



Serra Preschool

A Parent Participation Nursery School
Where Kids and Parents Learn Together.

May 2018
Newsletter

Director's Message

~Rhymes Are an Important Part of Childhood~

Mary had a little lamb, her fleece was white as snow...

Peter piper picked a peck of pickled peppers...

Sing a song of sixpence, a pocket full of rye...

We just finished rhyming with Glenda Goose in the 3 day class. Something I have learned over the years is that kids gain pride and confidence in themselves when they learn how to anticipate final words in a rhyme.

In both classes, the kids love finger plays, books with rhyming patterns and nursery rhymes. Here are some of the skills taught when we share rhymes with children.

Language skills- Rhymes help children learn word

endings and their controlled meter aides children in their beginning reading efforts. Children hear new words that they would not hear in everyday language. The more stories and rhymes kids hear, the larger their vocabulary. A strong vocabulary improves listening comprehension, social conversations, writing, and more!

Thinking Skills- Rhymes help our brains cells recall words and facts. Nursery rhymes and even finger plays usually tell a story with a beginning, a middle and an end. This teaches children that events happen in a sequence, and they begin to learn how to understand stories and follow along.

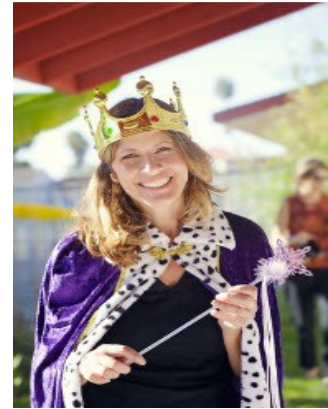
Alliteration- "Goosie, Goosie Gander," onomatopoeia "Baa Baa Baa Black Sheep" and imaginative imagery.

Music Skills- Rhymes help children learn songs easier.

Literature- Nursery Rhymes bring classic literature to children at an early age.

Creativity- Rhymes enable children to start making up their own rhymes when they are in preschool.

And Rhyming is just plain fun. Silly rhymes and nonsen-



Serra Preschool Director Mrs. Nowicki

sical verse are appealing to kids. That's why rhymes are still popular after 500 years!!!

Here are a few rhymes to go with our current observations of caterpillars and butterfly's.

Roly-Poly Caterpillar.

*Roly-poly caterpillar. Into a corner crept.
Spun around himself a blanket. Then for a long time slept.*

*Roly-poly Caterpillar Wakening by and by,
Found himself with beautiful wings.
Changed to a butterfly.*

Bumble Bee

*Bumble Bee, Bumble Bee, Landing on my nose,
Bumble bee, bumble bee, Now he's on my toes.*

*On my arms, on my legs, On my elbows,
Bumble bee, oh bumble bee
He lands and then he goes.*

(This is a good one for kids who are afraid of bees)

President's Message

Race to Nowhere

I recently attended a screening of the documentary, *Race To Nowhere*, which challenges the current trend to relentlessly push teens to succeed in every aspect of life. One gut wrenching story after another is shown, where teens are portrayed as being overly stressed from the never-ending homework, activities, college preparations, etc. to the point where they are literally making themselves sick, even suicidal. Vicki Abeles, the director/producer of the film, was present for a Q&A session following the screening. She mentioned that it saddens her that although her film is 10 years old, it is still relevant today, meaning that though some school districts nationwide have improved their policies to reduce student stress, overall not much has changed. In the beginning of the film, she asks the rhetorical question, "Where does it all begin?"

My mind immediately shot to: "It begins in early childhood." While I do have a teen at home, I think I might have been the only one in the auditorium who also has a preschooler. However, I don't think it was on anyone's mind, whether they were involved in the production of the film or not, that the stress that American society puts on teens is evident even in our youngest of all students. For example, Capistrano Unified is transitioning to full day Kindergarten for all their schools. I am so relieved that Luke will still be going to half-day next year, but the year after that, *all* schools will be full day. Furthermore, the California Dept. of Education is proposing TK for *all* 4 year olds, not just the ones with Sept, Oct, and Nov birthdays. And while TK will start out as half-day, it'll move to

full day. You'll see. So, while administrators everywhere are well aware of student stress that kids face in middle school and high school, it doesn't stop them from flattening childhood like a bulldozer.

