
CO-OP COMMUNITY NEWS

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



January 2007

REMEMBERING AND DEVELOPING RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

BY IRENE WAGNER, LICSW, PARENT EDUCATOR AND
CLINICAL SOCIAL WORKER IN PRIVATE PRACTICE

Think back in time—

Is there a ritual that you can vividly recall from your family of origin? Was it a daily ritual like meals together or your bedtime ritual? Or does a family tradition come to mind such as birthdays or anniversaries? You may recall a graduation, wedding, or funeral that was especially meaningful to you. These are considered to be life-cycle rituals. At this time of year, we often recall holiday celebrations. Parents of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, in particular, begin to reflect on their respective family of origin rituals, often determining which were meaningful to them.

Steven Wolin who wrote "Family Rituals," states "Through their special meaning and their repetitive nature, rituals contribute significantly to the establishment and preservation of a family's sense of itself." Infants, toddlers, and preschoolers thrive on rituals, especially their bedtime rituals. Rituals with nurture their sense of security, control, comfort, and trust in their world. Rituals provide a fundamental purpose in society. Rituals assist us with expressing and maintaining relationships, such as

Valentine's Day and greeting our partner and children when we have been away. It also helps to make and mark transitions for ourselves and others. A few tips for assisting our infants and toddlers with transitions are to sing the "clean-up" song when it's time to put the toys away, and to sing a marching song as we go out our front door, leave the park or preschool. We can use rituals to recover from losses, and trauma. In my family, we honor my deceased mother-in-law on the anniversary of her death, by having a family dinner in which we express the ways we love and appreciate her. Rituals can also assist us to voice our beliefs, along with affirming joy and honoring life with festivity.

Did you have rituals as you were growing up? Some parents recall very little if any family rituals which reflect a minimized ritual style. They may have some regrets regarding this lack, but, if so, you now have the opportunity to develop your own nuclear family rituals. Some family members have rather rigid ritual styles where rituals take place the same way every time with the

same family members, which may detract from the meaning of the ritual or discount the feelings or needs of the members. If family rituals are often performed out of a need to please other family members, this may represent an obligatory ritual style. Also some rituals may feel tense, and conflicted, if only a few family members have all the power and responsibility for the family rituals.

I encourage parents to have on-going conversations with their partners about which rituals are important, and which new rituals they would like to develop. I validate that parents are able to revise rituals as their children grow, based on the evolving needs of the family members. This approach is reflective of the flexible ritual style which has the most potential to meet the needs of all the family members. Above all, enjoy yourself in the exploration of rituals.

Resource: Rituals for our Times Celebration, Healing, and Changing Our Lives and Our Relationships by Evan Imber-Black and Janine Roberts 

*The Parent Advisory Council (PAC)
of the
North Seattle Cooperative Preschools
Invite you to a Discussion with*

Marja Brandon

“Trucks and Dolls... Gender Realities in Education”

Wednesday, January 17, 2007 7-8:30pm
Faith Lutheran Church - Social Hall
8208 18th Avenue NE - Seattle, WA 98115
This lecture is free and open to the public

Gender realities in education...

Spend an engaging evening discovering the ways bias can creep into our schools. Learn how to be conscious of gender biased messages, avoid them, and engage our schools in the conversation to create balanced communication for all children.

Marja Brandon

As a graduate of Wellesley College and Harvard's Graduate School of Education, Marja has spent the past 20 years as a teacher, Sex educator, and administrator and is currently the head of the Seattle Girls School. She is a board member of SMART Girls and ParentMap. Honored for her innovative approach to education, her awards include the Stanley O. McNaughton Golden Apple Award and most recently she received the Helen H Jackson Women of Valor Award for Education. Beyond her academic and professional achievements she is the proud parent of four children!

No RSVP required, but for more information, please call 789-6975

Open Enrollment

Frequently Asked Questions

Questions for currently enrolled students

How do I enroll my infant into a toddler program?

You are eligible for in-house registration. Your parent coordinator will be able to assist you. You will also need to work with the parent coordinator at the school you wish to attend.

How do I enroll my toddler into a pre-3 program?

You are eligible for in-house registration. Your parent coordinator will be able to assist you. If you wish to attend a pre-3 program at different school, you will also need to work with the parent coordinator at the school you wish to attend.

