



DIRECTOR'S NOTE
Our preschool's philosophy.

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DAY CLASS NOTES
What your kids have been up to.

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PARENT THOUGHTS
Hard to say goodbye dropping off your kid.

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SEPTEMBER
2019

SUNNYMONT WESTIDE SUN

President's Note | Strength in our community

Lately, I've been thinking about happiness. Every year, the United Nations puts out something called the World Happiness Report, which is a measure of a variety of factors, including how people in different countries feel about certain aspects of their lives.

"If you were in trouble, do you have relatives or friends you can count on to help you whenever you need them, or not?"

I'm fortunate enough to have a good family support system, including some here locally. But there's no question that a huge portion of my social support system comes from fellow parents, and most of those are ones I met right here at Sunnymont-Westside.

The nature of co-ops provides us with an opportunity to forge deeper bonds than we might if we were just passing by each other at drop-off and pick-up. When you work side by side with



someone, support their child and see your child supported by them, they become part of your community in a way that's very hard to forge in other kinds of schools. This is probably the single best thing I as a parent will take away from my time at Sunnymont-Westside (and believe me, there is stiff competition).

One of the other factors they measure in this report is generosity. Not how generous people are to you, but how generous you are to others. What social scientists know (and what our

children are given the chance to learn by being invited to share things freely, rather than being forced), is that being generous makes us happy. A co-op gives us an opportunity for this kind of generosity; we can give our community our time, our skills, and our love, and we are rewarded with good feeling that's often lacking in modern life.

As I sat down to shake the shaving cream out of my boots after school today, I can't say I felt awash with happiness in that moment; but even the somewhat tiresome or unglamorous tasks remind me that this school belongs to me, and to my community which I love more than I can express. I hope that you feel connected, to the children, to the parents, to your school. I hope that we bring happiness into each other's lives, in whatever way we can.

LIZ LYNCH
Board President

**SUNNYMONT-
WESTSIDE**
Staff

Director
Justine Saffir

1-Day Class Coordinator
Jill Siegrist

2-Day Class Coordinator
Belinda Weaver

3-Day Class Coordinator
Daphne Kuo

4-Day Pre-K Class
Julia Eppstein

1-Day and 2-Day teacher
Debbie Barnes

3-Day teacher
Justine Saffir

4-Day teacher
Rebekah Wunderlich

Director's Note | On who we are

As we begin a new school year, it's nice to revisit our goals, aspirations, and sense of identity.

Several years ago, right after Sunnymont and Westside got married, we talked about our identity and our culture at an all school meeting. (For those of you who have wondered why we have a ridiculously long, hyphenated name – now you know.) Each person present contributed one thing that they felt was an important core element of our school's philosophy and identity.

All of these things were sorted into categories, edited to eliminate duplications and to provide for flow of the language, and the result was a map of our school culture. As I look at the list today, it still resonates as a snapshot of whom we are and who we seek to be.

WE ARE...

A COMMUNITY

- We are about community
- We are an extended family
- We value the cohesiveness of our staff and community

WE BELIEVE

- Everybody is different. But we are all one family.

FOCUSED ON CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT...

- We provide for children's development through developmental activities and meaningful positive interactions.
- We exist for the growth of our children
- We value each child's growth and individuality.

- We provide developmentally appropriate activities and structure.

... THAT HONORS THE INDIVIDUAL

- We teach to the individual.
- We strive to fully honor, respect and love each child.
- We strive to meet each child where they're at, and celebrate it!
- We strive to be appreciative of each child AND adult and to be a place where both are supported where they are when they arrive.
- We share love and see the good in every child's personality.
- We see each child as unique, we appreciate the differences and seek to meet each child's needs.
- We aim to meet kids "where they are."
- We seek to nurturing individual personality and to work with it.
- We focus on meeting kids' needs

WE ARE CHILD-CENTERED

- We support children being self-directed rather than parent-directed.
- We support child-centered play.
- Our culture is child-centered.
- We believe in child-centered learning.
- We let kids figure out how to haul all the pumpkins to the yard "on their own."
- Child-led learning is our mode.

WE ARE PLAY-BASED

- Our program is hands-on and play-based
- We support play based learning.
- We support our children's learning at play and growing through play.
- Our children play, play, play, meet

new friends and learn at their own pace.

- We support exploration.
- We are a safe place for children to play to their heart's content.
- Our children learn through play and parent support.
- Our goals for our children are learning, developing tolerance and having fun.

WE VALUES CHOICES

- We always offer choices.

WE ARE BUILT ON POSITIVE DISCIPLINE...

- We focus on parenting and how to talk to kids.
- We strive for positive discipline.
- We work together as parents to focus on the children and their social interactions.
- We teach compassionate problem solving.

- Our goals for our children are learning, developing tolerance and having fun.

... and PARENT INVOLVEMENT

- We focus on parenting and how to talk to kids.
- We work together as parents to focus on the children and their social interactions.
- We strive to be appreciative of each child AND adult
- And to be a place where both are supported where they are when they arrive.

JUSTINE SAFFIR

Director



Board Meeting

Board Meeting. Even if you're not on the Board, you're always most welcome to attend

07



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Halloween carnival and pumpkin patch

We'll offer spectacular science to spooky games, bounce house, face painting, crafts and more! See our flier on page 6.

1-Day Notes | Exploring and learning



JILL SIEGRIST
1 Day Parent-
Toddler Experience
Class Coordinator

Our 1-Day parent-toddler experience is off to a great start.

