



Handprints



Hello Everyone!

I hope you all had a fun, relaxing, and healthy winter break. I cannot believe we are already in the second half of the school year. I have really enjoyed the first half of the school year.

You all have been amazing this year. We have had so much happen these past few months, and I have always had members who will step up to help me when needed. I am so very grateful for all of your kindness and generosity. We have truly shown how a Co-op family works together this year!!

We have many events coming up with the school in the next couple of months:

- February 13th - 16th No School (Great American's Weekend)
- Early Enrollment (for all current and past Co-Op members) will be February 17th at 8:30am
- Open Enrollment Open House (open to public) will be February 26th from 6-7pm.
- Annual Music and Art Show with Silent Auction – March 10

We're preparing for the elections for the 2015-2016 board soon. When nominations are opened, please feel free to nominate yourself or any other member you feel would enjoy being on the board. I have been on the board for three years and have loved it. I look forward to working another year as a board member.

Thank You,
Shasta Grifka
President

January 2015

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A Note from the Director

It is common for parents to experience some anxiety about guiding children's behavior in the classroom. Engaging with children about discipline issues face-to-face is very different than reading about our policy in the comfort of your own home. For this issue of Handprints, I'd like to share an article written by former Co-op teacher and director Courtney Aldrich. This article provides points of consideration for you to think about regarding your role in our classroom. As always, I'm happy to discuss any questions you may have!

- Claire

Assisting and Discipline – What should I do?

One of the trickiest parts about being an assist parent is understanding your role in the classroom when it comes to the topic of discipline. Unfortunately, there is not a "one-size fits all", straightforward set of procedures. It depends upon your comfort level and the dynamics of a particular situation. Hopefully this article will help you feel more comfortable and confident in handling the uncertainty of discipline issues.

For starters, there is a buzzword in Early Childhood Education called "guidance". Guidance has replaced the word discipline, which has a negative, authoritative connotation. Guidance is the means by which we help children learn about working together, self-control, decision-making, problem solving, and conflict resolution in an encouraging atmosphere that maintains their self-esteem. Before a situation ever arises, it is so helpful if we have a mindset that allows for children's mistaken behaviors (as opposed to *mis*behaviors) as an opportunity for us to help them learn. We expect adults to guide them in their academic learning, so why not expect that they'll need guidance in their social and emotional learning as well?

OK, now that we have everyone thinking in a more positive manner about guidance issues, what do we expect of you as assist parents? The only *mandatory* involvement on your part is if a child is hurting him or herself or someone else. Safety is number one always. Unsafe behavior must be stopped immediately.

Usually, however, guidance issues are not issues of immediate safety. Often a child is not working well with another child or not following the teacher's directions. In these cases you are more than welcome to help guide the child in a manner consistent with our preschool's philosophy and within your personal comfort level. Prior to assisting, if you refer to our Guidance Policy, you'll see that there are levels of guidance that range from very low intervention (such as consciously ignoring the behavior, physical proximity, and eye contact) to higher interventions (such as re-directing behaviors or giving choices). When talking or interacting with the children, it is helpful to use the "talk" and techniques you have heard and seen the teacher use. When in doubt, follow the cues of the teacher. Of course, you can *always* summon the teacher to handle a situation you are not comfortable addressing.

Another factor to keep in mind is that different children have different needs at this age depending on their own personal developmental timetable. This complicates guidance issues because "cut and dried" rules aren't always appropriate. For example, it may not be appropriate to expect one child to be able to sit through an entire gathering time, while other children may be expected to do so. Once again, follow the cues of the teacher, and remember safety issues are *always* non-negotiable.

Always know that as teachers we appreciate your help with guidance in the classroom. One of the unique aspects of co-op is that we only have one teacher per class, so we cannot have one teacher attending to an individual child while the other teacher leads a group activity. We have a teacher's aide position to help alleviate those guidance situations that demand the teacher's undivided attention. There can be a variety of demands on our time depending on the day, however, so we still really depend upon parents. In your role as a teacher's helper, guidance issues always take priority over cleaning or other assist duties in the classroom. The teacher will also guide the parent helpers in guiding the children when necessary – it is all part of how we work together to create a consistent, caring program. Hopefully this letter has helped ease some of your concerns – assisting in your child's education is truly a privilege and a joy, and we want you to get the most out of it.