How do I enroll my child in the follow on program at the same school? (ie pre 3's to 3-5's program at the same school)

You are eligible for in-house registration. Your parent coordinator will be able to enroll you in the follow on program at the same school.

How do I enroll my child in a follow on program at a different school? (ie pre 3's to 3-5's program at a different school)

You are eligible for crossover registration. Your current parent coordinator will be able to assist you with this enrollment. You will also need to work with the parent coordinator at the school you wish to attend.

How do I enroll my child in the second year of the same program? (ie second year of 3-5's program)

You are eligible for in-house registration. Your parent coordinator will be able to enroll you in the second year of your current program.

Questions for siblings of currently enrolled students (these questions pertain only to a younger sibling, when an older sibling is enrolled for this current academic year)

How do I enroll my infant into an infant program?

Infant registration is handled directly by the college. Please call 206-529-6029

How do I enroll my toddler into a toddler program?

If the older sibling attended that same toddler program, your toddler is eligible for alumni in-house registration according to that school's bi-laws. Please work with the parent coordinator of the program you wish to attend. If the older sibling did not attend the infant program, you must go to open registration.

How do I enroll my pre-3 into a pre-3 program?

If the older sibling attended that same pre-3 program, your toddler is pre-3 for alumni in-house registration according to the school's bi-laws. If your older sibling is

currently enrolled in a 3-5 program, you are also eligible for in-house registration. Please work with the parent coordinator of the program you wish to attend as they will be able to explain that coop's in-house registration rules.

How do I enroll my child in a follow on program at a different school? (ie pre 3's to 3-5's program at a different school)

You are eligible for crossover registration. Your current parent coordinator will be able to assist you with this enrollment. You will also need to work with the parent coordinator at the school you wish to attend.

Questions for siblings of alumni (ie. not currently enrolled) students

How do I enroll my pre-3 into the pre-3 program my older child attended?

Your pre-3 is eligible for alumni in-house registration.. Please work with the parent coordinator of the program you wish to attend as they will be able to explain that coop's in-house registration rules.

Questions for siblings of alumni (ie. not currently enrolled) students

How do I enroll my pre-3 into a pre-3 program that my older child did not attend?

You must go to open registration.

please see registration calendar on next page

Local portrait photographer & co-op parent Janet Klinger is offering a 20% discount for co-op families and those referred by co-op families. The offer will be open through January, 2007. In addition to the discount to you, Janet will give another 20% to her daughter's co-op. You can check out her work at the Janet Klinger Photography website, www.janetklinger.com.

Registration Calendar

NSCC Parent Education Program

School Year 2007-08

In-house Registration

In-house registration	Monday, February 26th to
.....	Thursday, March 1st
Lottery and/or space assignment notifications	Friday, March 2nd
Registration numbers notification to PAC	Monday, March 5th
Available cross-over space notification to PAC	Friday, March 9th

Note: There is a one-week break between in-house and cross-over enrollment periods. Registration payment must be received by the coop before the beginning of cross-over registration or the space is forfeit and made available for cross-over registration. Enrollment numbers will be updated on the co-op website prior to beginning of cross-over registration. Depending on registration numbers, PC may also need to submit registration and wait list information to PAC.

Cross-over Registration

Cross-over registration	Monday, March 12th to
.....	Thursday, March 15th
Lottery and/or space assignment notifications	Friday, March 16th
Enrollment numbers notification to PAC	Monday, March 19th
Available open enrollment space notification to PAC	Friday, March 23rd

Note: There is a one-week break between cross-over and open enrollment periods. Registration payment must be received by the coop before the beginning of open registration or the space is forfeit and made available for open registration. Enrollment numbers will be updated on the website prior to beginning of open registration. Depending on registration numbers, PC may also need to submit registration and wait list information to PAC.

Open Registration

Open Registration	Saturday, March 24th
Enrollment numbers notification to PAC	At the close of open registration

Note: After open registration, co-ops may process space assignments and wait list requests on a first-come first-served basis.

Work on your fitness goals: check out Moms on the Move aerobics, the only exercise class of its kind in the area. Tailored for pregnant women, new moms, and anyone who wants a good workout in a supportive environment. Childcare is free; classes are M/W/F at 9:30 at the Ballard Boys & Girls Club. See the article in the January 2006 PAC newsletter (available at www.northseattlecoops.org) or email vernab8@hotmail.com for more information.

