

CO-OP COMMUNITY NEWS

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



December 2004

Time for Myself? When?

BY BETH GOSS

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Ah, December! For many of us the “holiday season” is here. Regardless of what your family chooses to celebrate, many adults (and children) find themselves stressed-out as they approach the New Year. We may be all grown up and have our own families but we bring some baggage with us which we like to unpack right about now.

Some of us feel stress because we want everything to be just perfect. We do our own baking, decorate the whole house, make our own gifts, our own wrapping paper, our own cards. Some of us believe we have to do it “just like mom did” and maybe (gulp!) mom’s even coming to your house this year. On the other hand, you may be bound and determined to do things totally differently, which may cause its own stress.

You may be worried because people will be coming over and some will stay for days. The usual daily routine with the kids will be shot (no

naps?). You’ve got cleaning to do, gifts to buy, and money to spend. Maybe you’re worried that the children may not act like perfect angels. Oh, and then there’s the issue of time for yourself.

I don’t mean to depress you. In fact, I’m done talking about holidays. I do, however, want to talk about the most important job you do. That, of

course, is parenting. Stressed-out adults don’t tend to do a great job of parenting. Children growing up with a stressful home life may also have high level of stress hormones. They literally carry the stress of the family in their bodies. Therefore, taking care of yourself and reducing your stress is NOT a selfish thing to do.

“How do I do it?” you say, “I don’t have any time.” I know, I’m a mother of two myself. My oldest is 10 and I’ve only recently begun to figure this all out. Of course, I didn’t

Being happy
is a wonderful gift
you can give your
family this year.

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2004-2005 Calendar

December

- 13 PAC Meeting
- 20–31 Winter Break (no school)

January

- 11 Talking to Kids About Sex:
A Free PAC Workshop
- 12 PAC Meeting
- 17 MLKing Jr. Day (no school)

February

- 14 PAC Meeting
- 21 Presidents Day (no school)
- 22–25 Mid-Winter Break (no school)

March

- 14 PAC Meeting
- TBD Coop In-house Registration
- TBD Coop Open Registration

April

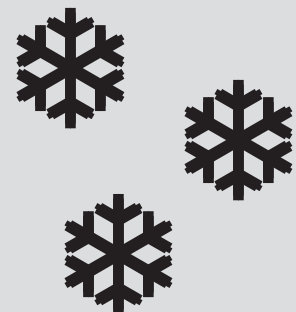
- 11–15 Spring Break (no school)
- 18 PAC Meeting

May

- 9 PAC Meeting
- 30 Memorial Day (no school)

June

- 13 Last day of classes for Seattle
Public School students



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Which School is the Right School? Five Questions Every Parent Should Ask

*This article is adapted from the book, **Picky Parent Guide: Choose Your Child's School with Confidence**, by Bryan C. Hassel, Ph.D. & Emily Ayscue Hassel, published by Armchair Press, 2004. Bryan Hassel was last month's PAC-sponsored parent education speaker. This article was part of Bryan's hand out, and appears here with permission.*

Question 1: Do you expect all students to meet tough grade level standards?

Seek: Would grade level work at this school challenge your child? If not, see Question 2. If so, seek a school that relentlessly ensures every child masters core subjects. Can they tell you how? Don't just take a school's word for it: do a high percentage of kids like yours meet grade level? Scores for children

similar to yours in previous performance, parent income, race, and any other important characteristic (e.g., children with your child's particular disability, if any) are better predictors of what your child will learn at a school than are overall school scores. If a school claims to have "higher standards," compare your top schools in one or two grades and subjects. Seek short, written, step-by-step goals in each subject – these tell you that every teacher can use the goals. Among schools that have clear goals, compare: which school expects more?

Avoid: Schools making excuses for kids who are behind academically. If your child struggles, they may make excuses rather than help your child, too. Also avoid schools that pretend none of their students struggle. All schools have more than

a few students who face learning challenges at some point. You need to know in advance how the school will respond.

