



THE SOUTH SHORE NATURAL SCIENCE CENTER

September 2017



Nature Center Preschool News

Welcome to a new school year! We are pleased to welcome back families from last year and welcome new families to Nature Center Preschool. This edition of the monthly newsletter will give you some important information for the start of the 2017-18 school year. Please review the family guide that you received in your child's cubby, it has the answers to many questions and includes important Preschool policies. As always, feel free to contact the Director, Diane Thureson, with any questions!

In an effort to decrease our use of paper products in Preschool and promote more reusable options, NCP is asking families to send their children to school with a reusable water bottle and reusable napkin each day.

Don't forget to bring a backpack with a full change of seasonal clothing each day. We go outside in many kinds of weather including rain! Please remember raincoats and boots!

Did you know?

Write your child's name on all belongings!

Swim



Garden Volunteers

Thank you to the families who helped us care for the garden over the summer! The fall is still a great time to help.

Contact Melissa for information about volunteering in the Children's garden!
mkurkoski@ssymca.org

The NCP swim instruction program at the Emilson Branch of SSYMCA will begin in October. More information will follow as the school year begins.



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Family Advisory Council News!

The Family Advisory Council (FAC) is an important group of parents and family members that work together with the NCP staff to support the mission of SSYMCA, SSNSC, and Nature Center Preschool, plan events and fundraisers, and provide helpful feedback, creating a cooperative climate that will make the NCP experience the best it can be for Families.

We welcome all families to participate on the FAC at our semi-monthly meetings or behind the scenes in supportive roles. If you would like to be a part of the FAC, let your classroom teachers know or email Diane dthureson@ssymca.org.



Nature Notes

Blue Jays have an impressive vocal repertoire that includes not only many sounds beyond their raucous jay! jay! calls but also other familiar oddball noises that resemble gurgles, rattles, and squeaky gates. Like other members of the corvid family, jays are pretty good mimics; they commonly impersonate Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks. I've also heard jays do credible Cooper's Hawk and Broad-winged Hawk calls, and I've read reports of them imitating American Kestrel and Osprey.

Several theories attempt to explain the behavior, two of which are most accepted and logical. The first says that jays are trying to warn other birds that a hawk is or was present. The second suggests that jays want to dupe other birds into thinking that a hawk is nearby, perhaps to gain access to a feeder.

We have a number of committees on the Family Advisory Council:

- Family evenings/events
- Fundraising
- Yearbook
- Community engagement
- Storybook walk
- Ladies Night Out

Even if you know you cannot attend meetings, please consider a committee or special project. The meeting schedule was included in the FAC packet you received in your child's cubby.

Dates in September

18th Extended Day begins

19th parent/caregiver coffee

9am Tu Th classes

1 pm PM classes

20th parent/caregiver coffee

9am MWF classes

25th 7-8pm Family Advisory Council meeting

27th/28th Lunch Bunch begins

September areas of Learning!

- **Science:** harvesting from the children's garden, plant and animal growth
- **Gross motor:** exploring the many outdoor areas Nature Center Preschool offers
- **Language:** Literature selections— The Kissing Hand, Chrysanthemum, Pete The Cat
- **Math:** mapping the grounds of SSNSC
- **Music:** Introducing NCP songs and finger plays, songs that are part of the routine of the day: the flag song, the pickup time song, snack songs and poems
- **Art:** First drawings
- **Social/emotional:** learning routines, getting to know each other, class agreements



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Family Involvement in Early Literacy

<https://www.edutopia.org/blog/parent-involvement-in-early-literacy-erika-burton>

PreK/Early Childhood Development Domains

Educators and families alike know that preschool-age children need a lot of modeling to navigate through social/emotional, cognitive and gross/fine motor skills. Many experts in the field of education in the last decade have emphasized the importance of play-based curriculum and its vital role in developing a child's imagination and social skills. Learning to get along with others is modeled and developed throughout the preK years and a child's formative years through programs under the umbrella of SEI (Social/Emotional Skills): anger management, problem-solving and empathy skills. Kindergarten teachers are thankful for the beginning role that preK teachers play in this initial modeling and development. Fine and gross motor skills are honed through everyday preK learning activities such as cutting, drawing, sorting, painting, catching, throwing, kicking, hopping, jumping and writing one's name.

Family Involvement: What Skills Need to be Part of a Daily Routine?

Family involvement in early literacy is directly connected to academic achievement. Children need parents/caregivers to be their reading role models with daily practice in order to navigate successfully through beginning literacy skills. According to research, parents and caregivers should focus on the words on the page while reading with their preK reader (Evans, Shaw, Bell, 2000).

Here are some strategies for beginning and seasoned readers' literacy success:

- **Point to each word on the page as you read.** This beginning literacy strategy will assist children with making print/story/illustration connections. This skill also helps build a child's tracking skills from one line of text to the next one.
- **Read the title and ask your child to make a prediction.** Beginning and seasoned readers

alike need to make predictions before reading a story. This will go a long way to ensure that a child incorporates previewing and prediction in his or her own reading practices both now and in the future.

- **Take "picture walks."** Help your child use the picture clues in most early readers and picture books to tell the story before reading.
- **Model fluency while reading, and bring your own energy and excitement for reading to your child.** Both new and seasoned readers struggle with varying pitch, intonation and proper fluctuations when they read aloud. Older readers will benefit from shared reading (taking turns).
- **Ask your child questions after reading every book.** Reading comprehension is the reason we read -- to understand. The new [Common Core standards](#) assessing U.S. children's readiness for the workplace and college ask children at all grade levels to compare and contrast their understanding of concepts. This takes practice. Help your child explain his or her understanding of any given story in comparison to another. Have your child share a personal experience similar to a problem or theme within a story. Higher-order thinking skills (critical thinking) are skills children are expected to use in both written and oral assessments in school. There is no way for a teacher to ask every child to use a critical thinking skill every day. Families can.
- **Connect reading and writing if possible.** The connection between reading, writing and discussion should be incorporated with daily literacy practice. Have a young child dictate to a family member who writes in a journal or on a sheet of paper. Modeling the formation of sentences aligned with the words of a story is crucial for a child to begin making a neural interconnectedness between reading and writing. A child's process of drawing pictures brings his or her personal creativity toward the story. Sharing these illustrations of experiences and individual interpretations related to the sentence he or she has created on the page is yet another step toward this early balanced literacy approach.



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