

# CO-OP COMMUNITY NEWS

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



February 2009

MARK YOUR  
CALENDARS AND  
CHECK YOUR CLOSETS  
THE PAC CO-OP GENTLY  
USED SALE IS COMING  
SOON



PAC Co-op Preschools will be hosting a Gently Used Sale on March 21, 2009 from 9:30am – 1:00pm.

The sale will be a way for co-op members to sell new and gently used children's clothing, books, and toys. The sale will take place at North Seattle Community College on the same day as open registration. Proceeds will benefit the PAC Scholarship Fund. So please check your closets, basement, attic and garage for items your family no longer needs but that others would love to make use of.

Co-op members can sell items for 50% of the proceeds OR donate items outright so the Scholarship Fund will benefit from 100% of the selling price. Set up will take place on Friday, March 20th from 7pm until 9:30 pm. Anyone contributing items to the sale must have merchandise in place at the end of the set-up period. Checks of proceeds from the sale will be distributed to participating sellers within three weeks of the sale.

*At the end of the sale, sellers will have the option to collect any unsold items or donate them to a non-profit that supports local families. If you don't want your items donated, you must retrieve them at the end of the sale.*

If you are intending to contribute items to the sale, email Michelle Beaumont ([beaumontmp@seanet.com](mailto:beaumontmp@seanet.com)) by February 24<sup>th</sup> for an information packet about the types of items that will be accepted, how to prepare your merchandise for sale, and other details you will need to know.

Finally, please help us spread the word about this sale. Send your friends a 'save the date' email (suggested wording below) and remind them to attend closer to the date.

### ***Save the Date!***

Mark your calendar and get ready to cash in on good deals at the **Gently Used Sale hosted by the PAC Co-ops**. Families from over 40 co-ops will be selling gently used children's clothing, toys and books.

***PAC Gently Used Sale - March 21, 9:30am - 1pm.  
North Seattle Community College Room CC 2253***

Please feel free to email Michelle Beaumont ([beaumontmp@seanet.com](mailto:beaumontmp@seanet.com)) with any questions or if you'd like to help with the sale.

Thanks All!

Your PAC Representatives

## 2009 Calendar

### **February**

- |           |   |
|-----------|---|
| Feb 9     | PAC meeting                             |
| Feb 14    | Valentine's Day                         |
| Feb 16-20 | <b>Mid-winter Break<br/>(No School)</b> |
| Feb 24-26 | In-house/Priority<br>registration       |

### **March**

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| Mar 9        | PAC meeting                                   |
| Mar 9-12     | Cross-Over<br>registration                    |
| Mar 21       | Open Registration for<br>the 09-10 school yr. |
| Mar 21       | PAC Clothing sale                             |
| Mar 30-Apr 3 | <b>Spring Break<br/>(No School)</b>           |

### **April**

- |        |             |
|--------|-------------|
| Apr 13 | PAC meeting |
|--------|-------------|

### **May**

- |        |                                     |
|--------|-------------------------------------|
| May 10 | Mother's Day                        |
| May 18 | PAC meeting                         |
| May 25 | <b>Memorial Day<br/>(No school)</b> |

# Panel Discusses Kindergarten Readiness

By Toby Beth Jarman, Parent, Cedar Park Toddlers and Wallingford 4-5s PM

Are our children ready for kindergarten? Are we ready? Parents gathered at Faith Lutheran Church on Thursday, December 11, to hear a panel of experienced teachers and parent educators answer questions about kindergarten.

This was the second in a series of four free educational events presented by PAC for the 2008-09 school year. Panelists were Elizabeth L. Bird, a parent educator in the Child and Family division of NSCC; Matt Kreiter, a teacher for the University-Ravenna 3-5s co-op; Laura Spangenberg, a co-op parent and experienced elementary school mom; and Allison VanDoren, a Seattle Public Schools kindergarten teacher. With a roomful of enthusiastic parents, the panelists went straight to questions from the audience. Following are some of the topics that were discussed.

## What are the most important skills for starting kindergarten?

Kreiter narrowed it down to two:

1. The ability to listen and pay attention in a large group, and
2. The ability to work together in a small group.

These are the fundamentals for kindergarten success. Letters and numbers can be taught later. Holding a pencil and using scissors can be taught later. But if a child begins kindergarten with the ability to work with others and handle disagreements, that child will have a strong foundation for all subsequent learning.

VanDoren added that if parents do want to practice academic or fine motor skills with their children at home, it is essential to make it fun so the children will stay motivated. For example, they can play with Legos to develop dexterity or sculpt letters with Play Dough to practice the ABCs.

