to ten minutes, 4 times a month. If you exceed this grace period allotment in a calendar month late charges will be added to your next month's bill. All pick ups that exceed ten minutes will be billed a late fee."

Tuition Payments: "Tuition invoices are provided for families each month. Tuition payment options are part of our annual agreement with families. Tuition may be paid 1) in full by check, cash, or money order with a 3% discount by September 10th, 2) in full by credit card, 3) monthly by bank draft, or 4) monthly by credit card. Monthly payments occur on the 10th of each month during the contract period. Paperwork for each monthly payment option must be completed in the office by the end of your child's first week of school.

No refunds can be allowed for days missed due to travel, vacations or illness.

Families who pay in full by check, cash, or money order must provide credit card or bank draft for occasional charges that may occur during the contract period.

Families who withdraw during the school year for any reason will be immediately billed remaining annual tuition. The school will refund any overpaid tuition when the opening created by the withdrawal is filled, as specified in the school contract.

Playyard Use: (See sidebar) When you have signed your child out on the sign in/sign out page provided for each classroom the responsibility for supervision switches from teachers to parents. During this transition from school to home it is most helpful to—and safer for—your child if you expect him/her to follow our school rules. We hope you will find it helpful that we have posted playyard and school rules on all three playyards.

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.

Alumni News

A playyard note from David, our Extended Day Primes teachers:

Please try to leave space for safe passage between the garden yard and the school yard at 3:30 by not parking too close to the playyard gates or crosswalk.

M. H. (1994-1996) a 2008 high school graduate of was named a Rotary Scholar and, with that honor, was able to attend an Educational Leadership Conference in Austin Texas over the summer. This week he began college at the University of Idaho.

R. L. (2005-2007) was honored with the Naturalistic Intelligence Award for his 2nd grade class. He is known for his appreciation for plants and animals.

A. W. (1998-2001) was nominated by her math teacher to participate in People to People's 1st Leadership Summit for Young Women this past summer in New York City. For one week she was able to attend seminars, participate in community service and get to know other young women from around the country.

S. H. (1999-2003) a 7th grader was able to participate in a national history competition in Washington DC over the summer after placing at the top for her age group in the state of Idaho.

Congratulations M., R., A., and S., and thanks to the families of these alumni students for letting us know about these great events and honors. We always love to hear from our alumni students and families.

Young Children and Physics (!)

The Children's School is very excited to be participating as a research site for a study being funded by the National Science Foundation. We have joined with schools in Pocatello to be one of three sites around the country working with materials related to constructivist education and children's physical knowledge. (Besides Idaho the other sites are in Alabama and Texas; the pilot site and the recipient of the funding is in Iowa). You will likely not hear children talking about Newton's Laws and the Scientific Method—but you will almost certainly see children solving problems related to motion, slope, and speed and hear children talk about how they are thinking about solving scientific problems.

Although the entire school will be emphasizing this work in our teaching with children and in our staff meetings, the specific data collecting classrooms will be the 4-5s, 4-5-6s, and Primes classes (and families in these three classrooms will be receiving more information in the next few weeks). Three teachers, Betsy Robinson, Taira Lee Guerrero, and Susan Gardner, were able to attend training sessions in Pocatello during the summer months that qualified them as participants. Through their participation we are able to have Dr. Sally Pena, a former TCS teacher and current ISU Professor of Early Childhood Education, available as a resource to our school.

As a constructivist process, your children will be building an understanding of

science, which is different from a direct instruction science education model (which many of us know all too well from our school days). Constructivism, one of the foundational educational theories underlying our practice at TCS, is problem solving and experience based. Our emphasis is on supporting children in their work with problems related to physical knowledge—asking questions, providing materials, giving children time and space to try ideas out, and sometimes providing challenges for children. You may see groups of children struggling with making materials do what they want them to do, trying small variations, making mistakes, and trying again—without teachers giving them the “right answer” even when the “right answer” is glaringly obvious to us! This is a very intentional process.