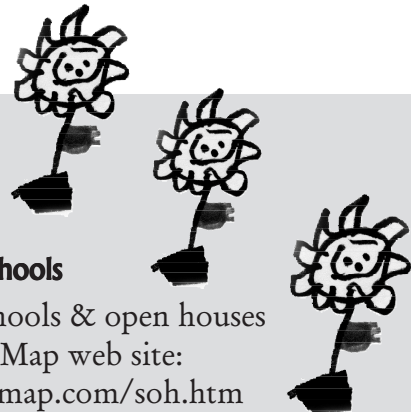
Question 2: Do you raise goals for individual students beyond grade level?

Seek: All-you-can-eat learning, no limits for kids ready to learn more. Kids not just allowed to work ahead, but expected to work ahead when ready. Percent-at-grade-level scores don't tell you much if your child could learn beyond grade level. Seek schools where more than just "gifted" kids score at the top. Look for schools where all children, including those already ahead, experience large yearly "gains" or "growth."

Avoid: Schools that say, "Our grade level work is tough enough for all

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Kindergarten Readiness Corner



Seattle Public Schools:

- Pre-Register (& sibling early assignment) by December 17 for Fall 2005 enrollment
- City-wide Kindergarten Fair - Saturday, January 8 from 9am-noon at the Stanford Center - 2445 Third Ave. S.
- Tours and open houses start in January
- For info & forms, call 206.252.0410 or visit www.seattleschools.org (click on "Student Enrollment" in left-hand column)

Seattle Private Schools

- See list of schools & open houses at the ParentMap web site: www.parentmap.com/soh.htm

For More Information (Public & Private)

- Check out your co-op Kindergarten Readiness folder, prepared and updated each year by PAC
- Browse *The Seattle Times Elementary School Guide*, available in print and online (for free) at: schoolguide.seattletimes.nwsources.com

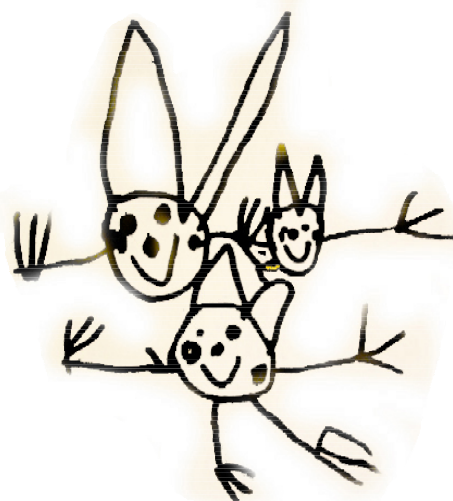
Which School?

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Question 3: How do you monitor individual students' progress?

Seek: Weekly checking of your child's learning progress is ideal and not at all unrealistic in a school organized to ensure that every child learns. Monitoring progress every six weeks is the minimum needed to keep your child on track. School staff should be able to explain to you in plain language how this is done. Frequent quizzes, short papers, etc. are ways to check each child's progress, but these alone are not enough. They do not tell a teacher how your child learns best. Small group or one-on-one contact between students and the lead teacher is almost always necessary for a school to implement effective, frequent monitoring.

Avoid: Schools using end-of-grade tests only to "monitor." This information comes too late to ensure that your child learns each year. Also avoid schools that say, "We don't need to monitor our kids." Every school has students who need extra help or new approaches and others who are ready to move ahead faster. A school can't detect a child's changing learning needs if it does not monitor progress often.



Question 4: Do teachers adapt methods to ensure each child learns (and loves learning)?

Seek: Every teacher is expected and trained to reach every child by addressing individual kids' interests, strengths and weaknesses. Other staff ("resource teachers" and specialists) should play a clear, consistent role in monitoring and adapting to children's needs. The school should have materials on hand to meet the needs of different learners – not just worksheets and not just work at grade level only. Otherwise, the best teachers will burn out and leave, and more typical teachers will stick to a one-size-fits-all routine. Other parents should be able to tell you how teachers have adjusted instruction to meet their children's learning needs.

Avoid: Schools that say, "We know the one best way to teach all children." Research has repeatedly disproven this outdated notion. Also avoid schools that say it is up to each teacher to decide whether to adjust instruction. You can be sure that your child will experience

an enormous teacher-by-teacher quality rollercoaster in a school like this. Choose a school that helps teachers be their best in understanding and meeting your child's needs.

