

CO-OP COMMUNITY NEWS

From the Parent Advisory Council
of the North Seattle Community College
Cooperative Preschool Program



April 2004

Relationship Enhancement

BY IRENE WAGNER, MSW AND MARY HULL, MSW,
Parent Educators, North Seattle Community College

Parenting a young child is a time of great discovery—nurturing and caring for someone who is solely dependent upon you; learning parenting skills; often developing an area of yourself you only dreamed about; and reflecting upon one's own childhood. This is a time of immense joy and significant challenge.

One of the biggest challenges couples face is how to nurture their own relationship while raising a young child. We recently discussed this topic with our co-op parents, and found a universal recognition of the need to consciously carve out time for one's partner. We share now some of the strategies used by our parents to do just that, in the hopes that you, too, may find them useful.

- Take advantage of “Parent Survival Night” programs offered by The Little Gym, Seattle Gymnastics Academy and Meadowbrook Community Center. Typically Fridays, drop off your aged 3+ potty-trained child for several hours of early evening fun. Reasonable fees.

The Little Gym
7777 15th Ave. NE
206.524.2623
www.thelittlegym-seattle.com

Meadowbrook Community Ctr
10515 35th Ave. NE
206.684.7522

Seattle Gymnastics Academy
12535 26th Ave. NE
206.362.7447
www.seattlegymnasticsacademy.com

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2003-2004 Calendar

April

5–9 Spring Break (no school)
12 PAC Meeting

May

24 Last PAC Meeting
31 Memorial Day (no school)

June

15 Last day of classes for Seattle
Public School students

APRIL EVENTS!

Ingraham Co-operative Preschool Rummage Sale

Saturday, April 17
9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Ingraham Co-op, N. 130th
St. and Ashworth Ave. N.
(Two blocks east of Aurora,
on the southwest corner of
Ingraham High School
campus).

Start Them Young: Organiz- ing 101 for Your Children

FREE PAC-sponsored parent
education lecture by Ellen
Langan, a professional
organizer and principal of
Langan + Associates.

Thursday, April 22
7:00 p.m.- 8:30 p.m.
NSCC Campus Rm 2153

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RELATIONSHIPS

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- Go on a trip together even if just for a few days and do the things that you once did before having kids.
- Have lunch together once a week at a restaurant.
- Get up earlier than usual to help your spouse get ready for work and to share a cup of coffee.
- Leave love notes for each other. Be creative where you leave them, such as among the house plants or in the dryer.
- Carve out "talk time" together after the children go to sleep.
- Go out with other couples, and coordinate with a sitter to watch all the children together.
- Try new restaurants, or go to your favorite restaurant. A favorite that was mentioned is Wasabi Bistro in Belltown.
- Make each other feel how you used to feel.
- Have dinner alone with your spouse at home while your child is at the home of family, friends or a sitter.
- Structure in time for self, spouse, and family every weekend. For example, write down three things each that you want to do for yourself, with your spouse, and with the whole family. Ask your spouse to do the same, and make it happen.
- Do babysitting swaps with other families of same-aged children.
- Find a balance. Ask for time for self and be sensitive to how much time your partner needs to self-nurture.
- Plan for together-time one to two times per month with your spouse, and schedule ahead of time with the children's favorite babysitter.
- Go out after your child is asleep. This is especially effective if your spouse works long hours and wants to spend as much waking time as possible with your child.
- Get a sitter and walk in the neighborhood and talk.
- Be flexible in the time you have together. Lunch out and a matinee are still fun and maybe cheaper than dinner and a late-night movie.
- Use the movie coupons from the Entertainment Book to save money, making more dates possible (some coupons need to be mailed in for certificates, so plan ahead).
- Work towards a bedtime routine with your children that any caretaker can handle.
- Shop at stores that offer free child care while parents shop: e.g., IKEA, Fred Meyer in Ballard and the QFC at University Village.
- Montlake Terrace Pool provides child care while parents swim
- Spend on a housekeeper so there is more free time.
- After kids are in bed, fix a nice dinner, build a fire and play cards.
- Have a sitter stay over and get a hotel room.
- Form a babysitting co-op with friends. Three families was the recommended number; one week you watch all the children and you get to go out the next two weeks.

Many experts in child development emphasize the importance of parents nurturing their relationships with their partners, as well as with their children. Researcher Pamela Jordan, R.N. of the University of Washington emphasizes the need for couples to have fun. We'd like to add that it is a joyful thing for children to see their parents having fun with and loving each other. What a great example to set!

PAC: What & Why

BY TOM HOBSON

Teacher, Woodland Park 3-5's

*This article first appeared in **The Co-op Community News** several years ago, when Tom was a co-op parent and PAC rep. In view of the changes now being made to the way PAC scholarships are funded, we thought it was a good time to run this again. It's an excellent overview of the many beneficial services that PAC provides to our co-ops—or could, if more PAC reps could focus on efforts other than administering a raffle.*

— Editor

As we step out of high gear with another annual scholarship raffle, it's 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

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NSCC Co-op Preschool Fall '04 Openings*

	Co-op	Openings	Contact	Phone
Toddler	Northeast	3	Jennifer Yerkes	517.5045
	Northgate PM	10	Elisabeth Sullivan	985.6949
	Olympic Toddler	16	Teresa Salkov	362.9143
Pre-3s	Crown Hill	9	Paige Embry	297.7306
	Meadowbrook	3	Caroline Aylward	604.7654
	Northgate PM	12	Audrey Rahmn	729.5072
3-5s	Meadowbrook	10	Stephanie Detwiler	366.1817
	Meadowbrook 5s	8	Elizabeth Barr	525.4747
	Sandhurst	8	Macy Yule	527.5539
	Victory Heights PM	1	Ana Shumway	522.4392
Web Link	To view current listings and for descriptions of each co-op, please go to northonline.sccd.ctc.edu/parented *current as of 4-12-04			

PAC WHAT & WHY

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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 (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.

Our Neighbors, Ourselves

Stories of Scholarship Recipients

- A single mom, working part-time to stay as involved as possible in her child's life, values the co-op experience for herself and her child. She gets no support from her child's father and her expenses usually exceed her income. She and her child participate fully in their co-op, which considers them a great asset to the group.
- A father of two young children was laid off from his job; he searched for over a year before finding work again, at less pay. The family is very active in their co-op with the mother serving on the board.
- A preschooler was home with her parents until joining a 3-5s co-op, which was a very good match for the child and helped to increase her confidence around other children. The parents feel the parent education has been very helpful for them. The mother works nearly full-time while the father is a full-time graduate student.
- After being laid off, a father of two went back to school and his wife began to look for work. Eight months later she has had multiple interviews but no offers. Their parent educator describes them as a wonderful addition to the class.
- A recent immigrant is living with relatives while she goes to school to improve her English and her chances for employment. This single mom struggles with English, but is very involved on her co-op work day. They have no income and could not participate in preschool without a scholarship.
- A mother who is the wage earner in the family is missing several months of work due to surgery. She will be compensated just partially for lost wages. The family participates fully in their co-op and benefits greatly from both preschool and parent education.

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NSCC Cooperative Preschool Program

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206.527.3783 (NSCC Parent Ed Office)