If this sounds similar to how we handle other areas of curriculum, it is. (Think conflict resolution, for example). That is one reason that we are excited about being a participant. We anticipate learning a lot as a school faculty and being able to share our new understanding with our entire school community as the year progresses. Look for updates in the TCS Times, the classroom project part of the communication wall, and, hopefully, parent education events.

When planning potluck foods and home snacks, please remember that we are a peanut-free school.

TCS Faculty and Staff Biographies

Cindy Finch - Director

Cindy received her BA in English and Psychology from Austin College (Sherman, TX) and her MA in Education, Emphasis in Early Childhood from BSU in 1983. From 1982-1986 she taught in the 4-5's and Kindergarten classes and facilitated the development of the 3-4's and Parent-Toddler program. Cindy returned to TCS in 1997 as a Primary teacher. In the years between 1986 and 1997 she worked for Head Start, taught CDA classes at BSU and consulted with various early childhood programs. She was the school's Project Director for the Pathways to Competency project during which she collaborated on the creation and development of the Children and Conflict video and companion materials. Cindy was named the Director of TCS during the 2000-2001 school year. Cindy is married to Ken Smith and is the mother of two children who are TCS alumni. Cindy likes to hike, travel with her family and read.

Andrea Laird - Administrative Assistant

Andrea received her BA in Developmental Studies and Justice and Law from the University of Winnipeg, Manitoba and her MA in Psychology from NCOC in San Francisco. She has worked in public school nursery (pre-K) and in preschool in Canada. Andrea also worked in an infant and toddler program in California. She joined the staff of TCS in 1996. Andrea has taught in the All Days, the Primary 5-7's and Toddlers and is now the Administrative Assistant. Andrea is married and has one son. She enjoys reading and travel.

Sherri Lauer - 3-4s Teacher

Sherri is returning for her fourth year at TCS in the 3-4s class. She has her master's degree in Developmental Psychology and has been working with young children and parents for more than 20 years. Sherri's experience with

TCS began when her own children attended school here, 14 years ago. Sherri's many roles in the early childhood community include teaching a Child Care class at BSU, Accreditation consultant for the J.A. and Kathryn Albertson Foundation, board member for Treasure Valley Association for the Education of Young Children (TVAEYC), and discussion facilitator for TCS's parent toddler program. Sherri has lived in Boise for 15 years with her husband and three children.

Mary Griffin - 3-4s Teacher

Mary completed her undergraduate degree in psychology and masters work at the University of Illinois in Urbana. While in central Illinois, she taught at the university lab school supervising student teachers, working with preschoolers and their families and teaching classes. She spent three years at Chicago Child Care Society teaching in a multi-age setting and two years teaching in TCS's parent toddler program. She has lived in Boise for thirteen years with her husband and three daughters, all TCS alumni. Mary has been an active volunteer and substitute teacher in her children's classes and looks forward to her fifth year teaching in the 3-4s.

Over the summer months, we said good bye to some a couple of children

Names removed to protect children's privacy.

Julie Gill - 2-3s Teacher

Julie is beginning her 16th 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, TCS alumni. Julie has her CDA, and has studied Elementary Education and Child Care and Development at BSU and Liberal Arts at Albertson College. She lives with her husband, Al, her two children, and her dog Cinnamon.

Mark Zimmermann - 4-5-6s and Parent/Toddler Program Teacher

Mark has an AA Degree in Child Care and Development and a BA in Applied Science with Emphasis in Child Care and Development from BSU. He has been a graduate assistant in the Masters Early Childhood Program at the BSU School of Education. Mark is beginning his 21st year teaching at TCS. Mark is a former president of the local and state chapters of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Mark enjoys camping and travel, and walking.

Betsy Robinson - 4-5s and Parent/Toddler Program Teacher

Betsy received a BS in Child Development and Family Relationships with a specialty in Early Childhood Education from Colorado State University. She graduated with honors and also studied child development at Iowa State University. Betsy has taught for 26 years. She has taught 3-4s and 4-5s and in the Parent/Toddler program at other schools in Boise. Betsy is in her 13th year at TCS and has taught in the 3-4s, 4-5s and Afternoon Kindergarten. Betsy enjoys travel, reading, gardening, exercise and working with teenagers as well as young children. Betsy has been married for 36 years and has two grown children.

