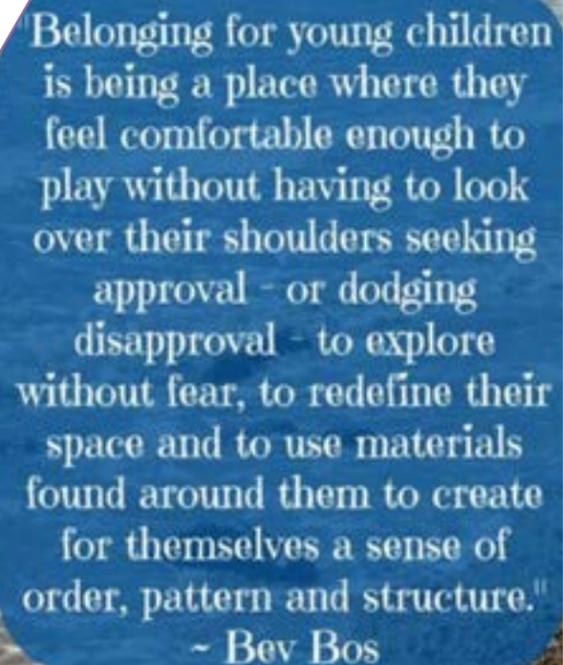


THE

PURPLE KANGAROO

AN IRVINE COMMUNITY NURSERY SCHOOL PUBLICATION





Belonging for young children is being a place where they feel comfortable enough to play without having to look over their shoulders seeking approval - or dodging disapproval - to explore without fear, to redefine their space and to use materials found around them to create for themselves a sense of order, pattern and structure."
~ Bev Bos

WORDS OF WISDOM

Quan and I have 2 daughters, Fiona, a 1st grader, who went to ICNS for 3 years, and Felicity, who is now in the 3 day class. We have both experienced and struggled with the paradox discussed above about parenting in our modern world, and how scientists KNOW that “free play” is VITAL to the health and well being of each child, but at the same time, there seems to be less and less of free time offered frequently enough for kids.

This is a huge issue in Irvine, as we expect a lot as a community from our schools, teachers, students, and academic progress as well as extracurricular activities.

It is very easy to “get busy” with homework, after school extra-curricular activities, other family duties, etc., and forget that children of all ages NEED FREE PLAY, and a time to let their mind stray, be creative without too many stipulations or boundaries, and time to just sit, rest, chat with friends & family. “Free play”!

At ICNS, we know what free play and play based learning looks like, sounds like, feels like, smells like, and even tastes like because Donna, Bushra, & Tanya show us “play based learning” daily in all classes offered at ICNS! Donna very much so exemplifies the words of Bev Bos, who was a renown parent co-op preschool teacher and ran The Roseville Community Preschool as a director for 50 years. She was known for saying, “If it hasn’t been in the hand, the body and the heart, it can’t be in the brain.”

It’s very easy to get stuck in a rut with busy schedules, and just keep muddling through without taking time to smell the roses, think about how kids learn best, and still have enough free play as you leave ICNS. My oldest daughter Fiona is 6.5 now and a few months into 1st grade. I can’t even begin to say what a struggle it felt like to go from ICNS, where she felt comfortable to ask teachers any question on her mind or add her non-stop comments throughout the day, and then starting kindergarten where there’s only specific and limited times and ways to voice your opinion, ask a question, or get up to wiggle or wander, and discover freely.

At least for our family, most of the play based learning opportunities just stopped in kindergarten, so it felt like a shock to the system after Fiona was so comfortable with the values and ways of ICNS.

In many ways, that’s just life. It was a struggle, but we did get through kindergarten, and she’s feeling much more connected to the ways of learning in the 1st grade classroom.

