



A Non-Profit Corporation Founded in 1973 756 Cherryvale Rd., Boulder, Colorado 80303 (303) 494-4112 September, 2004
Disclaimer: Views expressed in this newsletter are provided for informational purposes and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of Our School.

From the Chair

The 2004-2005 school year is off to a good start. The new children who attended the summer session now have an experiential sense of *their* school's place and have a range of play possibilities and human connections. The summer session's returning children strengthened their abilities to function within a group they already know and helped integrate the new children. When at their best, they have inadvertently been peer models in constructive and creative play. We expect the fall session transition to be smooth, and we thank the children for being so open and eager to learn.

Many thanks to all for a very impressive workday! People came on time and were very efficient. The outer play structure and children's chairs were sanded and painted, and the sand area and materials were cleaned and repaired. Parents became acquainted, and there was a relaxed and friendly mood. It couldn't have been better! Our special thanks go to Brian Pratt, who employed his skills and own equipment to organize the 'crew' for sanding and painting the playground, and to Sandra Svoboda and Daniel Gerace who did a splendid job with the planter in front of the "art room" outside.

Again many, many thanks to all! The efforts and participation have allowed Jim and I to set up the school in a relaxed manner. It is really nice to take a break and just walk around the school enjoying the sight and smell of flowers!!

Board Meetings

Our first Board meeting was held Tuesday, August 31st. The new Board has established the **fall calendar** including setting all the dates for upcoming Board meetings, session meetings, workshop/seminars, social events, etc. Please refer to page 8 of this newsletter for a complete list and mark your calendars to attend. The Board meetings are open to anyone, but required for those elected or appointed to it. Minutes are also available in the Parents' Room. In all appropriate instances, you can be assured of confidentiality when the Board discusses an issue concerning a child or a family.

PLEASE KEEP THE FOLLOWING IN YOUR FILE FOR REFERENCE

Protocol for information, issues, confidences, etc.

For any **inquiry or concern** you may have about this **co-operative and its administration**, contact the room parents in your session(s). If they can't readily answer your questions, they will consult with the Chair to either find the information, determine if it is an item for the Executive Board to resolve or if it needs to be directed to a Board Officer. For matters **concerning the children's program** and your own and other **children** in any given day session, **go directly to Jim and Yvonne**. It is their professional responsibility to inform you and give you answers that are substantially accurate.

For personal **financial matters**, go directly to Jim, the Treasurer, so your confidentiality can be respected.

When you have an issue that affects your family and therefore your children, please talk to the teachers

directly. They are bound by professional ethics and will decide with you what needs to stay confidential.

Please, do not use the **"grapevine"** if anything puzzles or bothers you. Officers of the school are there to help you. Use them! Please, however, do not hold room parents or others as **hostages of confidence** pertaining to school matters! This puts them in an awkward position as they need to be objective and fair to help you, and truthful when reporting to the Board.

Beginning School Reminders

Heads: Hats should be on children's heads **before** they get out of the cars. We are very concerned about the heat on their head and their eyes need protection year round. Sunglasses are not sufficient as they get scratched and lost in no time. As you know, Colorado has a high incidence of skin cancer and cataracts that may not show up until adulthood. So let's

protect them now and start a good and lifelong habit. May we also suggest that this applies to babies and toddlers!

Sunscreen: It is required by Human Services Regulations that children wear sunscreen. You may apply it yourselves, or the adults at school can do it. Of course, children are not allowed to apply it on their faces by themselves!

Feet: Socks protect still tender toes. Socks can keep fungus and blisters away. Children need to bring or wear sneakers or shoes (without smooth soles!) so they can run or climb safely.

Body wear: Children need **clothes in which they can move, get dressed and undressed easily by themselves, be actively safe and competent, and take risks while running and climbing**. Avoid shirts with turtlenecks as they are hard to take off on their own. Let them wear **pants and shorts with elastic waists**. All these encourage self-

sufficiency and a sense of competence.

Cleanliness: When you co-op, you'll notice that we always ask children to **use a tissue** when they sneeze or cough - not their elbow or hand! Then they **wash their hands**. They also do the latter if they pick their noses. They are required to wash after using the toilet and before snack. It's good hygiene and a good health prevention habit.