Patty Head - 4-5s Teacher

Patty received her Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education from the University of Idaho and Master of Arts in Education, emphasis in Early Education from the University of Alabama Birmingham and Boise State authoring a thesis on mentorship for administrators, master teachers and first year early childhood teachers. A 20 year veteran, Patty has taught first grade, Kindergarten, preschool, and for two years was the 3-4s teacher at TCS. Patty completed an internship to become a Child Life Specialist at St. Luke's Hospital and is a certified EMT. She has been married for 32 years and is a mother to two grown children. After a ten year "retirement", Patty is thrilled to be in her fourth year at The Children's School.

Nicole Shadduck - All Day Preschool Teacher

Nicole graduated from BSU in 1997 with a BA in Elementary Education with an endorsement in Early Childhood Education. Nicole has worked with infants and toddlers in an at-risk program for teen mothers and in Kindergarten in a Boise public school. She has started developing and presenting workshops at conferences for early childhood professionals. Nicole joined the TCS staff in January 1998. She is the editor of the school newsletter. She is married and has one teenage son. Nicole enjoys reading, exploring new local restaurants and travel.

Lynn Hanson - All Day Preschool Teacher

Lynn is in her seventh year of teaching at TCS. She has a BA in Child Care and Development and is working towards her MA in Reading. She has taught K-8 in a one room school house in Yellow Pine. She lives with her husband and has four grown children. She enjoys quilting, sewing, and art.

Tonya Palsulich - 2-3s and All Day Preschool Teacher

Tonya received a BA in Human Development and Child Study from Stephens College in Missouri. She joined the staff of TCS in December 2000. She is married and has two sons. Tonya enjoys music, reading and traveling.

Susan Gardner - Primary Teacher

Susan received her BA in Elementary Education, with a minor in English, from Luther College in Decorah, Iowa. She has taken post graduate classes at the University of Minnesota. She has taught public school in grades K through 3 in the Idaho communities of Salmon, Leadore, and Emmett before moving to Boise and working at TCS. Susan is in her 13th year of teaching at TCS. She has a daughter (a former TCS student) and three stepsons with her husband. Susan enjoys life with her family, traveling, camping, and exploring the West!

Mary Helen May - Primary Teacher

Mary Helen received her BS in Elementary Education with an Emphasis in Early Childhood from Oregon College of Education (Western Oregon University). She taught Kindergarten at Adams, Roosevelt and Garfield Elementary Schools in Boise from 1973-1978. She helped facilitate workshops for the new kindergarten program. Mary Helen taught in K-3 classrooms in

Check your family's school mailbox for a welcoming letter from the president of Parents for The Children's School (P-TCS) group.

"While P-TCS provides many tangible ways to help the school, what I appreciate the most is the opportunity to help build a sense of community."—K.

We hope that you are able to attend our first meeting, Thursday, September 4th at 7:00 PM.

Oregon public schools. She then moved to Wyoming and began her preschool teaching career. She taught toddlers, 3-4's and 4-5's. Mary Helen has continued her education, taking classes in early childhood curriculum at a variety of universities. She joined the staff of TCS in 1998 and taught in the 3-4's and 4-5's and toddlers programs. This will be her seventh year teaching Primes. Mary Helen is married and has 3 grown children.

Ruthee Fuentes - All Day Preschool Teacher

Ruthee joined the staff of TCS in May 2005 after completing an internship in the All Days class. She is currently pursuing an Associates in Early Childhood Development at Penn Foster College. Ruthee graduated from Nampa High School with her career pathway also in Early Childhood Development. She has been involved in many camps and youth activities over the past several years. Ruthee taught the infant-toddler class and assisted the preschool class at New Horizon. She enjoys reading, fishing, traveling, volunteering in her community and spending time with her family in her spare time.