I went up and spoke with Vicki Abeles after the screening of *Race to Nowhere* to ask her if she had any thoughts on the impact that rigorous preschool programs have on the long term psychological and emotional well being of children. She emailed me an article titled "The New Preschool is Crushing Kids" by Erika Christakis of The Atlantic Daily. "Oh no!," I thought, "I'm not sure I want to read this." (too sad to read). The article opens, "Step into an American preschool classroom today and you are likely to be bombarded with what we educators call a print-rich environment, every surface festooned with alphabet charts, bar graphs, word walls, instructional posters, classroom rules, calendars, schedules, and motivational platitudes—few of which a 4-year-old can “decode,” the contemporary word for what used to be known as reading." Hmmm, doesn't sound like Serra. (I didn't think it would). So, I kept reading, and the more I read, the more I was confident in what I've known all along: Serra cherishes childhood and will protect it with all our might. We develop people, not advanced scholars who will live their K year in the "red group." (but, yeah, we love our kiddos who are in the red group). <3

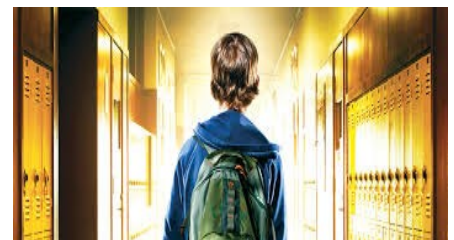
One of my favorite and unique aspects of Serra is how well we communicate with children and how well we encourage children to communicate with each other. Christakis writes, "The real focus in the preschool years should be not just on vocabulary and reading, but on talking and lis-

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tening... Conversation is gold. It's the most efficient early-learning system we have...One major study of 700 preschool classrooms in 11 states found that only 15 percent showed evidence of effective interactions between teacher and child. Fifteen percent." I'd bet the farm that if Serra were in that study, we'd be in the top 1% of the 15%. Teaching children how to kindly and respectfully give and receive messages is the cornerstone of our language system at Serra. And it doesn't happen overnight. It's a 2-year process with lots and lots and lots of practice. Luke is still practicing, trust me! And I hope he continues to practice, as I hope for myself, because being able to hear and be heard in a caring and gracious way is a cornerstone of The Golden Rule.

Finland is known worldwide for its amazing educational system, and here's what they have to say about preparing preschoolers to read: "The basis for the beginnings of literacy is that children have heard and listened ... They have spoken and been spoken to, people have discussed [things] with them. They have asked questions and received answers." So, in response to all those preschools out there that focus on Spanish and piano and Hooked on Phonics and iPads and robotics, I'll keep my head held high that my four little loves spent their preschool years at Serra.

~Cori



Potpourri...

Clothes for the Cause

All items for Clothes for the Cause are due May 30. This is a fundraiser set up by Erin to help clean out our closets and make some money for Serra!

Legacy Tiles

We will be doing "legacy tiles" which are the painted and Fired Up tiles that are above the painting easel outside. They cost \$20/each, and you are welcome to buy more than one to do a family tile and an individual tile, or multiple tiles to make one design... whatever you'd like.

All the materials will be at Serra after the 3day Mother's Day Celebration on Friday, May 11 at 12:15 pm- 2:00 pm

Cash or checks payable to Serra Preschool.

May 2018

Dates to Know:

- May 2 | 3day Parent Teacher Conferences
- May 3 | 2day Parent Teacher Conferences
- May 4 | Dad's Dessert Night
- May 9 | Board Meeting
- May 10 | Mother's Day Celebration (2Day)
- May 11 | Mother's Day Celebration (3Day)
- May 11 | Legacy Tile Painting
- May 14 | Teacher Appreciation Week Begins
- May 23 | General Meeting
- May 28 | Memorial Day (No School)
- May 30 | Clothes for the Cause Ends
- May 30 | Wet and Wild Day (3Day)
- May 31 | Wet and Wild Day/ Last Day of School (2Day)
- June 1 | Last Day of School (3Day)

Field Trip April 26th!



amazon smile

www.smile.amazon.com

when shopping on Amazon, Serra will receive a percentage of your purchase (you pay what you would normally pay anyways, but Amazon will donate funds to Serra!).

Dad Joke of the Month

Why did the banana go to the doctor?
Because he wasn't peeling very well.

Serra Preschool Board of Directors

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Social, Tiffany Condello	tiffanycondello@gmail.com

May Birthdays

- May 2 | Jack Gorham-Madrid
- May 6 | Violet Durham



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To all the Serra Moms!

HAPPY
Mother's
DAY