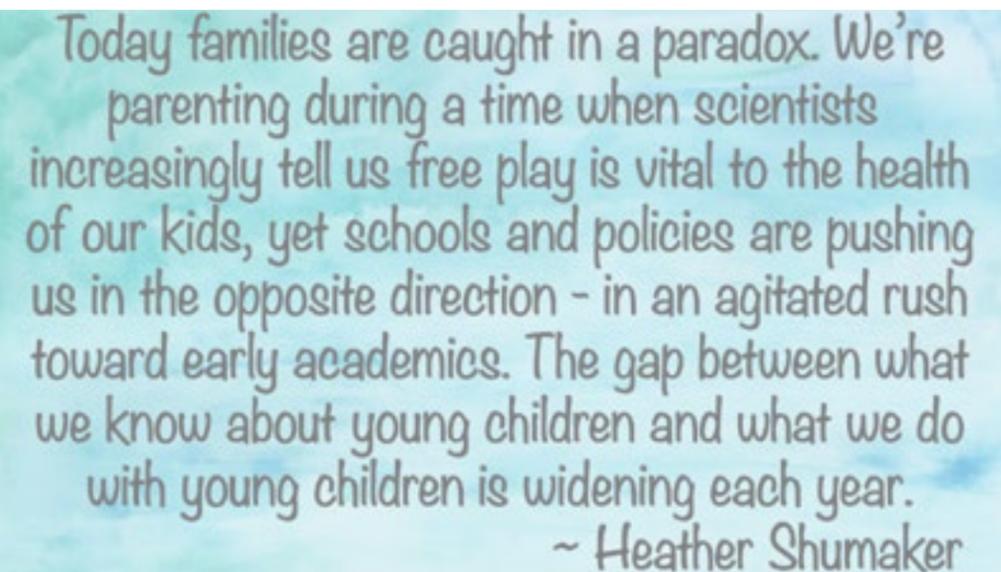
But, I guess my point is that through this struggle, it made us truly appreciate this beautiful, open, cozy, encouraging, positive, stimulating, play based learning school we are so glad to have been and still are a part of here at ICNS!

We need to continue to be our child’s best advocate for letting their minds wander, letting their bodies wiggle, feeling comfortable to try something new and not worry about reactions from others about making a mistake in the learning process. Even if this simply means, that we’re careful not to over-schedule our kids, and make sure they are encouraged to have free time for their brain.

Of course, homework is always going to be there, and we already know that once we leave preschool, most schools are no longer play-based for the most part. It’s a reality. But, it truly would be nice if we could find more ways to take the essence of ICNS teachers & ways of learning with us on our journey after preschool....as Bev Bos described her life’s work as “expanding horizons for children and their parents, and keeping the wonder, discovery, and hands on experience in their lifelong learning!”

Advocate for this!

Colleen and Quan Nguyen
Parents of Felicity Nguyen (3 day)



Today families are caught in a paradox. We’re parenting during a time when scientists increasingly tell us free play is vital to the health of our kids, yet schools and policies are pushing us in the opposite direction - in an agitated rush toward early academics. The gap between what we know about young children and what we do with young children is widening each year.
~ Heather Shumaker

ASK MS. DONNA

Donna Schwartze shares her wisdom on the inner workings of the child mind and how to survive as a parent

I was asked to answer 2 questions that are universal parent challenges: How to build a child's self-esteem and what to do about whining. Every parent wants to have a self-confident child who will grow to be a successful, happy, fulfilled, and contributing member of society. Most parents find the whining voice of a child to be equal to fingernails on a chalkboard and one of the most annoying aspects of parenting.

Let's address whining first. Why is it that children resort so quickly to whining behavior? I believe it comes from a child's frustration of not being listened to or getting the attention that he needs. The child has a message and no one is listening. Parents are busy and children are always talking and asking for things and too often parents brush them off with empty comments of "OK", "Just a minute", "Not now". If the child and parent have frequent conversations, and the child senses that his voice, comments, and ideas are valued, there will be less reason to whine. (This is one reason we try to eliminate "Good Job" from our conversations, and ask more thoughtful, intentional questions-but this is another discussion that we have begun and will continue throughout the year) So what to do when the whining begins or continues?

It took me a long time as a parent to realize that I could (somewhat) control the whining by engaging with my child more often, ignoring the whining, and removing the payoff. Children have one track minds that go straight from the station to their wants and desires, and they are under the misguided impression that if they ask repeatedly and loud enough in a high pitched, screeching voice, that the adults will hear them and they can get what they want.

This only works if it has worked previously. If a parent gives in the first time a child whines to get what he wants and succeeds=aha-success thinks the child. Let's try this again, and again, and again, until your "no" goes unheard, and your logic and negotiations fail to stop the whining. Parents are usually so worn down by the constant barrage of demands, promises, and noise that they give in. It takes a lot of fortitude, patience, and a determination equal to the child's (and sometimes wine!) to stop the whining.

Not only is whining hard on a parent's ears and emotional state, it is not good for the child. What the child is learning from a constant payoff of whining are some very unattractive personality traits and habits, such as:

- That if he makes a big enough fuss he can get/do what he wants.
- That her wants are more important than

everything/everyone else's.

- That she has control over her parents, thus eroding her respect for her parents

- That if he can control his parents, he loses his boundaries and sense of security.

As Barney Fife would say "Nip it in the bud!"

Stop the whining before it gets out of hand. Have techniques and statements ready for any potential onslaught of whining and never back down! Be firm and stay calm.

