

Kaleido-scoop

*Newsletter of Kaleidoscope School
October, 2017*

Nuts and Bolts

Please remember to pay tuition in a timely manner. We are a small business and your prompt payment on the first school day of each month is important. Thank you.

Preschool and PreK Families: Please write your child's name or symbol on the label of your child's coat! Your child may have more difficulty recognizing their coat at school than they have at home. This will help us bundle up more quickly to enjoy the park together! Thank you.

Have you noticed the boxes of library books by the classroom door? We have been making books for each class about our school days for you to take home, read together, and then bring back for another family's turn. This is a great way to spark conversations and stories about your child's school day. The covers are color-coded: Blue for Early Preschool, Red for Preschool, and Purple for PreK. Enjoy!

Halloween is coming! We will be handing out candy for the Magnolia Village Trick or Treat! If you would like to donate a bag of candy to the cause, we will have a box out to collect treats. An incredible number of children and families participate in this fun event. Thanks for your contributions.

Halloween in the Classroom:

Your child is welcome to wear a weapon free costume to school any day. In particular, kids are invited to wear or bring costumes October 30 in the Preschool and October 31 in the EPS and PK classes.

The youngest class has parent-teacher classes coming in early November. This is a chance for parents to come in for a half hour and talk with your child's teacher. We prepare by writing up observations in different developmental areas (social/emotional, cognitive, communication, motor). This helps structure our time, but it is really a conversation about your child, how they are at home and at school. What is challenging? What is delightful? What questions do you have for us about your child or development in general? Look for sign up sheets on the bulletin board soon.

Upcoming dates

Wed, Nov 8, evening –
Thurs, Nov 9, morning – EPS parent-teacher conferences
Thursday, November 9, No school – EPS class (to accommodate conferences)

Friday, November 10: Veterans Day – No school

November 22-24: Thanksgiving holiday – No school

Some thought and theory behind the Kaleidoscope Way

Teaching young children is an interesting mix of observing, holding space, setting limits, and interpreting and analyzing the experiences of the children in our care. One of heroes and inspirations is Vivian Gussin Paley. She is a teacher and an author. She taught preschool and kindergarten for 37 years, primarily at the University of Chicago's acclaimed Laboratory Schools. She is the author of 13 books about young children.

In her writings, she often weaves together stories, based on close observation and recordings of the children in her class, with analytical and self-reflective practices that inform her work in the classroom. She has done pioneering work on multicultural issues in the classroom, the importance of play, and storytelling in the classroom.

Her writing is easily accessible to anyone who spends time with children. She inspires readers to protect and promote the magic and power of pretend play. She documents the cognitive growth that occurs in a classroom where dramatic play, storytelling, and creative kindness are valued and practiced. The following is excerpted from The NAEYC magazine Young Children's 2001 interview with Ms Paley:

Many people have asked me, "What's the difference between ordinary kindness and creative kindness?" And each time I give a different answer, since for me the subject is evolving.

The teacher or the child who suggests a role for the child who's been left out is practicing what I think of as creative kindness. The effort to respect, include, and admire a child takes into account the particular nature of a child's desires and self-image. Let's say the teacher says, "Peter really loves being the big monster, doesn't he? I wonder if anyone has a place in their story for a big monster. And maybe Peter would like to know how you want the big monster to act so he doesn't frighten the baby." You can see all the creativity that goes into this kind of thinking.

It's much easier to practice creative kindness in a classroom that allows for play and storytelling and story acting because you can insert new scenes and new roles in stories. When the classroom is primarily organized around subject lessons, it is harder to accomplish. For young children, it is easier to explain the creative side of kindness where there are roles to be explored and a story to be told.

We read Paley's [You Can't say You Can't Play](#) in the early days of Kaleidoscope School. She inspired one of our key classroom principles, "We make room for everyone to play." We model and teach creative kindness as we expect and coach children to "grow the game" or "grow the plan" or "grow the idea" so everyone is included. It can be challenging as children receive a lot of messaging out in the world that does not center this inclusive tenet. It was a game changer for us to articulate and implement this philosophy at school and has led to many interesting conversations, kind practices, and creative solutions. Storytelling and creative play are powerful tools humans have. Vivian Paley's tender, sweet and insightful writing is a gift to both discover and revisit.