



Parent *MAY* Newsletter



"May there always be octopus."

In the Classroom: Taming the *Class Clown*

A parent (from another preschool program) recently shared with one of the staff that her child was in danger of being "kicked out" of that program because he was "bad," making other children laugh with his antics, being inattentive at Circle Time and interrupting other children's work. As adults, many of us remember that person in school: the class clown. He/she was funny and entertaining, but also a distraction in the learning atmosphere. Preschool-age children may bump into each other on purpose, use silly voices when greeting or speaking, giggle uncontrollably when friends make faces or get really wound up in a group.

Learning positive ways to get attention and recognize expected behaviors in different settings are important skills for children to develop in groups. Children may need help learning how to greet each other appropriately, entering play and accepting that sometimes they will not be the center of attention. Parents should be on alert for this behavior at home too. To help a child learn appropriate attention-getting skills, parents and teachers can:

- Identify why the child is acting a certain way. Is the child uncomfortable with greetings? Do siblings or other relatives greet the child with rough play? Does the child always want to be the center of attention?
- State how you want the child to behave. "Use your regular voice to talk," "You're not going to be silly at the dinner table, but you can always tell a story," or "You can just say hi to your friend."
- Remind your child of expectations when you anticipate him/her acting out. "When we are at the restaurant with Grandma and Grandpa, you can tell them about our trip to the zoo, but remember that sometimes you will need to just sit quietly."
- Avoid laughing at inappropriate behavior that is meant to get people's attention, and enlist the help of relatives and friends. While at dinner in a restaurant, the same child who may get "kicked out of preschool" may run around the table trying to tickle others and chew with his mouth full while looking to see if he/she could make anyone laugh. Children try similar tactics in the classroom. When a child repeatedly "tripped," looking around to see if anyone was watching, the teacher said, "You can just stand up and walk." She then invited him to build with her so he had her attention, but in a constructive activity.
- Follow through with consequences. Remove the child from any situation that he/she is trying to control by being funny, without warning or threats. Simply say, "Come with me for a minute." Tell him/her, "When you are done being silly, we'll go back in."

Of course, there are times when children are truly comical, and it's impossible not to laugh. While witty people are a joy to be around, the class clown rarely works to his/her full potential. Our goals are to help children learn appropriate ways to get attention based on the situation and help children develop self-control so they recognize when they are going too far and can strike a healthy balance.

End-of-the-Year Picnics

On our last day of school, we invite parents and siblings to join us to celebrate a wonderful year. Please come and enjoy a day in the park. We will have a variety of activities set up, both in and outside. Morning picnics will be 9-11 a.m. and afternoon picnics from 12:30-2:30 p.m.

Wednesday, May 26 All MWF & MW classes

Thursday, May 27 All TR classes

Sign-up sheets for a potluck snack will be available at school later in May.

Thinking to the Future

If you plan to enroll another child in RecSchool in the future, please remember to call and place your child's name on the mailing list the year before he/she will be eligible to attend. Siblings of former students have registration priority over new students, but do not automatically receive registration information.

"I Wonder If That Movie Is Appropriate For My Child"

Since many movies are marketed to children, even when rated PG-13, parents are often in the uncomfortable role of deciding, sight-unseen, whether a film is appropriate for their preschool, elementary or teenage children. "Screen It" is a useful resource for parents who would like to preview the content of movies before blindly saying, "Well, I guess it's okay." Although the homepage "requires" a subscription, parents are able to access extensive lists of newer and recently released films at http://www.screenit.com/search_movies.html, free of charge. The reviewed information is organized into categories (violence, disrespectful behavior, frightening/tense situations, drug/alcohol use) and progresses from general ratings to describing specific scenes. With peer pressure and heavy marketing, parents may feel influenced to allow children to see films that are not appropriate for the child's age. By doing a little research before saying yes, parents can avoid exposing children to uncomfortable or inappropriate images, even when "everyone else is going!"