If they need to be **changed**, they do it **standing up** and then wash their hands. They are fully capable of doing this - they are not babies anymore!

When young children paint, paint may get on their clothes or on another's clothes. The paint is nontoxic and supposedly "washable". You may not care, and will appreciate and accept the new art form on the shirt. However, if you *do* care, we may put your child in a school shirt (as we do with sand) or you may bring one of your own. We do not use aprons. They hamper movements, give children an implicit

message that their work is "dirty" and close neighbors are not protected. We do not use the labels "dirty" or "messy" with them when their activities are constructive and child appropriate. When these labels are used, some avoid those activities or the more rebellious get "dirty" to get attention or be testy. Paint, for instance, is color, texture and form and the experience is worth exploring.

Forms: All forms are due now! Completely fill out and bring all forms at the same time! Even if they look like duplicates, they are for different agencies. We follow Health and Human Services regulations, which require that non-compliance for any type of vaccination be posted on the school bulletin board.

School picnic: Mark your calendars for Sunday, September 12th. The Fall school picnic is a **potluck**. Please bring a dish to feed your family plus four additional people and we'll all share. (That's the nice part!) Bring your own drinks

(alcohol is allowed), cups, silverware, plates and napkins, etc. If you wish, you may bring a blanket to sit on the grass, an adult soccer ball, something for baseball, etc. **Try to sit with people you don't know and move about** so you can get acquainted with prospective friends. (That's the other nice part!) The kitchen and, of course, the toilets are accessible. The indoor play areas are off limits. The picnic is from 4:00-7:00 p.m. If we absolutely need to **cancel** because of weather conditions, room parents will call or e-mail by 2 p.m. The rain date for the picnic is Sept. 19th from 3:00 – 6:00 pm.

Co-oping and Room Parents: Co-oping schedules are developed by the **Room Parents for the month and/or semester**. To plan for emergencies and sicknesses, each session day has both a scheduled co-oper and a back-up co-oper. If you are the scheduled co-oper, it is your responsibility to attend that session. Please also **be free on your back-up** day in case you have to substitute. Please

contact the room parent now if you are aware of any days that you are unavailable for co-opping or for being the back-up co-oper.

If you are unable to co-op on your scheduled day, it is your responsibility to contact the back-up person as your replacement, and inform the teachers and room parent of the changes in scheduling. If, by chance, the back-up co-oper is unavailable to replace the scheduled co-oper, it then becomes the responsibility of the back-up person to find a replacement for the scheduled co-oper. The back-up co-oper must then notify the teachers and room parent of the changes to the schedule.

Also, if you wish to switch your co-op day ahead of time, it's your responsibility to find someone that is willing to do so. The **"switchers"** have to inform teachers and room parents, and make the change on the school co-op calendar on the bulletin board in the Parent's room. In case of a last minute emergency, call the school to inform the

teachers about your switch.

Don't forget - many families are willing to exchange baby sitting on your co-op day. Ask around.

The scheduled co-oper is responsible to be present as indicated on the calendar. However, fathers, mothers, relatives, nannies, etc. are encouraged to come to co-op, either part time or full time. The **diversity expands the children's horizon.** If a spouse or relative other than the person named on the co-op schedule will co-op, please let Jim or Yvonne know ahead of time.

The **Room parents also are your main contact** for much information and will steer you through the administration maze helping you with where to go for issues or concerns, car pool coordination, etc. Remember, they are not obligated to keep your confidences on matters related to or of school concerns (such as issues related to officers, other parents, teachers or children and their program) as they need to

report to the Board for discussion, resolution, information or help. In doubt, go directly to the Chair, Yvonne. To keep things open, fruitful, and still protect a family's privacy, officers on the Board do not divulge names unless absolutely necessary.

On your co-opping day, don't feel you have to be busy. We recommend that you **observe** rather than making contact with children at first. The more you observe, the more you'll get insights in some facet of each child's personality and their teachers' interactions. Observing is not being idle. It helps one register in one's mind mini-events and interactions which one can classify and analyze for deeper understanding. Then when you start interacting, you are comfortable in finding the approach that is discrete and pertinent without interference in the flow of children's play. The teachers will also give you clues for a particular interaction when needed, answer your inquiries and review with you at the end of the session.