While teachers always appreciate a student who can tie her shoe or zip her jacket, these types of self-care skills are not mandatory for new kindergarteners. Students constantly practice at school and will master these skills over time. However, the better students can take care of themselves physi-

cally, the easier it is for the teacher to manage the classroom. Skills like unpacking one's own lunch and taking oneself to the bathroom (and washing hands!) are useful from the beginning.

## What if your child does not seem socially ready for kindergarten?

The panel agreed: Bring 'em on, because that's what kindergarten is for! No student is expected to have perfect behavior on day one. Kindergarten involves lots of practice, and every student has something to work on. Students are given multiple tours of the school, practicing going through the lunch line and visiting the bathrooms. Teachers are happy to work with parents to help their children adjust.

## Should children with summer or September birthdays start kindergarten a year later?

Bird said "red-shirting" (starting kindergarten a year later) is a decision that largely depends on the individual child. Being the oldest in the class could be a source of confidence or awkwardness for the child. Some older students might get bored in a class full of younger kids. Other students do fine. Long-term results are inconclusive.

The panel agreed that, in their experience, the students they know who began kindergarten at age 4 adjusted well. Parents should observe their children's skills, find out what the kindergarten requires, and decide whether it will be a good fit. The most important factor is emotional readiness. Many early childhood educators support the idea of giving younger students an extra year to grow and develop.

Undecided parents were encouraged to err on the side of caution and register their child for kindergarten anyway. If they change their minds, it will be much easier to withdraw later than it will be to enroll.

## What about half-day kindergarten?

While there are some schools that offer complete half-day programs, other half-day programs simply dismiss the half-day students early from a full-day class. As a result, these students might miss out on addi-



tional social or academic opportunities. The panel agreed that most students are ready for a full day of kindergarten, even if it seems daunting at first.

**How do teachers handle the large class sizes?** VanDoren said there can be as many as 28 students per teacher in a kindergarten class. To help offset the large ratio, teachers encourage parent involvement in the classroom whenever possible (beginning in October). Part of the daily routine includes students working independently or with parent tutors. Everyone has different things to work on, whether it's learning to read or learning to function in a group.

## What should parents be looking for at open houses and tours?

Parents were encouraged to tour many different schools to get a feel for each one's philosophy. The panel advised parents to observe how the classrooms are run and how the teachers interact with their students. Even if parents have heard a lot about a particular school, good or bad, it's a good idea to check it out first hand. VanDoren added that if the schools all seem wonderful and difficult to rank, choosing one's neighborhood school is probably the best option.

Parents were reminded that their own preferences may differ from their child's academic and social needs. For example, one parent in the audience said she loved the idea of an alternative school, but found that her child strongly preferred a more traditional setting.

*(continued on page 6)*

## What to do during rainy days...



We asked our PAC committee parents what they like to do with their kids during rainy days and we got some great responses! The following is listed in order of most popular.

1. Woodland Park Zoo and the Zoomazium
2. Indoor play spaces at your local community center
3. Seattle Public Libraries
4. Seattle Gymnastics Academy
5. Children's Museum
6. Pacific Science Center
7. Have a playdate
8. Visit friends
9. Indoor swimming pool
10. REI flagship store
11. Arboretum
12. Play Matters
13. The Scratch Patch
14. Indoor play space at Alderwood Mall and Bellevue Square
15. Mockingbird Books



## “Good Job,” the Power of Our Words

By: Chris David, Parent Educator and Preschool Teacher

Judgment: “Be a good girl and give me the paint.” or “that is not a nice thing to do.” In the past I have used similar judgment phrases when referring to a child or an action of a child. Judgment phrases were so commonplace that I used them without much thought. Now I avoid using judgment words, because through my education I learned there is a better way to communicate to children.

Words have power over children and how they think about themselves, especially judgmental words employed by parents or teachers. Even positive words can have a questionable impact on a young child’s mind. For example, “Be a good girl and get me the paint.” What are the alternatives for this child? If she does not get the paint, is she bad? Is she good only when she is doing what everyone else wants? Will people still like her if she doesn’t get the paint? Positive words can teach a negative lesson.

As a new teacher I tried to teach a positive self-image to children. I said: “good listening,” “good eyes,” “good work,” and many other “good” things. Any behavior or activity I wanted to encourage received a “good job.” I didn’t realize how silly I sounded until children started using my words; “good eyes,” “good girl,” and “good walking.” The “good” comment sounded so empty, automatic and not authentic. Then I started to hear the children say: “bad girl,” “bad running” and “bad boy.” Had I taught these little children that it is okay to judge each other?

