



# Co-op Community News

From the North Seattle Cooperative Preschool Parent Advisory Council

November 2002

## Never be late for school again!

.....or at least be on time more often

By Tom Hobson, co-op parent

"Quit dawdling!"

"Hurry up!"

"Do you want to be late for school?"

You see it coming, but there doesn't seem to be anything you can do. You tried planning and preparation. You set your alarm a half hour early. You had long, calm talks with your child detailing your expectations. Yet, day after day, you feel the knot tightening in your gut as the school bell draws nigh. Once again you badger and threaten to get the kids out the door. The worst part is that after all that effort you're still 15 minutes late. No one wants to nag or threaten. It leaves our children sulky and we feel like we're turning into the kind of parents we promised we would never be. It feels, however, like the only option left. How would you feel to get to school on time, and have your own child take the lead in making it happen? It's possible.

### *Listen to yourself*

Try this little experiment. Point to a dirty carpet and say to your spouse, "Vacuum the living room." You don't need to actually try this, do you? The mental experiment is enough: there is a very low probability that your carpet will get cleaned. Nobody likes to be told what to do and this includes children. Ultimately, you might get the results you want because you are bigger and stronger, but is this the kind of parent you want to be? Listen to yourself as you go through your morning routine (you can even tape record yourself for a few mornings). What things are you saying to your child? Most of us are addicted to directing children, especially during transitional periods like getting ready for school. (e.g., "Pull up your socks," "Finish your breakfast.") Many of us try to soften these statements by turning them into questions (e.g., "Wash your face,

*(Please see page 2)*

## Inside this issue

**Never be Late Again..... pages 1-3**

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## Event Calender

( )=Seattle Public Schools Only.



(Nov. 18-26 Elementary Parent-Teacher Conferences)

**Nov 28-29—Thanksgiving**

(Dec. 4 Two-Hour Early Dismissal for Students)

**Dec. 23 -Jan.3—Winter Break**

**Jan. 20-Martin Luther King Day**  
(Jan. 27-Seattle Public School break btw. Semesters. )

(Feb 5 Two-Hour Early Dismissal for Students)

**Feb 17 Presidents Day Holiday**

**Feb 18-21 Mid-Winter Break (no classes)**

(Feb 26 Two-Hour Early Dismissal for Students)

## Co-op Openings

**See page 3**

For a current listing of cop-op openings please visit our website:

<http://northonline.sccd.ctc.edu/parented/openings.html>



## Co-op Community News

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okay?"), but to your child's ear, it's the same. The human tendency is to rebel against being bossed. We might do what we're told, but ultimately we grow to resent it. Our inner child shrieks, "You're not the boss of me!" Can we expect our children to be any different? Also listen for questions to which you know the answer or don't have an answer (e.g., "Didn't I tell you to come downstairs?" "How many times have I told you to put on your shoes?"). Your child either recognizes these for what they are (directions) or feels challenged to actually answer the unanswerable - a stress inducing situation at best.

### Putting your child in charge

The reason we rebel against directional statements is that we want to feel in control. Being told by others what to do seems to undermine our autonomy. It seems that one of the worst ways to get children to do what you want is to tell them to do it. Am I saying that the key to getting out on time is to put your child in charge? Yes. This does not mean you must sacrifice your own wisdom. In fact, Child Protective Services would soon knock on your door if you did. But getting to school on time is as much your child's responsibility as yours. Sharing responsibility with your child provides her with a sense of pride and control, and takes some pressure off of you; maybe even loosening that knot in the pit of your stomach.

### Speaking informatively with your child

Try our mental experiment again, but this time simply state, "The living room carpet is dirty." Don't point, don't make "knowing" eyes, just make the statement. You still might have to do it yourself, but the probability of the carpet getting vacuumed goes way up. Because you merely state the fact, you create a circumstance which puts your spouse in control - he makes his own decision concerning the dirty

carpet. Speaking informatively with children works in the same way. Instead of directing your child, limit yourself to informative statements. You may talk about yourself (e.g., "I don't want to be late for school," "I can help you with your shoes.") Talk about what your child sees, hears, or senses (e.g., "Your pants are on your bed," "Your toothbrush is on the counter."). Talk about possibilities and connections to other things (e.g., "Yesterday we missed circle time because we were late." Once you have replaced directional statements with informational statements for awhile, it's time to try the descriptive cue sequence.

### The descriptive cue sequence

The descriptive cue sequence is a powerful tool, developed by North Seattle Community College instructor and early childhood education authority Tom Drummond, to help you speak informatively. The sequence gradually increases the amount of "push" with each step. Don't move on to the next step as long as you are getting the results you want.

#### 1. Give cue

- -Instead of directing your child to get ready for school, give a cue, such as, "It's time to get dressed."
- -Some parents might prefer sounding a signal of some kind, like a bell or a song.

#### 2. No help

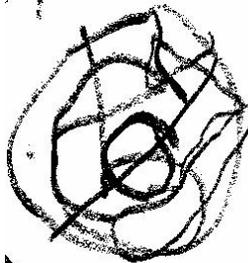
- Wait for 10 to 15 seconds
- Look for appropriate behavior and reward it by describing it or with a non-verbal recognition (e.g., thumbs up, big smile)

#### 3. Describe (see following page)

- Describe what needs to be done without telling your child what to do
- Give facts on what needs doing, where things are, etc.