Question 5: Does the school fit your other top child and family needs and values?

While the best research shows that every child benefits academically from a Great School (Questions 1 – 4 get you started), each child and family also has a unique set of "Must Have" fit needs and values. Discover and match your child & family needs to just the right school – with confidence. Picky Parent Guide can help. You'll know exactly how to choose the school where your child will be the most successful and happy. ❄️

For more information about the authors and their book, please visit PickyParent.com.

NSCC Co-op Preschool Fall 2004 Openings*

	Co-op	Openings	Contact	Phone
Pre-3s	Ingraham	8	Anita Wooster	789.9186
	Meadowbrook	4	Monica Mace	522.0274
	Northgate PM	7	Jill Petro	706.1113
3-5s	Broadview	3	Erika Larimer	425.774.6571
	Northgate	7	Jill Petro	706.1113
	Sandhurst	3	Andrea Baumgarten	527.2886
	Wallingford AM	4	Lisa Drake	632.9817
	Wallingford PM	2	Ann Weber	632.0646
Web Link	To view current listings and for descriptions of each co-op, please go to northonline.sccd.ctc.edu/parented *current as of 12-10-04			

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have anyone telling me how to reduce stress so you're way ahead already.

The first question I'd like you to ask yourself is this: what did you do for yourself before you had kids? Before you met your partner? Get back in touch with your pre-parent self and make a list. While you're at it, make a list of the things that make you feel happy. This may take a while. It can be simple things like sitting on the beach alone (without sand toys) and listening to the waves. It could be going to the library and picking out gown-up books. It could be the knowledge that in two months

you're going on a date. These are important, difficult things to consider.

Now, with list on kitchen counter, you're ready to act. Start simple. It's time to make New Year's resolutions anyway. Maybe you'll plan to walk for 20 minutes, outside, three times a week. Exercise and sunlight, even through the Seattle clouds, make wonderful blues chasers.

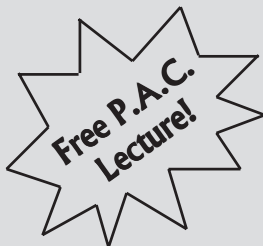
Plan one night a week or a few hours on the weekend to get away. You may have to actually write this into your day planner or it won't get done. I remember days where,

if I didn't write "lunch" on my schedule, I'd forget to set aside time for it! It's your job to make self-care a priority. Go to the gym, take a walk, visit a museum, take a class, have a date with a friend, take a bath when the kids go to bed, listen to a relaxation CD- find what works for you. Consult your lists when necessary and keep them safe.

I understand that this isn't the first time you've heard all this. People always told me to "relax" or "do something for yourself" and, like some of you, I always told them I couldn't. And then, one day, I got it. I made some changes. You'll start reducing the stress in your life when you're ready. Maybe that's today. Being happy is a wonderful gift you can give your family this year. ❄️

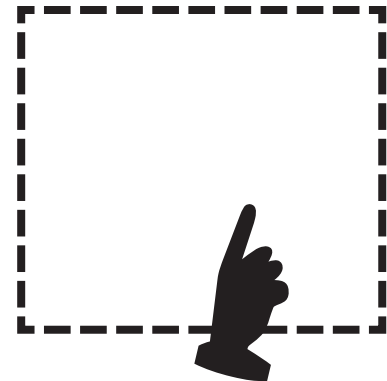
What Do You Say After You Gulp?

-- Talking to Kids About Sex & Sexuality --



Tuesday, January 11, 2005
7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
Faith Lutheran Church
8208 18th Ave. N.E.

Marja Brandon is a warm, engaging, humorous speaker who brings with her 20+ years as a sexuality educator of kids pre-K through post-college. She is the founding Head of the Seattle Girls' School, Board member of SMART Girls, Advisory Board Member of ParentMap, a Stanley O. McNaughton Golden Apple Award winner, and parent of four.



**YOUR CHILD'S
ARTWORK**

needed for the newsletter!
Please submit to your PAC
rep; B&W or high-contrast
color, digital or hardcopy
(will be returned).

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