Written by Courtney Aldrich

Special Note: Our guidance policy, along with other useful information, is available in our Handbook located on our website: www.chelseacoop.org



Fundraising Update and Silent Auction Donation All-Call

Many thanks to all who participated in the Holiday Massage Fundraiser!

We raised \$300 for the preschool, bringing us nearly halfway to our yearly fundraising goal of \$5,000. We are so grateful to Co-op mom Erin Beatty for donating her expertise and time!

Our Next fundraiser will be our annual silent auction held on **March 10th** at the yearly preschool art show and musical.

Last year we auctioned well over 100 items and raised the bulk of our funds at the silent auction. We have begun soliciting for donations—anything from guitar lessons to Disney day-passes. If you have a service, gift certificate, or corporate donation you'd like to make please contact Tess Eastment at tess74@gmail.com by **February 15th**. Given the Co-op's 501(c)(3) status, all donations are tax deductible, Tess can provide a letter with our Employer Identification Number.

Thanks again for your support!

Tess Eastment
Ways and Means

Open Enrollment

On Tuesday, February 17th, starting at 8:30am, Early Enrollment for the 2015/2016 school year will be open to any *current or past* Co-op member families. Early enrollment will take place at school just outside the Young 5's classroom. Co-op President, Shasta Grifka and Membership Chair Amanda MacDonald will stay until the line is gone. If you cannot attend on February 17th, we will continue taking enrollments from any past or current members before we open to the public at our open house on February 26th. Please plan to enroll as early as possible to take advantage of your Co-op member priority.

Applications will be available at the Co-op and on the website soon. You will need to provide a \$35.00 non-refundable registration fee (add \$5.00 non-refundable registration fee for each additional child) with your application. Please make sure your application is *complete* to avoid questions and delays. We cannot accept applications prior to early enrollment.

We accept members on a first come/first serve basis. In order to help families that may struggle to be at early enrollment, we are allowing each family to submit an application for ONE additional family. If a session is full, your child can be placed on a waiting list for the first available opening; available slots in the sessions do fill up quickly. If you do not register at early enrollment, mailing or delivering the completed application and registration fee as soon as possible will help in securing a spot for your child. Mailed applications will be considered "received" based on the postage-date.



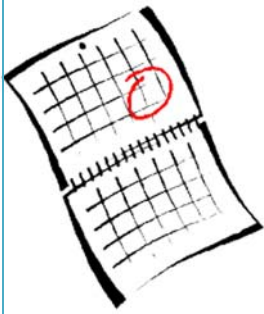
Open House

Enrollment will open to the public at our Open House which will take place on Thursday, February 26th from 6:00-7:00pm. This will be in parallel to the Community Education's Open House so that families can experience both schools and be informed of each school's philosophy.

Please spread the word to your local friends and family about our Open House and enrollment. If you know anyone who may be interested in enrolling, please have them contact Amanda MacDonald, call the Co-op at 433-1938 or visit the website.



PICUTRE DAY will be March 26th



Don't miss...

What: *Early Open Enrollment (Current/Past Co-Op Members)*

Where: Outside the Young 5's Classroom

Date: February 17th, 2015

Time: 8:30am

What: *The Chelsea Children's Cooperative Preschool Open House (Enrollment to Public Open)*

Where: Washington Street Education Center

Date: February 26th

Time: 6:00-7:00pm

What: *The Chelsea Children's Cooperative Preschool Art Show, Musical and Fundraiser!*

Where: Washington Street Education Center

Date: March 10th, 2015

Time: 6:00-7:30 pm with musical performance at 6:00pm. The silent auction will follow directly after the performance. Artwork will be hung for your enjoyment. Please invite your family and friends!



The following classroom donations are appreciated!

Swiffer Wetmop Refills

Paper Towel

Facial Tissue

Lysol or Clorox Wipes

Baby Wipes

Dixie Cups (9 oz.)

Napkins

Chelsea Children's
Cooperative Preschool

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PLAY. LEARN. GROW.

At Chelsea Children's Cooperative Preschool, we believe it our responsibility to provide multifaceted opportunities for preschoolers to explore, experiment, and grow in a safe, nurturing, and age appropriate arena. Valuing the family as a unit as well as the individuality and worth of each of its members is our philosophy and practical approach to preschool education.