

Serra Preschool Newsletter - November 2015



a cooperative preschool in South Orange County where children and parents learn and love together



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Kids Birthdays

Sasha Vojtus turns 4 on 12/2
Hannah Dos Santos turns 4 on 12/21
Johanna Finklestein turns 4 on 12/28

Upcoming Events

Thurs, Nov 19th – Stone Soup Celebration – 2-Day Class
Fri, Nov 20th – Stone Soup Celebration – 3-Day Class
Sat, Nov 21st – 6-Week Clean Up
Mon, Nov 23rd – Fri, Nov 27th – NO SCHOOL ALL WEEK (Thanksgiving Holiday)
Mon, Nov 30th – Teacher Prep Day – NO SCHOOL
Tues, Dec 1st – School Resumes
Wed, Dec 9th – Board Meeting 12:30pm
Sat, Dec 12th – Tree Lighting Movie Night – 5:30pm to 8pm
Fri, Dec 18th – Nutcracker Performance 3-Day Class – 11:30am
Mon, Dec 21st – Fri, Jan 1st – Christmas Holiday (NO SCHOOL)
Mon, Jan 4th – Teacher Work Day (NO SCHOOL)
Sat, Jan 9th – 6 Week Clean Up
Wed, Jan 13th – Board Meeting 12:30pm
Mon, Jan 18th – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (NO SCHOOL)
Wed, Jan 27th – General Meeting 6 PM Dinner 6:30 Meeting Starts

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS OVERVIEW

When: Tuesday, December 8th at 3:00pm

Where: San Diego Botanical Gardens - just 30 minutes north of downtown San Diego in Encinitas, California. It covers approximately 35 acres at 230 Quail Gardens Drive, which runs parallel to Interstate 5 between Encinitas Blvd and Leucadia Blvd.

Cost: \$7 per person, 0-2 years old free

What: Garden Of Lights - After the sun goes down in December, the San Diego Botanic Garden in Encinitas is transformed into a dazzling winter wonderland! More than 125,000 sparkling lights illuminate the flora of this fantastic 37-acre urban oasis each evening from 5 – 9 pm for a magical holiday experience.

Garden of Lights, from December 5 – 23 & 26 – 30, is the San Diego Botanic Garden's annual gift to the San Diego Community. Garden of Lights has events and activities that everyone in your family will enjoy. Nightly entertainment, including local blues and jazz bands, as well as delicious food from Red Oven Artisanal Pizza and Pasta, and hot coffee and treats from the Jitter Bean, will be available. Numerous family-friendly activities are also part of the festivities including:

- Horse-drawn wagon rides (on selected evenings)
- Holiday Crafts
- Spin Art
- Marshmallow Roasting
- Visits with Santa (December 5 – 23)
- Hot Mulled Wine
- Snow for sledding (on selected evenings)
- Puppet Shows (on selected evenings)
- Holiday Carolers (on selected evenings)

Nutcracker display

Directions: Take I-5 South , exit Leucadia Boulevard and turn left (heading east) (0.5 miles), turn right on Quail Gardens Drive (1 mile) the entrance to the Gardens will be on your right.

Contact Person: Nicole Bailey- Mobile: (949) 300-8345 – Email: Nrkibailey@gmail.com



If you are looking for free activities for your kids during the Holiday Break, you might consider....

The Mission San Juan Capistrano – December 21st through 23rd AND December 28th through January 1, 2016 from 11am to 1pm. There will be crafts and activities including Gold Panning, Adobe Brick Making, Cornhusk Dolls/Action Figures, Mini Coiled Clay Pots and Arrowhead Necklaces. No reservations required.

Director's Message

Happy Thanksgiving

Dear Parents,

I just got back from a nice long walk with my dog. As I was walking I was thinking about the kids at school and why I love my job at Serra Preschool. Even though some days I may feel a little wiped out it is worth every minute of my time.