The Fence

A story about Julian – age 3 &¹¹/₁₂^{ths} - and the fence.

WRITTEN BY ALDONA MITCHELL

You know that fence around the playground? It's a very important fence. It's a very trustworthy fence. The kids need that fence. One day outside, I was paying particular attention to that fence. Grace ran down the hill right into the fence. Carson casually leaned against it. Ella sat down by the fence. Nick kicked his ball right at the fence. Lucy ran her fingers along the links.

But, what if? What if Grace ran into the fence and it fell over? What if Carson leaned against it and it moved back? What if the fence suddenly moved in and bumped Ella? Or Nick's ball got through the fence? Or Lucy cut her fingers on one of the links?

That boundary they trust would no longer be trustworthy and they would no longer be confident within that playground.

Julian is in the process of teaching me the importance of clearly defined boundaries and the many different ways that kids will test the security of those boundaries. You and I, fellow parents, are the fence. The children will test us, the fence, to make sure it is secure. The test can be easy to pass; the test can also be very difficult to pass. Assuredly there will be failures and most assuredly there will be a make up test with extra credit, if you get my meaning.

My most recent test began (well, the point at which I noticed I was being tested) when Julian didn't want me to leave the classroom on

his drop-off days. He clung to my clothes like a drowning man, pleading most pitifully, "Don't go! I'm not comfortable!" and proceeded to scream and cry as I left the classroom. I did stand outside the door shedding a tear or two of my own, questioning the situation. Should I go back in? Should I take him home? Is he really ready for pre-school? I decided to go ahead and leave and then call from my next destination.

At my next destination, however, I realized I didn't have the classroom phone number with me and try as I might, I wasn't able to get it. Well, I thought to myself, he's surely over it by now, and he's in a good place with good people. I didn't return until close to pick up time.

However, when I did return Teacher Chris came up to me and informed me that he had indeed cried and screamed most of the day and whatever else she said I don't recall. I think I was traumatized.

So, when I was able to come to my senses again, I began to ask questions. Val had been there that day too, so I talked with her, our very experienced parent educator. "Should I call to see how he's doing or come pick him up?" "No," she replied. "He won't stop if he knows you'll come back when he cries and screams." In essence she suggested letting this play out. I was also reassured by both Chris's and Val's observations of Julian and their descriptions of how the behavior was being handled. He was being

treated respectfully as a kid having a normal reaction to a situation. Yes, it's tough. I didn't stop questioning myself and the decisions we were making, but it always came back to the fact that he is in a good place with good people.

The next time he clung and cried, but Chris was right there with us as we parted. When I fretfully returned at pick up, Julian was smiling and happy to see me. It turned out he cried only half the time this time. An improvement! The next time he cried only for a minute at the most. And then finally, a calm departure. Phew!

Not so fast! The test wasn't over. At home Julian was testing the fence in a major way. Anything that he had to do such as cleaning, getting dressed, brushing teeth, you know the usual stuff, he was refusing to do. Flat out. Time to clean? He would lay on the floor singing to himself. Time to get dressed? On the floor singing. Brush teeth? Floor. Singing. You get the picture.

So, one night we, the parents, had a plan. After dinner we will all clean, get ready for bed, and then meet back at the table for Julian's favorite, eggnog. It's a good tactic, first you do these harder things, then you can do something fun. But, if you don't do these things, you will miss the fun thing. Guess what? Floor. Sing. The rest of us continued on with the plan while Julian rebelled musically. But, when it was announced that it was time for bed he jumped up saying he

wanted his eggnog. OK fence, time to do your job. "Julian, egg nog time is over, it is time to go to bed." "I'll clean up! I'll pick up the blocks! I'll get my jammies on!" And no doubt he would have done all that in 10 seconds flat, but time was up. The screaming and flailing began. We tried too hard to get him in his pajamas. We finally just put him in bed and then try as he might to leave his room, the fence didn't let him out. He screamed for a good hour. He screamed that he wanted to brush his teeth. He screamed that he was cold. He screamed that he was scared. But, the fence held firm and simply kept him in his room.

