



Serra Preschool

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

September
2018
Newsletter

Mrs. Nowicki's Message

Hello Parents,

As summer comes to an end and my thoughts turn toward another school year, I can't help but think of what a special place Serra is for kids, parents and teachers. Kids get to do what comes naturally to them. They get to "play." Teachers work hard at creating a classroom environment that promotes learning through play. Parents get to be a part of that journey. A journey that is about children discovering, theorizing, experiencing, and learning. Welcome to the "Journey." I do not think you will be disappointed.

The teachers at Serra understand that play is the dominant activity that leads development. Children learn best not when they are told what to do, but when they act upon their environment and construct knowledge for themselves. Lev Vygotsky, a leading childhood theorist, strongly stressed this point, explaining that "in play the child is always behaving beyond his age, above his usual everyday behavior, in play he is as it were, a

head above himself."

Researchers have concluded that children who actively participate in dramatic play during preschool and early elementary years are advanced in intellectual development, score higher on tests of imagination and creativity, and have an enhanced ability to think inventively. According to Piaget, play is vital to cognitive development. However he explains that children are not acquiring new skills during their dramatic play episodes, instead, they are practicing skills they have recently acquired in non-play situations. Without this practice in play contexts, Piaget explains, their skills would be quickly lost. Play allows children to assimilate information they are getting from their environment into their minds and helps them make sense of it. An example of this would be when we see children at preschool whose parents just had another baby. Those kids will often take on the role of mother or father caring for a new baby. Or children who just went to the doctors and got shots

may take on the role of doctor in preschool giving dolls or friends exams and shots.

Dramatic play also helps children socially. Generally preschoolers play becomes more social as they get older. By engaging in socio-dramatic play (play that involves more than one player) their social skills were enhanced. Participation in this type of play requires a high level of social ability, including cooperation, negotiation, and appreciation of another's play efforts. The amount and complexity of fantasy play have been found to be predictors of social skills, popularity, and positive social activity. I think it is fair to say that young children who engage frequently in social fantasy play are more socially competent than those who play less frequently. Something else to consider is that children, due to limited vocabularies and understandings of emotions, are generally unable to verbally express their feelings. Instead they express them through the safe outlet of play. Dramatic play allows children the opportunity to use toys to say things



Patty Nowicki
3 Day Director

that they cannot verbalize, to do things they might otherwise feel uncomfortable doing and to express feelings and emotions they might be reprimanded for expressing in other contexts. Lastly drama encourages children to put themselves into the place of another in their imagination. It helps children develop empathy and awareness of others.

The teachers at Serra take this information very seriously. We use it to plan environments for the children that allow them to practice the skills they are acquiring as they grow. Adult support for the dramatic play area can take several forms. For example in the doll corner/housekeeping area a child may be imitating family activities. Continued on Pg. 2

Miss Cori's Message

The Value of Community

When my kids were younger, I was very actively involved in MOMS Club of San Clemente. After joining and receiving the first newsletter, I noticed that there was an open spot for the Service Project Coordinator. I knew right away that I wanted to take on this volunteer position. I wanted my children to grow up in a home where service to others is a given. I wanted them to see me care not only about them and our home, but that I cared about my community and the wider world around me.

Susan Parmlee from the Wellness & Prevention Center in San Clemente wrote, "Service to community has lost some of its luster for our youth as many are now required to complete service projects for school credit, membership in honor societies and to spiff up the college entry resume. I suggest we return to encouraging youth to serve because it feels good and because volunteer time is often a great opportunity to learn more about an interest that could morph into a lifetime passion. Instilling the value that helping others is important to overall wellness and should be the inspiration for service, not getting into a top university. So, how do we help our youth revisit the benefits of

volunteering? First, we lead by example, by explaining why we attend a PTA meeting, speak at city council about a cause, or help at the local food bank."

And here you are, embarking on an amazing journey at a co-op preschool where yes, you have to put in a lot of work, but the work is part of belonging to a larger community of families that care about making the 'Serra Experience' special and memorable for their family and for the families around them. Together, the value of community shines, and your children can bask in all that glow! What kind of values come with service? Children and parents learn together the values of commitment, responsibility, leadership, teamwork, problem solving, learning from mistakes, and some say most importantly, emotional benefits like empathy.

So when your children see you put in lots of hours at Serra Preschool, be sure to let them know that you're not just here for them, you're here for the community. You're here to be part of a community, to help it grow and flourish, and to take a step to developing a richer perspective of the world outside your door and beyond.

If I could've changed one thing about my volunteer hours and how my kids



Cori Preisler
2 Day Director

view what I do, I wish I would've spent less time volunteering on the computer, doing paperwork and emails and reports, and spent more time "out in the field." Serra Preschool is the perfect place for that. As you're walking towards our preschool, take a minute to let your children know the value of community.