Every word teaches children something. I realized I have a huge impact on children and I better do it right. I went back to school to complete my degree in Early Childhood Education. I had much to learn. How could I talk to children in a way that sounds authentic and non judgmental? One of the first lessons I learned as a student was to observe children: write down their behaviors objectively. A teacher pointed out any judgment is an opinion and not fact. I don’t know what made a child behave in a certain way. But if I describe the behavior and the results of the behavior, I might find out what motivated the action. Instead of “good work,” I might say, “you put a lot of yellow in your painting.” Now the child might look at the painting and tell me more about it. The child may not always seek my approval of the paint-

ing, “do you like it?” After much practice I can describe a child’s behavior without judgment even when the behavior is clearly against the class rules. When I took judgment words out of my vocabulary, I found that I control my emotions more easily. I remember two children fighting over one truck. I described what I saw; “Erin was playing with the truck. Joel came over and grabbed the truck. Erin yelled and hit Joel.” Without emotion I could state; “this is the problem: you both want to play with the same toy.” Now the children can work on the problem, they can learn a different way to behave.

These children are not being naughty; in fact, the children are just exhibiting behaviors that are normal for their age and development. Often adults call children “bad” for displaying this typical egocentric behavior. It takes a long time for children to move beyond being egocentric; if adults respond with a judgment of “bad” each time, what will children learn?

Now years later, I am an instructor in preschool classrooms and every year I hear parents say, “good job, good work, good walking.” I encourage adults to think about the power of their words. I challenge parents to describe the behavior that they want to encourage, “Jane you picked up all the toys off the floor, wow!” I bet this helpful behavior will be repeated. And when there is a problem; describe what the children are doing, point out the problem. Then wonder out loud, “How could you solve this problem?” The children become involved in solving their own problems and soon the problem is resolved, but not always. Remember this is a process and adults are right there to help during the process.

What is more effective: saying “Good job” or “Erin you and Joel worked that problem out by talking.” Good job is empty and describing what they did is informative. I would rather be informative.

It is hard to change old habits. At times I slip back and I catch myself saying “good job.” And that is okay because most of the time I am choosing my words with care that encourages the learning of social skills, problem solving and self confidence.

# PARENTHOOD IS FOR KEEPS!

*By: Mary Ann Abbott, Parent Educator, North Seattle Community College*

**Parenthood is for keeps.** Some people say, “Once a parent, always a parent. It doesn’t matter the age. It’s just the issues that change.” I knew that. This past summer, I relearned the truth of this saying.

**Parenthood is for Keeps, Step One!** Let’s go back a few years...My husband and I decided to have children. I had grown up as an only child. My husband’s childhood environment was a boarding school setting, so we thought we needed a crash course in early parenting. The Red Cross came to the rescue and taught us skills we didn’t know we needed—such as understanding the meanings of different baby cries. Experienced parents gave us counsel, shared their secrets, ---and warned us:

**“Life will never be the same again. You’ll never sleep in again!”**

“How to” books became our regular reading material because we got the message: Becoming a parent was a big decision! It was for keeps.

**Parenthood is for Keeps, Step Two.** Our first child was a healthy baby girl. The need to be “on,” whenever a need presented itself, was exhausting for me. Being so absolutely responsible for another human being was serious business. It was total commitment. It took two years for me to recover and get used to the interruptions in my life. Later, I experienced at least two miscarriages. My husband and I regained hope with the good medical care from a doctor who took special interest in our situation and monitored my condition weekly for 8 months. A healthy baby boy joined our family. We rejoiced. We were committed. It was for keeps.

**Parenthood is for Keeps, Step Three.** We survived the tooth fairy expenses, high fevers, the chicken pox, learning to ride a bike, falling in a camp fire, climbing trees, soccer and gymnastic injuries, summer camp, sick gerbils, disobedient dogs, frostbit toes, piano recitals, cookie and candy sales, car nausea, road trips, lost jackets, no lunch money, bad dreams, science projects, band concerts, parent-teacher conferences, fender mishaps, unrequested car tows—just, those typical growing up events that happen in a typical family. It was fun, but sometimes, it was a challenge! It was for keeps.

**Parenthood is for Keeps, Step Four.** Fast forward. That healthy baby girl became the mother of three active boys and was anticipating the birth of a fourth child. But, the pregnancy was in trouble, and emergency surgery was required to save her life. I cuddled those three little boys, took care of household needs, and read books to them in their California home. We grieved the loss of the baby but rejoiced in her miraculous recovery. That was a day this mother **and** grandmother learned again: Parenthood is for keeps.