It's worth it when kids tell me I am funny. When I open the gate in the morning and kids are super excited about coming in the door. When kids who did not have friends and played mostly on their own discover the joy in having a friend and begin to play with others. Today someone was laughing so hard on the swing he kind of lost his breath. When kids care for each other. When someone gives a super clever answer to something we are discussing on the rug, I always feel amazed.

I truly think your kids are remarkable, each and every one of them in their own way. I appreciate watching them grow, learn and play at school even when they are struggling because I know in the end things always have a way of working out. With our patience and gentle guidance they figure out what needs figuring out. We all have so much to be thankful for.

I am super thankful for Miss Lisa this year and all she is doing for all of us at school. I am thankful for all of you, for your hard work and for your enthusiasm for our little school. Its a little school but it is a great school.

I hope you all have a wonderful week with family and if you are traveling then I wish you safe travels!!!

Love, Mrs. Nowicki

Dear Parents,

Every now and then I come across an article that is simply too darn good NOT to share with all of you. I hope you enjoy it as much as I did. I know everyone will see a tiny bit of themselves in this article. I laughed when I saw myself in it as well.

Patty Nowicki

<http://www.parenting.com/article/helicopter-parenting>

How to Stop Helicopter Parenting

Learn how to raise independent kids and stop micromanaging their every move

You finish your child's puzzles. You solve his spats. Heck, you'd cut his applesauce if he asked. It's time to stop being a micromanaging mom. Help has arrived...It's a bird! It's a plane! No, wait... it's you, the Helicopter Parent. That shadow over your kid? It's yours—as you nervously bend over him in his bed, making sure his chest is still rising and falling. That droning noise? It isn't chopper blades; it's you again, on the phone to his preschool teacher, complaining that he said some kid cut him in line. Before that, you were busy wiping his butt, even though he does it on his own at Grandma's house.

Sound familiar? You've got tons of company. Like, for instance, Joy Schoffler of Austin, TX. “My three-and-a-half-year-old daughter, Isabella, will ask to be carried down the stairs,” she admits. “She sees me holding her brother and wants to be picked up, too. Of course, Tyler is ten months and can't walk, and Isabella can. But if I'm running out the door late, picking her up is easier than stopping and saying no.” Schoffler needs to start an online support group with Robin Parker of Atlanta, mother of 2 ½-year-old Thomas: “He's learned to bring his dad or me any challenging task because we'll do it for him,” she says.

Why do so many of us wait on our kids hand and foot, or micromanage their lives to jaw-dropping extremes? Are we trying to elevate troubleshooting to an Olympic sport (or land our own reality show)? There's plenty of evidence that this coddling is as unhealthy for them as it is exhausting for us. So you've gotta stop. But how? Read on for some insights, plus advice that'll help you land your crazy copter.

What the Heli Is Going on?

Think back to your own childhood: Your folks probably didn't hover nearly as much as you do. Chances are, you got to play in the yard unattended, or even made your own snacks. Turns out some pretty powerful technological, economic, and social factors have turned us into a generation of over-zealous moms and dads, experts say.

For starters, there's the explosion of cyberspace, and media in general: “Parenting information is available twenty-four-seven,” observes Christie Barnes, author of *The Paranoid Parents Guide: Worry Less, Parent Better, and Raise a Resilient Child*. “You can go online and find out every scary thing that could happen to your child. You can also investigate every illness. So there's endless opportunity for fear.” At the same time, the rules for setting your little one on the path to lifelong success have become murkier than ever, adds Margaret Nelson, a professor of sociology at Middlebury College, in Vermont, and author of *Parenting Out of Control: Anxious Parents in Uncertain Times*. “Even if you've managed to be financially comfortable and happy, you're aware your child may not be able to duplicate what you've accomplished, even if he does exactly what you did,” she explains. “So you ask yourself ‘What should I provide him with?’ Without an answer, you start trying to provide absolutely everything you possibly can, including too much help. Kids with overbearing moms may have more anxiety and depression.