Thanks for Sharing Your Children With Us

At this time of year we begin to count down the remaining days of RecSchool, which is a very sad thought. It's almost impossible to remember the first days in September when we were all nervous, wondering what the year would bring. This year has been full of laughter-filled moments, its fair share of challenges, daily small miracles, a few "oh, my goodness!" days and learning opportunities for all of us. It's a pleasure to see children stream into the classroom, grinning from ear to ear. Those smiles tell us that we have helped children feel competent and valued and made learning fun. We understand that each child comes to us with individual needs and believe that with love and support each child can grow to meet those challenges. At RecSchool, we hope each child has gained:

"May there always
be school."



- A love of learning through a variety of opportunities and successful experiences
- Confidence to take risks and tackle new challenges
- The ability to work through conflicts and accept differences of opinion
- Self respect and respect for adults and other children in the group
- The ability to find and become involved in significant learning experiences
- An awareness of literacy through a language-rich environment
- Self control by making positive choices and setting limits on personal behavior
- The ability to delay gratification and recover from disappointments
- The joy of making and keeping friends

These skills are not just useful as children get ready for elementary school. They are all crucial to leading a fulfilling, productive life. While we will occasionally mention that there is no preschool during the summer, we avoid talking about it too much. Many children don't understand the idea that preschool ends. If your child is questioning this confusing issue, provide simple explanations: "Preschool (or kindergarten) will begin again after the summer." Some of the five-year-olds may fully understand that they will not be coming back. They may feel sad knowing that they will miss their friends and teachers. You can help your child process his/her sadness by writing down these feelings. Be sure to admit that it is sad to say good-bye to friends and that you understand he/she will miss preschool. The last day is a hard day for us too. We look forward to the summer, but we will miss our little friends!

Spring Fling

Celebrate spring with fun activities for the entire family from noon-3 p.m. on **Saturday, May 1** at Fryer Park. Free activities include a bike rodeo, giant inflatables, crafts, games, touch-a-truck and more. Families are asked to donate non-perishable food items or personal care items to benefit the Grove City Food Pantry. Complete information is available at www.grovecityohio.gov.

We're Going to Slate Run!

On **Tuesday, May 11**, all RecSchool classes will meet at Slate Run Historical Farm and Park during regular class time for a tour of the farm, snack and playtime. We hope all families are able to attend this unique experience; it's well worth the drive. Please complete the attached attendance form and return it to RecSchool by Thursday, May 6.

Looking for Employment?

Are you interested in occasional or part-time work? RecSchool is looking for people who enjoy working with groups of children and would like to serve as substitute teachers or work a few hours each week. If you are interested, please pick up an application at City Hall. Feel free to call Michele with questions.

Growing Healthy Children: Teaching Appreciation and Respect for the Environment

On a walk to the garden, a group of children noticed a thick swarm of ants. When one of the children tried to step on them the teacher quickly stopped his foot. He responded, "But they are just ants" and she replied, "That's true -- they are just ants, but what do you think will happen if you step on them?" He thought for a minute. "Well I guess they would die." The teacher replied, "You're right, they would die, and ants are just trying to live. Let's watch to see where they are going." After a few minutes the child shouted, "I think they're eating that worm!"

This brief interaction helped the child understand that the natural world deserves respect and encouraged him to take a moment to observe "just ants." This year, the National Wildlife Federation created the "Be Out There" program, <http://www.nwf.org/get-outside.aspx>, to promote daily unstructured time outside and help children reconnect with the natural world. The website includes many activity suggestions to promote relaxed learning, the way young children learn best. Many of the Ohio Department of Education's Early Learning Standards can be met while children are digging for worms ("participate in simple, spontaneous scientific explorations with others"), smelling flowers ("use one or more of the senses to observe and learn about objects") and turning over rocks in the woods ("observe and begin to recognize the ways that environments support life"). Include a little time outside in each day's plans to benefit your child's health and support his/her learning.

IMPORTANT MAY DATES

Sat., May 1	Spring Fling, Noon-3 p.m., Fryer Park
Tues., May 11	Slate Fun Family Field Trip; no regular classes
Wed., May 26	Last Day: MW & MWF End-of-the-Year Picnics
Thurs., May 27	Last Day: TR End-of-the-Year Picnics
Sat., June 5	Family Fishing Day, 8 a.m.-noon, Fryer Park

Drawings were made after reading "May There Always Be," by Jim Gill



"May there always be cookies."