Love,
Miss Cori

Mrs. Nowicki's Message Continued...

He/ she copies a parent making breakfast. Later he/she pretends to be a parent cooking breakfast. For imitative play an occasional comment such as, "you're using a tea pot," etc. to label materials and give the child an opportunity to respond to the comment may be helpful. Be careful though, a constant stream of such remarks may be tuned out because the child is really concentrating on what he or she is doing. As children play together, conflicts may become frequent. Two other children may want to be "the daddy" or use the stroller at the same time. It sel-

dom occurs to them that the daddies can be neighbors, or that a stroller is not the only way to transport a baby. Adults need to use their own imagination to help children think of alternatives and broaden the scope of the play situation.

We will be helping you learn new ways to communicate with the kids. Please know this is not a race to perfection. Learning to talk to and interact with young children in ways that you never thought of before is a process. We know it takes time to learn and develop new skills and we

will be with you every step of the way.

Fondly, Mrs. Nowicki



Adam's Message

Welcome to Serra Preschool new and returning parents. I know you're all as excited as I am about the start of a new school year at Serra. We as a family have found Serra to be an awesome experience for our son and our family as a whole. **I'm** going to let you in on a great additional resource for your family. Are you ready? **It's** called Max Berg Park. Yes **I'm** talking about the park directly across from our preschool. You probably parked in front of it on your way to the school this evening.

Often times after we finish up our day at Serra we will head over to the park with other students and families. Sometimes we will have as many as a dozen families spending an extra hour or so together at the park. The park is relatively empty at that time until 2ish when Las Palmas gets out of school. Utilizing the park at the end of the school day is a great way to have your child practice what they are learning at Serra in a less structured environment yet still be around friends and family from Serra. Moreover, this is a great way to meet and get to know the other

families at Serra that in some cases you will be working and learning with for the next one, two, three or maybe seven years.

Was there left over snack today? Bring that snack over to the park. Running a few minutes late to the pick-up time at school? Ask another parent to bring your child to the park and meet them there. Bring a blanket, pack a lunch, take younger siblings with you to the park. Does your child have a birthday this week? Order some pizzas and celebrate with your **child's** classmates and Serra families at the park.

Sometimes, it is hard to really get to know the other parents when you are so busy working at the school. However, I have found getting to know the other families one of the greatest things about Serra and it really helps to foster our sense of community and family. We have developed close friendships in the last three years that I know will stand the test of time long after we have left Serra. Developing relationships with each other only makes things better at Serra. Especially if you



Adam Griffith
President

end up looking for someone to cover your shift for the next day at two in the morning the night before. I am looking forward to getting to know all of you and having a great year at Serra. See you at the park.

Adam Griffith,
President

The History of Serra Preschool

Serra Preschool was founded by Lee Steelman and Dean Lyons; two women whose children, Kory and Gus, constantly wanted to play together. The mothers were spending much of their time getting together so their children could play that they decided to let others join in on all the fun. Over a period of months the mothers discussed the possibility of starting a co-operative nursery school. By November of 1965, they were deeply involved in organizing one. When they learned from the Social Welfare Department that they must have a sponsor, they approached the Serra PTA (now Palisades PTA). A committee was formed and the PTA did sponsor the preschool. In June, 1966, the first sessions were held. Serra Preschool has been held in vacant rooms, in various elementary schools, a church, and at present we are fortunate to have use of the YAA facility.

September 2018 Newsletter

Hello Song

Let's say hello, to everyone.

Let's start the day and have some fun.

When someone says hello to you,
you say hello its the thing to do.

Let's say hello to everyone, and add a smile
when you say hello.

Hello, hello, I'm glad to see you today!!!!!!!

Dad Joke of the Month

Where do you learn to make ice cream?

Sunday School!



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(you pay what you would normally pay anyways, but Amazon will donate funds)

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Dates to Know:

- Aug 29 | First Day 3Day
- Aug 30 | First Day 2Day
- Sept 3 | Labor Day No School
- Sept 12 | Board Meeting
- Sept 12 | Street Sweeping
- Sept 13 | Street Sweeping
- Sept 20 | Street Sweeping
- Sept 21 | Street Sweeping
- Sept 21 | Story Walk 3Day
- Sept 26 | General Meeting
- Sept 29 | Six Week Clean Up



August & September Birthdays

- Aug 6 | Brody Hegarty
- Aug 9 | Harper Hyjek
- Aug 13 | Barret McCormack
- Aug 20 | Sawyer Steyermen
- Aug 22 | Bodhi Griffith
- Sept 3 | Olivia Rose Chaffee
- Sept 12 | Lily Heard

