

May/June 2009

TCS Times

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

From the Director

By Cindy Finch

I had fully intended to finish writing about “myths about The Children’s School” this month. I even wrote an article that addressed myths that some hold about . . . you: families who have chosen The Children’s School as the early childhood education program for your young children. Stay tuned for that one for the August/September issue of TCS Times.

When I received a request for a review of the transition information that has appeared in this month’s issues in past years, I decided that my newsletter energy needed to go that direction.

Summer is a time of year that naturally makes us—parents and teachers of young children—think about how to help children in the task of transitioning or making changes. There are transitions from the school year to summer activities, and there are transitions from summer to the new school year. Discussions and activities happen in the school, but honestly, much of the support of children will happen within the parent-child relationship.

Transitions that work well take a lot of adult energy. In general, experiencing a transition with young children requires a slow, steady, and sensitive approach. Young children cannot think about or imagine those parts of a change that they have not experienced in the past. Conversely, children who have experienced a transition in a certain way in the past may resist any variation from what they remember. In either case, children don’t need lots of verbal information and descriptions about the transition. They need, rather, some matter-of-fact information that there will be a transition and a few key pieces of information about what they can anticipate, particularly if it helps them to connect their current experience to a past experience. They need an opportunity to talk about their feelings about the transition. And they need for many parts of your lives together to not be in transition—so enjoy some sameness. The dance you are in with your child when you face a transition together will require that you alternately lead and follow.

Play can be one of the best responses to transition, both taking time to play as a family and giving your child plenty of time to play. Think about how your child plays. Play is a primary way for children to create meaning from life’s events and feel capable in handling the newness of a situation. For years my youngest child got out the unit blocks and little cars when he wanted to relax. I don’t really know what he was thinking about when he played this way. But

Recently received from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) in response to the annual report Cindy Finch submitted on behalf of The Children's School January 31, 2009:

“Congratulations on maintaining your NAEYC Accreditation and in engaging in continuous improvement to provide high quality care and education for the children and families you serve!”

The celebrating is a bit more low-key with this notice—but achieving and maintaining NAEYC accreditation is something we pay attention to everyday.

Thank you, TCS community, for making accreditation a priority.

because I watched him engage with materials this way for years, I always knew that this type of play was important to him, and that it was critical for me to provide the time and materials for him to play—often. What role does play have in your child's life when there are changes in the air? It may be very unique for different children—some children might seek sensory play like water while others are drawn to art or dramatic play. Whatever it is, I'd recommend providing time for it in your child's life during a time of transition.

Transition is a challenge and an opportunity. I think some adults approach transition with dread, seeing the challenges more than the opportunity; other adults approach transition with excitement, seeing more of the opportunity than the challenge. In my family, my husband and I anticipate change very differently and, after 28 years of marriage, we can joke about how different our perceptions and reactions often are (and we've been totally unsuccessful at changing each other's deeply embedded perceptions and reactions!). What do you know about how the adults in your family respond to transitions? It matters because, as is often the case, our adult response affects how we support children during times of transition.

Key to supporting children is acknowledging and understanding feelings about an upcoming transition without imposing our own feelings—of anxiety or excitement—too strongly. Some parents respond to a child's expression of concern about a transition by pointing out all the positive things that go along with the transition, and assuring the child that they'll be ok. Other parents respond by agreeing with a child's expression of concern or fear, and they take a commiserating role with the child. If either of these adult responses sounds like something you've done, you are absolutely on the right track by being encouraging or understanding of your children.

Something I suggest that goes one step beyond these common responses to children's strong feelings is this: help children identify the resources in the new classroom, class make-up, or school and within themselves for handling issues that might arise during transition. Rather than simply being reassuring, back up your confidence with details—offer that there will be adults who will be there to help, visit the new setting and help your child identify adult resources, talk about how you will be in communication with the new teachers or school. And, conversely, rather than sliding right into your child's fear of change, talk with your child about how much confidence you have in his/her ability to adapt to the new class, classmates, or school—then honestly talk about the strengths your child takes wherever he/she goes, like knowing how to ask for help, sharing ideas and interests in ways that draw people to him/her, etc. Parents can encourage or commiserate AND help a child feel capable in handling change or in getting help in a new situation.