Library: Our lending library is used extensively by the children in all sessions. We do not vouch for all the books' literary qualities. We have around 1500 books, fiction and non-fiction, so we encourage diversity of reading. (Ask teachers for special requests.)

To keep track of books going in and out, here are the procedures:

Borrowing

1. A teacher helps a child with a book selection from the shelves in the "guinea room".
2. A teacher registers the date and child's full name on the card in the book jacket.
3. The child borrower gets a card to "write" his/her name and stamp or decorate, then puts it in the book jacket. (Please be patient; this latter process is important for the child.)

4. The borrowed book is put in the child's bag or backpack or a plastic bag to keep it clean, avoid loss and to encourage a child's responsibility. However, the driver is ultimately responsible for the book.

Returning

1. Same procedure as #4 above
2. The best and simplest system we found is **to return** books directly to one of the teachers. *(Please do not put the books back on the shelves or they won't be entered into the computer as a return.)*

Damaged and lost books

1. Repair books before returning.
2. As listed in the Our School Policies #3.3e, replace (or pay for) books beyond repair (water damaged, torn or missed pages,

scribbling, etc.) or lost books.

The rationale for the previous is to support parents as they help children understand that books are precious objects for the enjoyment of learning. Also, when a book is damaged or lost it is costly to replace or may be out-of-print.

From the Treasurer: Please check your tuition statement to ensure it reflects your membership agreement, and your correct name and address. Inform the Treasurer **immediately** of a change of address and phone number. Tell the Treasurer, Jim, **and Jim only**, if you need to discuss any change in your tuition payments and/or tuition assistance. For those of you that pay your tuition payment by the month (including administration and building fees, when applicable), a statement is sent to you on the 15th of each month.

Reflections for a Good School Beginning

By Jim and Yvonne

Seeking autonomy is a lifelong undertaking. Early childhood is its necessary foundation. What was pertinent interaction for early toddlers is no longer so. This demands an interaction adjustment and more mature expectations from parents. Parents also have to be convinced and trust that the school environment is safe, and that the staff knows how to attend to the individual developmental needs of children and how to offer an appropriate and challenging program in which children feel secure, but also free to take risks in their engagements. When parents are reassured and supported by the teachers' knowledge and understanding, they also mature as they let go of former interactions, and, therefore, can better encourage responsible autonomy in their children's new and future ventures.

Autonomy (i.e. responsible independence) starts with the most simple but important steps for preschoolers - self-sufficiency in taking care of one's things and self, taking initiative for one's own activities, and, the most difficult task of all, saying good-bye without feeling emotionally and physically abandoned. As autonomy grows, a parent can be confident that their child feels support and love whether the parent is present or away. Below are some professional rationales and answers to frequent questions posed by parents over the years.

Why won't my child get dressed and eat breakfast before coming to school? It makes everyone tense.

Making some **transitions** from one phase of time to another is difficult for many children (and adults, too). Make allowance for the time **your child needs**. When not possible, avoid the "battle of will". Just bring your child in pajamas. A teacher will eventually help him/her into their day clothes. The same applies for breakfast - some children can't eat right away in the morning (nor some adults either.) Just tell the teachers. They will provide breakfast early in the session day. Pressure before school can make a child rebel with tantrums or refuse to go to school - the "battle of wills" is on for autonomy or control. Avoid having them watch TV, a video or be on a computer game. Such seducing distractions add to ever more difficult transitions (the same applies for lunch, dinner and bedtime, of course.) This is pertinent to **children's clothing** also. Do not battle over dresses or cowboy boots or sandals, etc. Make sure your child's bags include an appropriate change of clothing so they may engage freely, comfortably and safely in play activities rather than refrain from engaging in them due to clothing choices. Again, the teachers will help with the transition.

Shall I stay or leave?

Various factors influence this decision all relating to the introductory paragraphs of this article. First, **do not make promises beforehand**. This can be a relief to your parent anxiety by letting your child control a decision that's your responsibility to make. Your degree of confidence and that of your child is the best resource. You may say, "We'll decide what *is best once you are at school*." Then, together with the teachers, **you can**

decide in the interest of the child if its appropriate for you to leave, stay for awhile or the whole time, or come back early. Please, don't "bargain" with "o.k., 5 more minutes."

I'm ready to leave. But what if my child tugs at me and/or cries?

