

Nursery School News

A Monthly Newsletter of St. Paul's Episcopal Nursery School

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Volume XXXIV, Issue 7

May 2005

From Jane

Another year is about to come to an end! Each year when May arrives I find myself reflecting on the past year, in particular the children here at school, the kind of year that each one of them has had, and the impact that each child has made on my own life.

One thing for sure is that the best thing about working with children is their happy enthusiasm for life, and their trust and confidence in the adults in their world. I must say that I am thankful that I can be a part of their world; their joy, inquisitiveness, and their continued growth and development, especially at a time when our adult world seems so full of worries and concern.

In the midst of our harried adult life I find it comforting that some things never change. Three and four year olds still love to ride bikes in the Big Room, climb Dirt Mountain, and create wonderful works of art! But they do eventually outgrow preschool and move on to more complex and bigger challenges. And of course it is our challenge to encourage and facilitate those changes, endings, and new beginnings. The hard part about all of this is that once we find our children in a relative "comfort zone" we often hesitate to encourage them to move on.

For some of the children I find myself thinking if only I had just a little more time with this child, she is now just getting the idea of how it all works, or she is finally beginning to gain a sense of belonging to the group. As the school year ends not only do our children know where they fit into their class group, they know how to problem solve "nursery school" issues independently - often without tantrums and negativity! In spite of this we must remind ourselves that with each new day comes a new challenge, both for us and for our children. As soon as our children master one new stage and we finally breathe a sigh of relief, along comes a new one and we all cope with what usually becomes an even more complex and challenging stage than the previous one.

For those of us who can take the risk of being life long learners, and model that life style for our children, we will encourage and facilitate our children's journey into uncharted waters of the future. And even if we do try to hang onto everything that is comfortable and familiar, our children really do not allow us to.

Everyone has concerns when their children move on to new environments, and especially with any signs of immaturity and imperfection that we see in our children. But on the up side we should all find reassurance

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From Jane: (Continued)

in knowing that even though they are young, they really are capable and ready to take on new challenges and move on to the next stage in their lives.

As for me, I recently moved my 80-year-old parents from North Carolina into a retirement community here in Pittsburgh. Then in June I will be sending my youngest child, who is now 21, off to spend the summer in Anchorage, Alaska working at a children's camp, and then once again off to Europe in the fall for a semester abroad. And finally, my oldest child and his wife are expecting their first child (my first grandchild!) in October. So - changes, challenges, and uncharted territory are definitely laying ahead for me. Life moves on and we must embrace the happiness with the sadness.

Have a good, safe, and restful summer. For those of you leaving the school do keep in touch, and for the rest of you, I will see you during summer program or next September.

Dr. Barry Brazelton

I recently ran across some notes I had taken when I went to a lecture given by Barry Brazelton M.D. here in Pittsburgh a few years ago. His wisdom is still current today, so I thought I would share some of his information with you all.

He emphasized many of the stresses that families and children are faced with today and discussed the direction that we need to go in order to move toward solutions and to build a better society for us all. In his discussion he made the following points:

1. Society tells us that we must be perfect parents raising perfect children. Of course there are no perfect parents or perfect children! In fact the way that we learn in life is *not* from our successes, but from our mistakes. As parents we need to support one another and share in both our successes and failures. We need to be less judgmental of one another and more supportive of each other and our children. We also need to take the time to look back into our own past in order to better understand our hopes and goals for our children, as well as our fears and worries about them.
2. Women have been asked to literally split themselves in terms of work and family. Women have been given the opportunity to be successful in the work force, but they have not been supported in their role as mothers and care givers. We *must* support women in both roles. We have also given the message that being "just a mother" is not enough. Children are therefore given the message that their needs are not really that important. We need to get our priorities right as a society.
3. We must look at our values. Today war, money, and power are highly valued. We must not overlook our families and children. According to Brazelton, the U.S. is the least family and child oriented society in the civilized world. The business world needs to be more family friendly about all family matters, and particularly flex time and maternity leave for both men and women.

Dr. Barry Brazelton (Continued)

4. T.V. and media are only interested in the bottom line. As a result we are exposing our children to inappropriate, and particularly violent material. We need to be aware of what our children are watching, and be present to answer their questions, explain content, or turn it off when appropriate.
5. We need to be more accepting of diversity. Diversity is often seen as negative and real tolerance is only given lip service. Children perceive differences as young as age 4 around issues such as skin color, hair, and even levels of activity which, according to Brazelton, are inherently different for different races. As far as activity level in school goes Anglo Saxon girls are generally the ideal. When we insist that all children fit into a stereotypical white Anglo Saxon ideal in behavior, appearance, cultural and religious customs etc., we will perceive many children as falling into a deficit mode when in fact they are not. We need to be more open and accepting of our many differences.

Brazelton concluded his talk by listing four issues that we need to be aware of on a daily basis and that we should strive to emphasize in our parenting. They include the following:

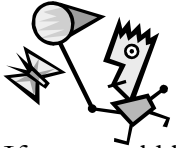
1. **Self-Esteem.** All of the brain research tells us that *personal interaction* is the beginning of a solid self-esteem. We need to allow our children time to *initiate interaction* that we then *respond to*. This is often not the case today because parents are so rushed that their interactions may become nothing more than intrusive comments, and not really in tune with their children's *genuine* needs. We need to slow our
2. **Self-respect.** This begins with ourselves, we must first respect ourselves in our own relationships, and only then will we teach our children to respect themselves. Self-respect leads to caring about others which ultimately leads to altruism. We need to model these values everyday in our interactions with others.
3. **Sense of humor.** We need to quit taking ourselves so seriously! Learn to laugh at life's little curves and imperfections.
4. **Sense of importance.** Children need to know that they are important enough to know how to cope. Children learn how to cope by being treated as though they are important enough to make their own choices. We need to give our children the opportunity to make choices for themselves. And to experience the consequences of not so good choices. This is how children learn to problem-solve. Obviously health and safety issues are not choices that should be left to children. But there are many areas where children can be empowered by making their own choices and thus getting the message that they are important enough to have an impact on their world in order to cope for themselves.



Lost and Found/Parent Bookshelf

Be sure to check the lost and found before the year is out. We will put things out on a table in the Big Room before school is out, check and see if your child has lost items here at school.

Check and see if you have any books at home from the parent bookshelf. If you find that you do, please return the books to the school office. Thanks for your cooperation.



Summer Program

If you would like your child to attend St. Paul's Summer Play Camp you can pick up a form in Kathi Workman's office. Summer program runs from June 20th - July 29th. Children must be 3 years of age by January 1, 2005 or have completed a 2 day class at St. Paul's and must be toilet trained (for health reasons).

Join the end-of-the-year celebration at the...

Mayfair Picnic

Saturday May 21, 2005

Rain or shine

11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

St. Paul's Episcopal Nursery School

Bring your family, a picnic lunch and enjoy the balloon making, clowns, face painting, children's games, moon bounce, train rides, pony rides and more!!

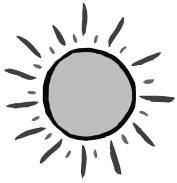
Admission is only \$5.00 per child (over the age of 2)

This includes 3 tickets, one for each ride and the games are FREE.

Enter your admission tickets at the picnic for a chance to win a hanging flower basket!!!

See Kathi Workman to purchase your admission tickets.

Mark Your Calendar For St. Paul's Activities and Events



May 2005



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8 	9	10	11	12	13	14
15 	16	17	18	19	20	21 May Fair
22	23	24	25	26	27 Last Day of School	28
29	30 Memorial Day	31		The first day of Summer Camp is June 20		