I have absolute confidence in the abilities of the children who are experiencing transitions. That doesn't mean that there won't be fluttery stomachs, tears, concern and confusion—that goes with the transition territory. The challenge and the opportunity is in learning that transitions can happen successfully, one step at a time, with the support of caring adults who can help identify the strengths and resources at hand.

To those who requested this information be printed again, thanks for asking. I hope you find it helpful to you . . . and your children.

Finally, have a wonderful summer, TCS families!

We Say Goodbye To...

We say goodbye to the following children and wish them the very best in their new school! We will miss you all!

The section is removed to protect children's privacy.

Did you know?

***Sixteen teachers were able to participate in the National Science Foundation research project called Ramps and Pathways by paying for a project facilitator to travel to Boise monthly.*

***Thirteen teachers have been able to earn university 1-3 credits from Idaho State University through the work that we are doing for the Ramps and Pathways project.*

***Two teachers were able to travel to Dallas for the National Association for the Education of Young Children annual conference.*

***Four teachers were able to attend a day long conference that provided an opportunity to collaborate with public and private schools all over the area on documenting learning.*

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previous page)*

*These professional
development
opportunities were paid
for by the money P-TCS
earned at the fall
carnival.*

*This was a tremendous
help because teachers
have to meet continuing
education requirements:
for state certification,
city licensing, and/or
accreditation.*

*The TCS faculty knows
how hard families work
to make continuing
education not only an
expectation of
employment at TCS, but
also a benefit.*

Thank you!

Alumni News

B. W. (00-02) is a spelling bee champ!

B. Y. (98-02) was chosen to receive the Mayor's Award for Youth.

The following TCS alumni recently graduated from Boise High School: K. M. (92-96), H. S. (95-98), L. P. (93-98), K. S. (93-97), M. O. (92-98), T. S. (96-99), C. R. (97-99), H. S. (94-96), J. J. (95-97), M. L. (96-99), M. Y. (92-98), A. N. (93-96). The following students also recently graduated from Boise high schools: K. L. (94-96) and C. F. (94-97). It brought back great memories for us of these students as young children—and it gave us pride to read of the honors and successes they have gone on to achieve. Congratulations, grads!

P-TCS: What a Year!

By Cindy Finch, Staff Liaison to P-TCS

Our sincere thanks go to the officers and many volunteers who have made this year a wonderfully successful year of fundraising for the school. We received over \$3000 from the carnival in support of teacher continuing education (see sidebar) and over \$400 for books from the sale of t-shirts. We are still collecting the final invoices from the Spring Fling auction—but we anticipate that right around \$30,000 will come to the school from that event in support of tuition assistance! Wow!

Of course this level of fundraising, and the community building that goes along with all the activities, represents a lot of work and energy, and our parent leaders exhibited plenty of both. We are so thankful to:

Kira P., President
 Kim L., VP and Class Rep Coordinator
 Dyan G., Treasurer
 Wendy S., Secretary
 Holly P., Rep to the Board of Directors
 April G. and Jessica S., Spring Auction Chairs
 Betsy M. and Vicky L., Holiday Bake Sale
 Jane L., Fall Carnival
 Ann H. and Lisa W., Parent Education
 Heidi B. and Kacy B., Hospitality
 Julie M. and Amy S., Facility/Work Days
 Amy S., All-School Campout

Kira P. brought us all together at Bardenay in May to celebrate the year's successes and to elect new officers and chairs for the 2009-2010 school year's events. There was already excitement expressed about events planned for next year—and an exclamation or two of how all that work really was FUN this year!