Your decision is made, clear and concrete. You give one kiss or hug, not more. The child has to trust that you mean it, you are confident and you will not be manipulated. You know your child is in good hands, even though she still wants to hang on to the habitual and less mature physical bond. You need to have her trust your words and not let her control you. So you go. She'll realize that the teachers can also help her. Once you leave, they will assess if the child is anxious, angry with you and has a temper tantrum, or is somewhat confused about the new situation. In any of these cases, **a teacher will call within about half an hour** to update you. Also, if necessary, they will ask you to come back right away or a bit later, and will give you the information you need to relieve your own anxiety. Also, you are always welcome to call within 30 minutes or so after leaving.

My child wants me to carry him, hold his hand, carry his backpack or hang it up. Should I cater to those requests?

Is it snowing, very windy or wet? Then possibly carry him if it is for his safety. If he can walk independently, then support that autonomy. Holding hands in this instance is a message of a child's inadequacy rather than of fondness; encourage him to go ahead of you, walking to the school and inside it. What he has in his backpack or bag is his responsibility, encourage it. Again, don't pressure him but display confidence in his readiness for independence.

What if my child wants to bring something to school?

Of course he can! It's part of his transition and link to the school - as long as it's **his own initiative**. The reverse also applies from school to home! Whenever the teachers believe something is appropriate or inappropriate, fragile, dangerous, interesting, legitimate, etc., trust they will handle it with sensitivity and will let your child borrow the item or not, as well as tell you about the interaction.

Should I direct my child into an activity, or tell her to "have fun" before I leave?

Avoid making it sound like *your* agenda, implicitly or explicitly, so that she may take **initiative at her own tempo**. Some children like to observe or walk about for awhile, some like to talk to the teachers first, some just zero in on something immediately, etc. Trust the teachers to know how to interact with each one. Telling the child to "have fun, draw a picture, etc." is also an *adult agenda* as far as a young child is concerned. Again, to promote autonomy, let a child **decide for herself** what is fun, interesting, risky, involving, etc. Whether the child can articulate it or not, they will draw from their underlying experience and demeanor to make their decisions.

My child told me "X hurt me, or I hurt X," or "X doesn't want to play with me," or "a teacher, adult was mean to me," etc. What am I to believe?

Perceptions may or may not be factual. (That's sometimes true for adults, is it not?) So it does not really mean the child is lying. However, sometimes children think "something" happened because of a former association or experience, therefore this expectation comes

to mind. Sometimes they over-dramatize a mild event because of an adults intent at interrogation or because they do get intense attention from an adult. Sometimes there could be *some* truth to the child’s perspective and an accurate report and understanding need to be given to the parents. We urge you to **always directly confer with the teachers** to sort this out so we can better help the children together.

We hope we have given sufficient understanding on behalf of young children. Still, come to us anytime you think we need some information or we can give some to you. We all want to make your children’s and your own experience a most interesting and pleasant one.

Calendar

September 11	Open House, 10 am-12 pm, families welcome
September 12	All School Picnic, 4 pm-7 pm
September 16	2-Day Session Meeting
September 18	Open House, 10 am-12 pm, families welcome
September 23	3-Day Session Meeting
September 28	Board Meeting
October 7	4-Day Session Meeting
October 12	Workshop/Seminar: Setting Limits
October 19	Semi-Annual Meeting (Required)
October 26	Board Meeting
November TBA	Fundraiser Kick-Off Party (Required)
November 3	Workshop/Seminar: Kindergarten
November 11	2-Day Session Meeting
November 16	3-Day Session Meeting
November 23	4-Day Session Meeting
November 24, 25, 26	Thanksgiving Break
November 30	Board Meeting
December 2	Workshop/Seminar: Children’s Literature
December 6	2-Day Session Meeting
December 14	Board Meeting (TBD)
December 20-January 3	Holiday Break

- All meetings are from 7:00 – 9:00 pm at Our School Preschool unless otherwise noted. Please plan to attend the whole meeting.
- Meetings are for parents only unless labeled as “all school” or “families welcome.”
- Meetings are required as noted. Session meetings and Seminars are highly recommended.

This document was created with Win2PDF available at <http://www.daneprairie.com>.
The unregistered version of Win2PDF is for evaluation or non-commercial use only.