Some replies, reactions, and techniques to use with a whining child:

- "I can tell by your voice that you really want _____. What is a better way to ask?"

- "I can see that you are disappointed. We can talk when you calm down"

- "When you stop whining we can discuss what you want"

- And this from Melissa Stoldt: her mother would say, "You have 1 minute to whine, and then I'm done listening" (I wish I had thought of this when my kids were younger!)

- "I can't hear a whining voice"

- "You can go outside and whine all you want.

There is no whining in the house" (this was my go to as I held the door open for the whining offender)

- "Uh oh! Is that a whining voice?" (a little humor here)

Probably the best offense to whining is to not let it get started and to make a commitment to spend individual time with your child. Get to know your child and their moods and the reasons behind their upsets. Quite often your child is throwing a tantrum or whining about something completely unrelated to the moment, or is unable to express himself enough to explain. Children at this age don't need a detailed explanation of the reasons we are not fulfilling their wish-keep it short, clear, and simple. Your patience and the connection that you make with your child will not only help ease and eliminate whining, but can also help build up your child's self-confidence, which leads us to the second question.

Think about when you feel the most confident. Confidence can look like certainty, self-reliance, and self-assurance. So how do we get a child to embody these traits? From my own experience, I have found that when I accomplish a task that I didn't think I could do, but I persevered and had some form of success, I feel so fabulous and so proud of myself! I believe that this feeling combined with the memory of many successes are what build confidence.

When your child accomplishes a task that was previously difficult-like putting on shoes, brushing teeth, cleaning up his toys-ask him how he feels. You can say to your child, "You must be so proud of yourself. You can do _____ now". Remind your child that she practiced and practiced and now she can button her shirt. Talk to your child about all the practicing he did and now he can ride a 2 wheel bike. "That feels good!" "You worked hard to learn that."

Adults should never do for a child what he is capable of doing himself, keeping in mind age appropriate expectations. Don't rob your child of the opportunity to try and fail and then try and succeed. Encourage your child to order his own meal at a restaurant and look an adult in the eye when saying hello.

Every time you have a success, you are building up your confidence, so with the next difficult task you face, while it may not be easy, you have learned how to persevere and practice and work hard towards success. Confidence is intrinsic. It's not a gold star or a toy reward or "good job". It is the development of character, and it is contagious-the more you get the more you want. Meaningful conversations with your child and the connection that develops will ease the sometimes difficult communication to your child to "keep on trying" or "you can do it." It is a challenge to raise a confident child, but parents, I have confidence in your commitment to your children and I know you can do it!

Ms Donna



25 Ways to Ask How Was School Today Without Saying, "How was school today?"

- them to take?
- #1. What was the best thing that happened at school today? (What was the worst thing that happened at school today?)
 - #2. Tell me something that made you laugh today.
 - #3. If you could choose who would you like to sit by in class? (Who would you NOT want to sit by in class? Why?)
 - #4. Where is the coolest place at the school?
 - #5. Tell me a weird word that you heard today. (Or something weird that someone said.)
 - #6. If I called your teacher tonight what would she tell me about you?
 - #7. How did you help somebody today?
 - #8. How did somebody help you today?
 - #9. Tell me one thing that you learned today.
 - #10. When were you the happiest today?
 - #11. When were you bored today?
 - #12. If an alien spaceship came to your class and beamed up someone who would you want
 - #13. Who would you like to play with at recess that you've never played with before?
 - #14. Tell me something good that happened today.
 - #15. What word did your teacher say most today?
 - #16. What do you think you should do/learn more of at school?
 - #17. What do you think you should do/learn less of at school?
 - #18. Who in your class do you think you could be nicer to?
 - #19. Where do you play the most at recess?
 - #20. Who is the funniest person in your class? Why is he/she so funny?
 - #21. What was your favorite part of lunch?
 - #22. If you got to be the teacher tomorrow what would you do?
 - #23. Is there anyone in your class that needs a time out?
 - #24. If you could switch seats with anyone in the class who would you trade with? Why?
 - #25. Tell me about three different times you used your pencil today at school.

L.O.L

Our ICNS parents share some of their most hilarious parenting stories.

As Breyton's Father, I love that he enjoys smiling and laughing. His favorite thing to do is wrestle but instead of engaging in contact he will just lay there and let me tickle him!

More importantly, Breyton is one that is happy within his own skin. Even when others comment he looks like a girl because of his long hair, he never gets mad. He just goes on his own way saying I like my hair and I'm a boy.