We welcome to P-TCS leadership the following parents:

Stephanie W., President
 Wendy S., VP
 Dyan G., Treasurer and Class Rep Coordinator
 Amanda S., Secretary
 Theresa W., Rep to the Board of Directors
 Sarah O., Parent Education
 Heide B. and Kacy B., Hospitality
 Amy S. and Heidi B., Fall Carnival
 Betsy M. and Vicky L., Holiday Bake Sale
 Keith D. and Jeff S., Facilities/Work Days

There are still a few class representative positions open; we are also seeking chairs for the Spring Auction and the All-School Campout. Please let us know if you are interested in being involved with this energetic, fun, hard-working

Capital Campaign Update:

As of June 25, 2009, 54% of families from the most recent year support the campaign. Broken down by class, here is class participation.

<i>Toddlers 1:</i>	<i>50%</i>
<i>Toddlers 2:</i>	<i>33%</i>
<i>2-3s:</i>	<i>75%</i>
<i>3-4s:</i>	<i>62%</i>
<i>4-5s:</i>	<i>44%</i>
<i>3-4-5s:</i>	<i>50%</i>
<i>4-5-6s:</i>	<i>57%</i>
<i>All-days:</i>	<i>80%</i>
<i>Primes:</i>	<i>79%</i>

**100% BOARD SUPPORT:*

The TCS Board has contributed more than \$25,000!

**100% STAFF SUPPORT:*

100% of TCS staff showed their support with more than \$10,000 in contributions!

MANY WAYS TO GIVE:

Spread your gift over 1, 2 or 3 years; Pay by credit card, check or stock transfers. TCS can bill you monthly, quarterly, yearly – you decide!

EVERY DOLLAR HELPS:

You choose the amount! Please give whatever amount is appropriate and meaningful for you. And remember, you can spread your donation over 3 years!

The Children's School

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We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.tcsboise.org

group. There is support to be found, relationships to be built, and successes to be experienced.

Parents for TCS--a big part of what makes this school community strong!
THANKS!

Parent Survey Re-Cap

By Cindy Finch

Thank you for completing the parent surveys. We had over 76% returned. I hope you took some time to review the percentages and comments on the tallied pages in the coffee room during May. Eighty five of 89 respondents rated their child's experience in classrooms as "satisfied or very satisfied." Eighty eight of 89 of you rated your family's overall experience at the school as "satisfied or very satisfied." These summary numbers are gratifying to those of us who are part of this community professionally.

There were some areas that you identified that we will be working on over the summer and as all teachers come back together to begin work next fall. Areas that we will be considering include: assessing our curriculum content, assessing how curriculum and daily activities are communicated to families, assessing Spanish curriculum, when and how it is offered, sharing what we learned as a faculty about the ramps and pathways activities

Look for program improvement plans (a required accreditation activity for our school) to come from your survey responses, as well as staff and board input, next school year.

Thanks, also for your great parent education ideas—both those ideas that involve the larger community and those that are specific to families at TCS. You have given our P-TCS parent education committee a great place to start in the fall. Several of you mentioned the facility and expressed gratitude that we are moving ahead with our plans to remodel. (See Liz Edrich's article about how those plans are progressing.) Overall, this surveying process is an important and positive activity for our school. We do it every year, so you can always count on being asked about your ideas and opinions about The Children's School. Your responses help us to know you better, to understand what you want for your children, and to remain focused in our work.

Capital Campaign News

By Liz Edrich

The Children's School's Capital Campaign is well underway! Our goal: to create a learning environment that matches the excellence of the faculty, the superior quality of our learning program and the dreams of our children. As of June 15, 2009, TCS has raised \$400,000 toward the Capital Campaign's \$1,000,000 goal! If the Capital Campaign succeeds, construction will begin this Fall.

To help reach our goal, we are hoping each and every TCS family – current and former –will participate in the Campaign at a level that is comfortable for them. Thank you, thank you to all who have participated already – your support makes a difference and helps toward our goal of 100% participation.

Please complete your pledge form today!

Please contact Liz Edrich, Capital Campaign Manager, at The Children's School if you have questions or would like to get involved.