**Parenthood is for Keeps, Step Five.** August 2008. An emergency phone call came to us. Our son had developed a life-threatening condition, was taken by ambulance to the local hospital, and later was airlifted to Seattle. A hospitalization of two weeks, good medical care, and an extended recovery period has brought him back to health so he is now resuming his professional duties. As I hugged him in the hospital, my thoughts went back to hugs I had given him during a hospital stay when he was three. And, I was so thankful! I watched him cuddle his infant daughter of three months and laugh with his older daughter. I thought to myself, “Now it’s his turn.” It’s his turn to pass it on—parenthood is for keeps!

**This is our story.** Your family may have a story with similar details. Or, maybe only a small slice. The part that rings true is that parenthood requires total commitment. It’s a lifetime of loving and giving—not just when you feel like it. And, it’s extending that love to spouses who join the family. The holidays give great opportunities for families to share that love and celebrate the commitments to each other.

So, are we sleeping in? No, because the habit of getting up early taught us well. When the grandchildren come bounding into our bedroom, join us in bed, and snuggle under the covers, it is definitely another reminder that parenthood is for keeps! What a great gift! Better than we could have ever imagined!

# Top Ten Reasons to Stay in Co-op

By Kris Dickenson, Teacher, Wallingford 3-5s AM

***Registration for the new school year is approaching. Meanwhile, your preschooler is getting bigger and more capable every day. Will co-op still be a beneficial school environment for her next year?***

## **For the Child:**

***Increase your child's independence*** by providing continuity of the school environment. Your child can start the next year with confidence because she knows where the cubbies are, where the easel is, where to go to the bathroom, where to play when it's a rainy day, where to find the pencils and scissors, and where to go when she needs a quiet moment with a book.

***Provide a strong social / emotional base*** by starting the school year with many of the same children and adults they already know. Your child doesn't have to expend emotional energy during those first few months worrying about all the things that are new. Rather, he can begin concentrating his efforts on learning and mastery far earlier than in a completely new place.

***Promote self-confidence and potential leadership role*** by continuing where your child is familiar with the environment and materials. While the teacher and sequence of events may be different from the previous year, the fact that a child knows where to go for self-help contributes to their sense of "I can do this" and "I can manage." They can practice and take risks in the safety of a familiar environment and be ready, when the time comes, to take on the kindergartner's role of managing their own needs.

***Provide a strong academic foundation*** in a context that makes sense to your child. North Seattle Co-op programs are developmentally appropriate and child-centered, which doesn't mean "non-academic." Rather, it means that the teacher and program view children as whole beings and place emphasis on all the areas of development – the emotional, the social, the physical and the cognitive – that are the base for academic achievement. Young children learn differently and much more holistically than older children, so we embed academics in everything we do, from writing out recipes for cooking projects, to dictation of their own stories, to open-ended art projects, to the science and mathematical nature of the blocks. This may not be as obvious as worksheets sheets and memorization, but can accelerate later learning. Even when some of the materials and activities stay the same from year to year, they are designed to stimulate meaningful development and progress for your unique student.

***Increase your child's ability to problem-solve in the social area.*** North Seattle Co-ops work to strengthen one of the most important skills to succeed in kindergarten: a child's ability to verbally work out social interactions, such as waiting for a turn, being patient, using words instead of hands, telling someone how they feel, how to ask to enter play already going on, and when to get a grown-up for help. Research has shown the importance of social and emotional awareness to the academically successful

child. When children are not stressed over how to take care of themselves or how to get help when they need it, they can attend to classroom learning with much more focus and concentration.

## **For the Parent:**

***Be part of a parenting community,*** with experts in other peers, your teacher, and your parent educator at your fingertips. A co-op community provides a place to talk, share, and grow as a parent. It can be lonely at home with young children, and a quick laugh with other grown-ups in your own life space goes a long way.

***Develop leadership skills*** and gain confidence in your professional abilities by taking on a board position. Board experience can be very helpful in your current or future workplace as well.

***Extend your knowledge of child development*** and enhance your ability to assist in your child's kindergarten classroom and beyond. The parent who steps into a playground argument with skill is or was a co-op parent!

***Provide a community of support for your child*** with the high adult/child ratio. Familiarity with a diverse group of adults increases your child's sense of trust in a larger community – that there are adults, other than their parents, with whom they can receive care, a hug and guidance. This can also be a bonus for future car-pooling needs!

