



School Faculty 2020-2021

Allison Ady—Older Primary

Sydney Cosso—Older All Days

Kaitlyn Erb—Older All Days

Joe Fritz—Older All Days

Trasey Graybill—Older All Days

Lexi Hundley—Part Time Programs

Tasha Lyon—Older Primary

Andy Ortiz—Younger All Days

Tonya Palsulich—Younger Primary

Maite Petersen—Part Time Programs

Alyson Peterson—Younger All Days

Olivia Smith—Part Time Programs

Rebecca Stalder—Part Time Programs

Alex Thornton—Primary Programs

Darcie Wickard—Younger All Days

Sarah O'Dell—Executive Director

Nicole Shadduck—Education Director

From the Director: Should I Stay or Should I Go?: Deciding About the Next School Year

By Sarah O'Dell, Executive Director

If you have a child turning 5 soon, you are reaching the point in their lives when suddenly there is a big wide world of choices. There are lotteries, open houses, records requests, teacher recommendations, worries, uncertainty, and to top it all off- it's only January! Can't we just enjoy the many months ahead in this current school year? I want to address some of the questions we are often asked during this time of year. School decisions can be easy or quite difficult and it is my hope that the collective experience that we have at TCS, as teachers and as parents, can help shine a little light on what you may be experiencing.

Is TCS the right choice for your Kindergartener, First or Second Grader?

The first step in answering this question is to think about your child's particular needs. One teacher shared a story about her own son: "When I asked his teachers what they thought about him leaving TCS to go to first grade at our neighborhood school, they asked me to think about my son sitting in a desk for most of his day. That helped me make a decision. Some kids can do that at 6 years old. My son definitely couldn't." Thinking about your own child's needs can help you make a very solid decision. For other families there are more considerations than just what your child needs. You may want to have all of your children at one school to help your family make better use of time that is already stretched thin. You may want to put the money you are paying in tuition toward a different financial priority. We, of course, believe that TCS is best for young children but we also recognize that your family has its own set of values.

Will we be able to get in later at another school if we stay at TCS?

In your neighborhood school? Almost certainly. In a charter school? Probably not. I have heard many stories of families talking to an administrator at their neighborhood school who has told them, "If you don't come now, you may have to be bussed to a different school later. We might be full." In reality that rarely happens. They aren't lying, they are just stressed, like you.

When I first inquired about enrolling my children at Collister Elementary School- for some, a desirable neighborhood school- there was a lot of talk about having to be bussed to a different school. When it was actually time, there was plenty of space for them. People moved and people open-enrolled elsewhere. Things change. Charter Schools are a different "can of worms". If you know that you want to go later, apply in your child's Kindergarten year. If you get a spot, take it. *If that is the right choice for your child.* Choosing a charter school is an individual decision and I encourage you to research the options. Some educational models will fit your child and family and others won't.

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Important Details

Please see the Weekly Updates and the school calendar for a comprehensive list of events and closures.

Monday-Tuesday, January 25th-26th, Parent-Teacher Conferences for the Older Primes and Younger Part Time Classes. CLASSES ARE CLOSED. Pre-arranged Primary Child Care Open.

Wednesday-Thursday, January 28th-29th, Parent-Teacher Conferences for the Younger Primes and Older Part Time classes. CLASSES ARE CLOSED. Pre-arranged Primary Child Care Open.

Monday-Tuesday, February 1st-2nd, Older All Days Parent-Teacher Conferences. CLASS IS OPEN.

Wednesday-Thursday, February 3rd-4th, Younger All Days Parent-Teacher Conferences. CLASS IS OPEN

Friday, February 5th, Intention Forms for the 2021-2022 school year are due by 4:00 PM in the front office.

Monday, February 15th, SCHOOL CLOSED for Presidents' Day.

Will my child be “behind” if we stay at TCS?

The short answer is no when answered using the values of education held here at TCS. Depending on your child’s strengths, areas of interest and way of learning, they may have to learn different or more tasks to meet the expectations of their new school. In the last several decades preschool classes and kindergartens have begun to look more “traditional”. Young children are expected to sit quietly while they listen to whole-class instruction or fill in worksheets. Schools have been expecting students to know more and more when they first enter their classrooms. In recent years there has been a “test” at Kindergarten registration and if your child doesn’t know the skills on this test, schools may recommend that your child receive additional instruction over the summer before they enter Kindergarten. This skill requirement is not developmentally appropriate and can have a profound effect on children's attitude toward learning. When young children are introduced to formal instruction too early, in a form that is too abstract, they may learn the knowledge and skills, but at the expense of the desire to use them. Based on the standards put in front of them at Kindergarten registration or their first weeks of 2nd grade, they may be “behind”. Based on what research tells us about how young children learn, they most certainly will not be behind.

My family’s story: Many of you have heard this story from me if we have talked at all about the pros and cons of staying at TCS past preschool but I share it here because it illustrates so clearly to me, and I hope to you, why “behind” is a relative concept.

I have two daughters, both at Boise High School now. They began attending The Children’s School at 3 and 4 years old. When it was time for my older daughter to go to Kindergarten, I made the choice to stay at TCS because I wanted them at the same school. The next year, we loved Older Primes so much, of course we stayed. The next year too. The year they were in 1st and 2nd grade, the teachers told me that something was going on with my younger daughter’s reading development and suggested we get her screened for a reading learning disability. She was able to grasp some concepts one day then she would lose them the next day. After testing she started to receive academic intervention at Lee Pesky Learning Center. She worked with a reading specialist a couple days a week. As she plugged along she remained really excited about school and learning. In January of her second grade year I started to PANIC. She was about to leave TCS and she still couldn’t read. My mom brain went in to disaster mode. I even entertained the idea of quitting my job and school so I could homeschool her. I couldn’t let my daughter go to third grade! She was BEHIND! Over the next several months I sought the help and advice of as many people as I could and I was still terrified. About a week before school started I had a meeting with the school principal and the third grade teacher. I admitted, with a flourish of what I later look back on as DRAMA, that my daughter still couldn’t read. The third grade teacher looked at me like, “Oh mama. You poor thing.” Then she said the best thing I’d ever heard, “A lot of third graders have difficulty reading when they get here. Don’t worry, I’ll help her.” And she did. And my daughter left third grade at a third grade reading level. But that was not the most important thing that she left third grade with. She left with a desire to be at school. She left with the confidence that she could do hard things. She left knowing that she was a complex human with 100 different skillsets, interests and abilities. Her ability to read well was ONE part of the hundreds of parts of her. She was an artist, a peacemaker, a killer four square player, she made it cool to see the special education teacher at literacy time, she was an Iditarod expert, she had quite a green thumb, she was smart, and she was resourceful as heck. She learned all of that from the strong foundation built under her by her time at TCS.

Of course I am biased about choosing TCS and feel passionate about the way we view and practice early childhood education. I also understand, empathize and once walked in your shoes, thinking about choices for elementary schools. There is no one answer, school or method for every child. Please talk with me about choosing TCS (or other schools!) We are here to help!