Taira Lee – 3-4-5s and 4-5-6s Teacher

Taira received her BA from Boise State University in Early Childhood Studies and Early Childhood Special Education in May of 2006. Some of her student teaching experiences include working in the Boise School District and with Spanish-speaking families in the Nampa area with the Idaho Health and Welfare Department. In the fall of 2005, she spent eight weeks completing student teaching in the 3-4-5's and 4-5-6's classes at TCS. While finishing her undergraduate work at Boise State University, she was employed at the BSU Children's Center for five years and taught in the looping program for infants and toddlers as well as several preschool classes. During the summer months, she spends her time in Erendira, B.C., Mexico on a work project focused on providing an educational opportunity for children living in the poverty of Mexican labor camps. She also enjoys traveling, spending time with friends and family, reading, and exploring the outdoors.

Lisa Wirtanen – 3-4-5s Teacher

Lisa has worked in the field of early childhood education for 25 years as a teacher, staff development coordinator, director, accreditation facilitator, sexuality educator, parent education facilitator, adjunct faculty member and curricula developer. She is the parent of two children, one currently attending TCS and one alum of TCS. Lisa enjoys friends, music, reading, hiking, and traveling.

David Rodenstein – Extended Day Primary Teacher

David began working with children in a volunteer program at Madison Elementary School. He has been involved with TCS since 2003. David is currently pursuing his degree in Early Childhood Studies at BSU. David enjoys gardening, hiking, and collecting vintage vinyl.

Where is the director's office?

If you noticed the absence of a desk in the front office, there is a simple explanation.

During the last weeks of the summer, Cindy Finch's workspace has been centralized in the school's annex (The Smith house).

To talk with Cindy, there are a variety of ways to contact her.

**By phone—
343-0262, her direct line*

**By mail, her school mailbox is located on the front office door.*

**E-mail
director@tcsboise.org*

You may not notice a difference. She is a strong presence in the school building. Look for her in the hallways and classrooms throughout the school day.

Sarah O'Dell - All Day Preschool Teacher

Sarah has returned 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 is continuing to study Elementary Education at BSU. Sarah is excited to be at TCS as a teacher and as a parent.

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 an 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 and toddler mental health and early brain research. Melissa has been married for 15 years and has three awesome children. In addition to playing with her family, Melissa loves running, hiking, biking and camping.

A thank you goes out to the G. Family for the donation of a digital camera.

Welcome to...

We would like to welcome the following children and their families!

Names removed to protect children's privacy.

***New Family
Orientation***

Wednesday, October 8th

7:00-8:00 PM

*An evening with the
director to talk about the
school's philosophy and
meet other families who
are joining our
community this school
year.*

*Snacks provided; Cindy
will also give a tour to
families who haven't
seen our full facility.*

*Child care is not
provided for this event.*

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

Potluck Schedule

We would like to ask you to take note of your family's potluck date(s). We always hope to see all of you to welcome the new school year. This schedule is intended to give you a day and time to block out on your calendar. There will be specific information, including signup sheets, available in individual classrooms. Please talk with a classroom teacher for more information.

All Days-Wednesday, August 27th, 5:30-7:00

4-5-6s-Thursday, August 28th, 11:45-1:15

4-5s- Wednesday, September 3rd, 3:30-5:30

2-3s- Thursday, September 4th, 11:30-1:00

3-4s-Friday, September 5th, 11:30-1:00

3-4-5s-Monday September 8th, 11:15-12:45

Primes-Tuesday, September 9th, 5:30-7:30

Important Dates...

Monday, August 25th-- All Days Resume and Primes and 4-5-6s Begin

Monday, September 1st, Labor Day, All Classes Closed

Tuesday, September 1st, 2-3s, 3-4s, 3-4-5-s, and 4-5s Begin

Thursday, September 4th, Parents for TCS Meeting and Fall Social, 7:00 PM, See Friday Update for details

Wednesday-Thursday, September 10th-11th, 4-5s Lunch Program begins, Register in office

Friday, September 12th, 3-4-5s Lunch Program begins, Register in the office

Monday, October 6th, Parent-Toddler Program begins

Wednesday, October 8th, New Family Orientation, 7:00-8:00 PM

Thursday, October 9th, P-TCS meeting at 1:30 PM, Location TBD

Saturday, October 11th, TCS School Carnival

Monday, October 13th, Annual TCS Board of Directors Meeting, School Community Invited