The next morning he was bright and chipper and full of hugs and smiles. . . until the next night when he laid on the floor singing. It was time for bath and the screaming and flailing began. I tried too hard to give him his bath thinking that the plan must continue. But, when I lost control and couldn't see straight and wanted to chuck my little precious out the second story window, I knew I needed a new plan. I was failing this test in a big way. First I had to calm down. I went in my room, sat against the door, and yelled at the kids to go away if they knew what was good for them. Breathe. Get the oxygen flowing to the brain again. The fight or flight adrenalin was pumping through my veins. Unfortunately my husband was working late that night, I was all alone and not doing well. So, I tried calling my sister, not home. Then I called my best friend who knows. She has three kids, one of whom is a particular challenge to her. She was home and willing to save me. She let me cry and vent. She soothed and listened. I became calm again and ready to move forward. I got the kids in bed. Julian screamed for a half hour.

OK new plan. My husband and I talked a while to come up with the plan that both of us, no matter what, would adhere to. I knew I couldn't do the routine any more if Julian was out of control. If the screaming began, it was straight to bed. While I now knew I couldn't force him to bathe, brush teeth, or put on pajamas without hurting him, I knew I could keep my cool just making sure he stays in his room. I was willing to let him fall asleep as is and wake up cold and wet, but my husband couldn't deal with that, so we agreed that we would at least put him in his pull-up for the night if he didn't do it himself.

The next morning I had some apologizing to do. I apologized for my behavior and acknowledged that it must have been scary for him. Julian said to me, "You didn't like me did you?" Ouch. "Honey I like you and I always, no matter what, love you. I didn't like what was happening, but you, I like." "Well," he said, "I didn't like you." I couldn't blame him for that, as I didn't much like me either last night.

Through all of this, I kept in contact with Teacher Chris. I let her know what was happening at home. She provided me with support; I got a lovely hug that I so much needed. She provided me with the name of a book to read that would help me learn more about what is going on in these situation and what I can do about it. And, she backed up my plan reminding me that being consistent is key. Give it time to work. Don't give up after only a few days, but keep going. Val walked by and chimed in that I should also expect some regression.

That night: Floor, singing. Time for bed. Freak out. Into room. Guard door. Cry for half hour. Collapse on

floor on top of pajamas and pull-up.

We got him in his night things and tucked him in with gentleness and kisses knowing that we were beginning to pass the test.

The next night as it was nearing bedtime Julian said in his sweetest voice, "I'm going to brush my teeth, and put on my pajamas and pull-up, and go to sleep in my bed." His eyes were wide and his expression so earnest, I couldn't help but hug him so tight and tell him I love him.

He did just that and has been doing it for 3 nights now.

Is the test over? I would love to say yes, but that would be naïve. He will retest the fence, if not tonight, then some other night. He needs to know that fence is secure. He may need to know it often. He may need to know it occasionally. The thing is, he just needs to know it.

Will he always test it the same way? No, that would be too easy. While there may be some review questions on the test, this test is mastered, and he will move me on to a new challenge. Remember, he can test the fence by running into it, leaning on it, sitting by it, kicking a ball into it, or running his fingers along it. I'm sure he can think of 50 other ways at least to test the fence.

I am ready. I have a partner. I have people I can talk to. I have resources. I have the drive to be better. I'm lucky indeed and so is Julian. Test away! This fence can pass with flying colors. 🖐️

NSCC Co-op Preschool Openings for 2007*

	Co-op	Contact	Phone
Toddlers	Northgate		
	Wed evening	Eileen Landay	525-1235
Pre-3s	Broadview	Jennifer Ambrose	256-0383
	Ingraham	Piper Salogga	528-1580
	Meadowbrook	Judy Dauphinee	meadowbrookpre3@gmail.com
	Northwest	Jeanne McGrady	706-5464
	Victory Heights	Cindy Ponko	306-9830
3-5s	Latona	Jennifer Clark	527-2817
Multi-Age	Victory Heights - PM 4-5s	Lynne Crowley	783-6027
	Wallingford - 4-5's	Wyly Astley	240-1656
	Northgate Multi-Age	Jody Wirtz	789-7077

Web Link To view current listings and for descriptions of each co-op, please go to our web site at: northseattlecoops.org
*current as of 12-07-06

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