Breyton is unaware but he is a comedian and does the funniest things. One story to share is when he was at his karate class. In addition to practicing marital arts, the students are expected to be aware of key principles and information regarding the arts of Karate.

On this day, all the students were focused and were quietly listening to every instruction. They all wanted that ninja dollar that is given to kids

who behave. "Who can name the five animals", asks Sensei Jack.

Breyton raises his hand and with a ferocious look says, "Dragon, leopard, snake, crane, and NINJA TURTLE". All the parents and kids break out in laughter, but Breyton remains stoic but with a quick smirk as he had his eye on the prize. That's my boy.

Louis Le
(Breyton 3 day)



When my son was 5 he was very interested in natural disasters and loved to draw. We had hundreds of drawings of volcanoes, hurricanes, tornadoes and floods.

One night, my husband and I came back from a date night and our babysitter expressed some concern over something Luke drew.

She indicated that even though it was spelled incorrectly she thought he was writing f*ck and told him that it wasn't appropriate and he got upset.

She showed us the picture he made and Ed and I burst out laughing. He drew some tornado funnel clouds touching down near a group of palm trees. He gave the palm trees a thought bubble which said, "fuke"!

I do believe that our babysitter was correct in what Luke was trying to write AND I do believe that palm

trees would be thinking that exact thought if several tornado funnel clouds were touching down and if they could think. To this day it is one of my favorite drawings and I hang it in a special place in my room.

Priscilla Cottone
(Chloe 3 day)





Max Maginnis age 3

...he'd snuck out of bed and decided to go for a sensory experience that night.

On the first night Max wore his brand new white Deadpool pajama shirt he did ruin it. I had been practicing oil painting that weekend and had an old canvas I was experimenting on. Oil paints take forever to dry and it was raining that weekend so I had to bring in the painting. It wasn't anything very good, but I wanted to still practice on it.

So that night my wife and I are in the office/dining room doing our night jobs and Max comes walking out of his bedroom where he was supposed to be asleep. His hands, face and shirt were covered in blood red smears. I jumped out of my seat and immediately started checking him

all over, thinking maybe he'd scratched a big scab and in the dark didn't know what he was doing.

Asking this sleepy little three year old if he had any boo boos, if he fell out of bed, anything to explain why he was covered in blood. I took him to the bathroom to get a better look and start cleaning him up still confused what he was covered in.

Then my wife comes walking in holding the painting I was working on, and it is covered in dozens of tiny hand prints and smears. Somehow he'd snuck out of bed and decided to go for a sensory experience that night.

The canvas stays outside now and he likes to draw on it with sidewalk chalk to this day.

Kevin Maginnis
(Max 2 day)



The Yellow Table

Recipes that feed your soul and your sweet tooth

Cocunut Lime Chicken
Recipe courtesy of A Saucy Kitchen
Ingredients

- 4 skinless, boneless chicken breasts
- 1/4 teaspoon sea salt
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 tablespoon coconut oil
- 1/2 cup red onion, chopped (it came out to 1/2 onion for me)
- 1 red chili, chopped optional
- 1 cup organic chicken stock*
- 2 tablespoons lime juice (about 1 large lime)
- 1 tablespoon chopped cilantro
- 1/2 teaspoon red chili flakes
- 1/2 cup full fat coconut milk from a can or coconut cream *
- 1 tablespoon arrow root starch for paleo or corn starch mixed into 1 tablespoons water optional

Instructions

Place the skin breasts between two pieces of plastic cling wrap and pound them down to make them even in thickness. This will help the chicken cook evenly and make for more tender chicken. Sprinkle each side of the chicken with salt and pepper. Melt the coconut oil in a large skillet over a medium high heat on the stove. Add the chicken breasts and cook each side for 5-7 minutes or until browned on each side. Remove the chicken from a skillet and set aside on a plate. The chicken doesn't need to be fully cooked yet because you'll be returning it to the heat shortly. Add the chopped onion to the same skillet and sauté for a few minutes to soften. Add the chili pepper if you're using it. Sauté another couple of minutes. Add the chicken stock, lime juice, cilantro and chili flakes. Bring the mixture to a boil and then reduce down to a simmer. Let simmer for about 5 minutes to let reduce down. Add the coconut milk and bring to simmer again for another 5 minutes. Add the starch and water at this time if you're using it. You may need to raise the heat slightly higher to bring this to a boil to activate the starch. Once the sauce thickens reduce it back down to a simmer. Add the chicken back to the skillet, cover and let cook for another 5-10 minutes or until the chicken is cooked all the way through. Serve with rice or cauliflower rice with the sauce spooned over the top. Add an extra sprinkling of cilantro & chillies and enjoy!