Finally, co-op is the only place where you will ever ***get a bird's-eye view of how your child learns*** on their own and how they behave in a group. You learn to appreciate all the qualities that your child has, not just the academic ones. As your child grows and attends elementary school, it becomes easier to manage the "I don't know" answer to your quest for information about their school day. But while they're little, a co-op allows you to know much more information about your child and their school than a drop-off preschool can. ●



*Kris and the preschoolers of Wallingford 3-5s AM*



(continued from page 2)

## “... Kindergarten Readiness”

### What if the child doesn't get into their preferred school?

Enrollment is based on a lottery system, so students may not be assigned to their first choice school. But the panel agreed that there are many excellent schools to choose from, and whichever school the child attends is likely to be a good one. Parents were encouraged to have an open mind and make the best of the situation by getting involved at the school and meeting the other families.

### How does the registration process work?

Enrollment information for Seattle Public Schools can be found on their Web site: <http://www.seattleschools.org/area/eso/story.dxml>. Be sure to double-check open house and tour dates with the individual schools, as there have been some scheduling changes this year. Further information on kindergarten readiness, including public and private school enrollment, can be found on NSCC Co-op's Web site: <http://coops.northseattle.edu/childergarten/childergarten.html>

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NSCC Cooperative  
 Preschool Program  
<http://coops.northseattle.edu/>  
 206.527.3783  
 (NSCC Parent Ed Office)

## Visit North's Counseling Department

2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the College Center, across from Admissions & Registration (527-3676, M-F 8am -4:30pm)

Interactive website:

<http://www.northseattle.edu/services/counseling/>

Referral resources for health and human services. Washington State Information Network. Phone 2-1-1, or TTY (206) 461-3610  
<http://www.resourcehouse.com/en/WA/cgi-bin/location.asp>

### Counseling helps students:

- Take career interest inventories, investigate careers, select academic programs and majors
- Improve concentration, recall, test-taking, time management, and other study skills
- Manage stress and crisis. Strengthen emotional/social skills
- Earn college transferable credit while developing

skills in Career Planning (HDC 100 on campus and online classes) and College Success (HDC101)

- Access 24-hour crisis intervention through King County Crisis Clinic at 206-461-3222.

### Counseling helps employees:

- \* Consult about challenging classroom and campus situations
- \* Schedule brief classroom visits where counselors describe services and provide quick, on-the-spot, study skills
- \* Arrange classroom presentations on time and stress management, career planning, and writing about cultural identity.

**Counseling Faculty**  
**North Seattle Community College**  
**9600 College Way North**  
**Seattle, WA 98103**  
**206 527-3676**

Please note that, because e-mail is not a secure form of communication, confidentiality cannot be ensured.

## NSCC Co-op Preschool Openings for 2009

| Toddlers                | Contact          |  |
|-------------------------|------------------|--|
| Northgate Toddlers      | Bryan Sera       | <a href="mailto:bpsnews@pobox.com">bpsnews@pobox.com</a> or 619-2445                   |
| Pre-3's                 | Contact          |  |
| Broadview Pre-3's       | Megan Bartot     | <a href="mailto:meganbartot@gmail.com">meganbartot@gmail.com</a> or 634-3470           |
| Meadowbrook Pre-3's     | Jessica Greenson | <a href="mailto:meadowbrookpre3@gmail.com">meadowbrookpre3@gmail.com</a> or 523-9673   |
| Ingraham                | Christina Suzuki | <a href="mailto:kurisu825@hotmail.com">kurisu825@hotmail.com</a>                       |
| 3-5's                   | Contact          |  |
| Broadview 3-5s          | Gina Vega        | <a href="mailto:gbreitbeil@yahoo.com">gbreitbeil@yahoo.com</a> or 365-1189             |
| Meadowbrook 3-5s        | Sushma Jain      | <a href="mailto:sushma_jain@hotmail.com">sushma_jain@hotmail.com</a> or 522-7744       |
| Ingraham 3-5            | Trina Nonis      | <a href="mailto:trinanonis@comcast.net">trinanonis@comcast.net</a>                     |
| Latona 3-5s             | Jennifer Heller  | <a href="mailto:seattlehellers@comcast.net">seattlehellers@comcast.net</a> or 547-8777 |
| Victory Heights PM 3-5s | Sorena Kaur,     | <a href="mailto:sorenakaur@yahoo.com">sorenakaur@yahoo.com</a> or 234-5568             |
| 5's & Multi-Age         | Contact          |  |
| Meadowbrook 5s          | Britta Hirsch    | <a href="mailto:brittalynh@gmail.com">brittalynh@gmail.com</a> or 320-7667             |
| Northgate Multi-Age     | Lisa Howard      | <a href="mailto:lhoward3@msn.com">lhoward3@msn.com</a> or 240-3578                     |