How to Stop Helicopter Parenting –continued

Time to Back Off

Once you've gotten used to being The Parent from Heli, it's hard to give up your pilot's license. There's even a social element to it, notes Barnes: "So many times, our worries about our kids are what we talk about with other moms," she says. "There's almost a feeling that if you're not worrying enough, there must be something wrong with you. Worrying feels like love." But a growing body of evidence indicates that being a (s)mother or a super-protective dad can backfire, badly. Among the latest studies is one from North Carolina State University, in which researchers studied kids and their parents in 20 parks over a two-month period. They found that children whose folks hovered and fretted were far less apt to engage in spontaneous play and missed out on some much-needed exercise.

It's not just kids' little bodies that suffer when you hover; their psyches can pay the price, too. Psychologists at the University of Washington studied more than 200 kids and their moms for three years, and found that when a child already had pretty good judgment and self-control, having a heli-mom who provided too much guidance and not enough independence raised his risk of becoming anxious or depressed. The kids in the study were mostly a little older (9 on average at the study's start), but it's easy to see how a micromanaging mom could frustrate a child of any age.

And what's all this doing to you? Probably nothing good either. One study showed that parents who judge their own self-worth by their children's accomplishments report sadness and diminished contentment with life in general. They appear to have less happy marriages, too, says Nelson, who interviewed approximately 100 parents and found that as the amount of time they spend on childcare rises, "personal relationships seem to be the first thing to go." So don't go there! Keep reading for great ways to let go of your helicopter parenting ways.

Get a Grip

OK, so now we've (hopefully!) convinced you that quality parenting doesn't mean constant hovering. But how do you start to ease up? Sounds tough, but it can be done. Here, advice from the trenches—including both pros and real parents!

Be a submarine mom or dad instead, says Silvana Clark, author of *Fun-Filled Parenting: A Guide to Laughing More and Yelling Less*. "Instead of hovering around your child, stay close by—in case of real danger—but mostly out of sight, so he gets out of the habit of running to you for every problem."

Ask your child's other care-givers what tasks he does when you're not around, then hold him to that standard at home, says Natalie Caine of Empty Nest Support Services, in Los Angeles, who frequently leads parenting groups that include helicopter moms. Does he put on his own rain boots at preschool but whine for you to do it on weekends? Insist you cut the crusts on his sandwiches, even though he'll eat crusts at your sister-in-law's house? Don't give in.

Make your kid a résumé, says Clark. "Take a piece of paper and write 'Sally is three. Here are some cool things Sally can do by herself.' Then list some of her abilities, like clearing her plate and putting her stuffed animals on her bed, and put a star next to each. Every time your child masters a new task, add it to the list, with the star. She'll be much less apt to ask you to wait on her, since she'll be so proud." And as you look at the growing list, you'll have evidence that you don't need to provide concierge service after all. "There's almost a feeling that if you don't worry enough, something's wrong with you," says Barnes.

Practice some basic playground skills with your child, says *Paranoid Parents* author Christie Barnes. "Show him how to kick a ball, climb on the mini-monkey bars, or even just go down the slide. If you see he can do these things safely, you'll feel more comfortable sitting back on the bench during his next park play date," she says.

Sit down and have a cup of coffee. Make a brief time every day when your butt's in a chair and your metaphorical copter is on the landing pad, too. "If your child calls for you and it isn't an emergency, say 'I am drinking coffee right now,'" advises Caine. "If he really needs you, he'll come to you, and if you do this enough, he may stop asking for help with every little thing so often."

Help your child get the picture. “I found myself being a helicopter mom and knew I needed to change,” says Dawn Arnold of Mazon, IL, mother of a 5-year-old. “I filled a small photo album with pictures of my daughter doing all the things she needs to do in the morning before school, after school, and before bed. Now she follows along every day. It lets her be independent, but the things that I think are important are still getting done.”

Count to ten before liftoff. “You know how people always say that you should count to ten before you lose your temper?” says Clark. “I tell parents, as long as their child's not in danger, to count to ten before answering his cry of 'Help me! or 'I can't!' In that time, you may realize it's not necessary to rush in after all...or your child may decide he can actually do whatever it is that needs to be done all by himself.”