#### 4. Model

- Model the desired behavior by doing some yourself



"Spider Web" by Annika Evans, Age 2

Newsletter Staff

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Parent Education Program





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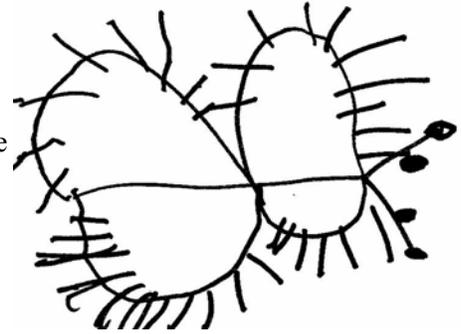
- Talk aloud about what you are doing

### 5. Direct

- If inaction is still a problem, give a simple, clear direction, e.g., "Please put on your socks."

### 6. Set a contingency

- Make the next activity dependent on completion of the task, e.g., "When you put on your socks, you can pick out which Hot Wheel you want to take in the car."



Corinne, Age 4-1/2

As you grow accustomed to this process, you'll find a decreasing need to employ higher numbers on the list. Many parents find it helpful to post the descriptive cue sequence on their wall, at least until they learn the procedure. You may not notice an immediate change -- it can take time for you child to grow accustomed to the feeling of control and responsibility. Stick with it and your child will gain a sense of pride and power as he is given responsibility for his own preparation for school. You will, however, feel an immediate change in how you feel about yourself. You won't nag or threaten and very quickly you will feel like the kind of parent you always wanted to be.

And if that's not enough, you and your child will get to school when you want to . . . at least most of the time.

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"Trick or Treat, Come In" by  
Dylan Bradley, Age 2-1/2

## Co-op Openings

For a current listing of cop-op openings please visit our website:

<http://northonline.sccd.ctc.edu/parented/openings.html>

### Current Openings in 3 to 5s Only



Co-op	# of Openings	Contact
Broadview-	2	Michelle Meyerdierks 367-2506
Ingraham	4	Michelle Beaumont 522-7495
Victory Heights PM	2	Rae Keyes 522-1326
Wallingford - AM	1	Marie Coffland 547-8648
Wallingford - PM	2	Sara Harmon 547-6315
Woodland Park	1	Stephanie Cogan 985-2054



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### **PAC: What and Why**

by Tom Hobson, Co-op Parent

As we step into high gear with another annual raffle, we thought it might be a good time to take a look at the bigger picture of our North Seattle Community College-affiliated co-op system's Parent Advisory Council (PAC) and its activities. For most of us, our contact with PAC is this newsletter and the raffle - PAC activities, indeed, but only two of the many benefits we receive through the work of this body.

#### ***Scholarships***

The societal and individual benefits of preschool can hardly be overstated. Study after study demonstrate that quality early childhood education is a strong indicator of a child's future academic success. Many of these studies show that even as early as kindergarten, there is a marked difference between those who have had preschool experience and those who haven't. Unfortunately, our public schools don't provide this important opportunity, leaving many lower income children without access to preschool education, forcing individual families to do without. One of the primary functions of your Parent Advisory Council (PAC) is to make the cooperative preschool experience available to those not otherwise able to afford it. Nearly 90 percent of PAC's annual budget is distributed to needy families in the form of scholarships. Our Scholarship Committee has a difficult job determining who qualifies for financial aid. At some level everyone feels like they deserve assistance, but our committee, working with NSCC staff and members of the community, make sure that only those who would not otherwise be able to attend a co-op receive assistance. Qualifying families may receive scholarships equaling up to 50 percent of tuition costs. Annually, around 75 families, or 10 percent of our co-op population, are assisted in this way.

#### ***Parent Education and Enrollment Support***

With the other 10 percent of its budget, PAC provides a number of other important benefits to its member co-ops, including quarterly parent education seminars and lectures, featuring some of our area's leading experts on children and education. Past events have included such important topics as sibling rivalry, emotional intelligence, and the effects of television on our children's developing brains. Watch these pages for dates and subjects. PAC also supports co-ops by orchestrating the open registration to enroll new children, monitoring openings at individual co-ops and assisting those who need help to fill up those empty slots.

#### ***Kindergarten Preparation***

As your child approaches the end to his or her preschool years, attention turns to the often complex and confusing world of kindergarten. PAC's Kindergarten Readiness Committee is responsible for producing comprehensive "Kindergarten Readiness" folders as well as generating kindergarten-related information for this newsletter. This information saves co-op parents incredible amount of time and energy by providing data and advice about their options for kindergarten.

#### ***Politics and Communication***

The pressures and demands of work and parenting often leave us time for little else, especially when it comes to keeping track of what those sneaky elected officials and policy-makers are up to. PAC's Political Action Committee keeps us informed of relevant political and social issues regarding children and education, letting us know about developments that will improve our kid's educational opportunities and calling us to action when the best interests of our children are threatened.

The most elementary purpose of PAC, however, is to increase the quality of communication between all the NSCC co-ops. To that end, this newsletter and our web site (<http://northonline.sccd.ctc.edu/parented/>) exist to inform you about important dates (e.g., scholarship deadlines, upcoming seminars and lectures, raffle information), disseminate the reports for the various PAC committees, and serve as a clearing house for ideas, solutions and techniques from other preschools.

... And now back to that pumpkin pie ...