The Way We Whirrr

For the helicopter parent, these things really get their choppers going...

Trifling toy traumas

Little Thomas Parker has a train set, and sometimes the tracks jiggle apart. “I'll stand there and watch him trying to fix it for a minute, but I don't like to see him struggle. Before he reaches the breaking point, we step in,” his mom, Robin, confesses.

School snafus

Paranoid Parents author Christie Barnes heard of one mom who called school to complain that a kid had stared at her son. It turned out he'd stared because her son had drawn a flower on his nose.

Sticky Social Situations

“We took our three-year-old son, Jackson, to our friends' house for their kids' Halloween party,” says Chasity O'Steen. “Jackson didn't really know their kids, let alone their kids' friends. I kept wanting to walk across the room and help him enter the group.”

Clothes Calls

Hair and makeup artist Candice Isaac, of Baltimore, still selects her 4-year-old daughter Sierra's clothes. “Sierra would pick five options and stand there trying to choose, and I have to get out of the house to meet clients,” she says.

So what is your kid capable of? These are all tasks he can start to learn as he moves past toddlerhood:

1. Zip his pants
2. Put on a belt
3. Make an easy sandwich, like cream cheese and jelly, using a dull knife. (Hint: Toast the bread, so it's a little easier to handle.)
4. Sort socks
5. Fold towels
6. Help set the table
7. Put clothes in the laundry basket

How do you Catch a Turkey?

(From a child's point of view)

3-DayClass

Isaiah – I would grab a net and run fast and catch it.

Havalee – You catch the feathers then you cook him and eat him up.

Eligh – You could catch him with a net and cook him up.

Greyson – I would just run really fast and catch him in a net then eat him up.

Eliana – with a net then eat it.

Logan – You vacuum him up and drop him in a net that's how you do it Mrs. Nowicki

Riley – I would make a turkey trap out of metal. Then I would eat it for Thanksgiving and have rice, beans and soup and that's the end of how you catch a turkey,

Marlon – with a fishing pole then I would put it in a trap, then we will eat it.

Vincent – I catch the turkey.

Rocco – I would run and get in front of him to catch him then I would burn him so I could eat him, then I would eat it.

Zayne – You catch it with a net.

Boden – I'll run and I'll have a net and I'll catch it and I'll give it to my Mom and Dad for Thanksgiving.

Matthew – Get a net then a jet pack then fly super speed then when the turkey was laying down I would catch it.

Jameson – You try to hide then you sneak behind the turkey then you catch it.

Coralyn – I would dress up like the Mommy turkey and I would make him hug me then I would take him to my house.

Samaira – You run and try to catch the turkey.

Cassidy – Wait for it to land then catch it with a net.

Taylor – Just wait then catch it using a net.

Izabelle – get a net catch it then cook it up.

2-DayClass

Wyatt - I would grab it.

Kai - You would just run really fast then grab it then eat it.

Si - You just catch a turkey with running.

Diem - I would catch him with a fishing stick.

Asher - I catch him in a bag.

Sasha - I would get a net and catch him.

Ella - I would run fast at it then I would shoot it down.

Austin - I would go fast then bend down and get him.

Dominic - Grab it and kill it then eat it.

Evie - I have an idea you could do a rope.

Kaitlyn - I would run and squeeze him.

Eden - I would get my doggie too steal him away.

Johanna - I will wear these shoes then I will catch him then I will roast him.

Saylor - Hit him then get him down.

Shane - Maybe I can catch him in my arms.

Hannah - I would just run so fast and jump in the air.

Baylon - I don't know but I would eat him.

Brooklyn - Turkeys are fast so you have to run fast then grab it up and cook it in the oven.

How do you make Stone Soup?

(From the 3-Day Class)

You start with a stone, then add:

- Sugar and water in a big pot
- Cucumbers
- Corn
- Pepper, salt
- Carrots, pickles, peas, lettuce, cheese, protein

Stir it all around and put the pot on the stove, turn it to 12 and cook for about an hour.

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