We have a very small group, so it's nice for our youngest kids to have plenty of space to explore and not feel crowded. Each child seems to have their favorite areas to play. They all are still a bit apprehensive about Mom leaving their sight, but in no time they will all be cruising around the playground like they own the place!

Surprisingly, the snack table is not the most popular activity station!

These toddlers have already eaten lunch and are ready to play! Ben and Ariel tend to like the sandbox, but Violet gives it a wide berth as she walks by. During the second week of school, the giant bin of trains was out and managed to catch the attention of almost all of the kids at the same time. They liked letting the trains zoom down the bridge as the adults quickly built more track. Sometimes these drowsy toddler just like to relax in the hammocks or sit and read books. Even with multiple options for water play, often the most popular station is not really one at all: the outside sink! When there are so many watering cans to fill and dump, and a convenient water source that is toddler-height, why venture any further?

We are all still settling into this brand new experience, and I know I can't wait to watch these toddler grow into confident big kids!



Reading time is always encouraged!



Getting into
the rhythm
of our 1-Day
class.

2-Day Notes | Warm-weather fun



Our 2-Day kiddos are getting along.

We have a fabulous class with some familiar faces from 1 day and some new faces, too.

Our first few weeks have been getting to know each other and the new structure of the 2 day class.

Both parents and kids have been getting into the swing of the work cards, with parents figuring out where all the supplies are and the kids realizing that their parent might not be able to follow them around like they did last year.

Teacher Debbie is guiding us all through the transition and helping everyone get into the swing of drop offs, in their own time. We've had a few instances of parents needing to



BELINDA WEAVER

2-Day Class
Coordinator

switch their work day due to illness or events and it's been wonderful to see the class jump in with offers to help. This is one of many reasons why Sunnymont-Westside is such a wonderful community!

Each day begins with an exploration of the inside space... blocks, play dough, art, dress ups, and snack. There is so much choice! Debbie sings songs and tells stories and then it's outside time, at last.

With the warm weather, we've been enjoying some water play and riding the big bikes. Playing with the 4 day



Every day is dress-up day!



Cooling down when it's hot!

class is busy and fast but lots of fun!

The children are already starting to look for each other when class begins and all the parents are enjoying seeing the start of connections that will flower during the year.

We had our first class meeting with Debbie, too. These are always so enlightening. At this meeting Debbie asked up to share something about our child that delights us. Some of us found this easy, while some of us found it harder but all of us have our open to the daily delight our kids bring us.

We're all looking forward to the fall activities... and weather (or is that just me?)

3-Day Notes | Engaging in play and learning

JUSTINE SAFFIR

3-Day Class teacher,
Sunnymont-Westside Director

This year's 3 Day class is off to an enthusiastic and energetic start. But while there's no lack of energy, there also seems to be no lack of focus.

A recent morning saw a busy classroom of involved kids: three kids cooking and eating in the dramatic play kitchen, two more kids feeding food to dinosaurs, three more kids making button collages and chatting about their designs with the art parent, two more working on puzzles, another carefully following a pattern to place shapes on a post, three others working on color diffusing paper with a parent at the project table, and another two hard at work making banana pops at snack, and another two looking at books. All busy, but all involved. Of course, we've had a lovely time just running in circles and jumping onto the sofa some days, too. It was an amazing level of involvement.

When kids are involved, whether in an art project or in running in circles, we know they're learning. The kind of play that builds skills and cognitive abilities (and really, social, emotional, and "academic" learning are all cognitive activities) is play that children are engaged in. And the 3 Day kids are definitely an engaged group already. This is great, because it lets the grown-ups observe interests, play themes and skills, and plan for curriculum that will continue to interest and engage the kids and support their developing the skills they most need to work on.

Several kiddos are working on self-regulation of impulses and energy



Having fun with arts and crafts time.

levels, so we're taking turns acting out the story of "the Gunniwulf" at group-time. This gives kids a chance to chase each other and run from each other within a small space, and put on the brakes repeatedly. For those who don't remember the

story, a little girl ventures into the jungle and is found by the Gunniwulf. She sings, her music lulls him and he falls asleep. When she runs off, he wakes up and chases again, and this pattern repeats several times. Acting this story out not only gives kids a chance to retell and remember the sequence of a story, which is an important language development and logical thought skill, but it also gives the actors a chance to experience chasing and catching gently and with control, in a nice safe space. (This is not very professional to say, but it is also adorable and hysterically funny to watch.)

Feeding the fish is one of our daily



rituals. Someone will ask if it's time, we make an announcement, and interested kids gather around the aquarium. Each child gets a flake or two of food, and everyone drops their flakes into the aquarium, then we all excitedly watch the fish eat it up. The act of doing things together helps the kids begin to feel a sense of unity. Mutual experiences and classroom rituals build their sense of community and belonging, and we get to practice taking responsibility for the welfare of our fish at the same time.

Drop by and watch our purposeful chaos when you get a chance. We are already feeling like a community. I'm really looking forward to watching that community develop together this year.

4-Day Notes | Science through mixing colors

REBEKAH WUNDERLICH
4-Day Class teacher,

4 Day is off to a busy start this year! We are enjoying getting to know each other and learning about the new routine at school.

Our science theme this month is colors, which of course lends itself quite well to lots of artwork. We mixed red, blue and yellow playdough and have worked with watercolors and tempera paint. This carried over into colored water play outside too. There are lots of great color books that we have been reading along with some fan favorites by Corey Rosen Schwartz and Mo Willems.

For our ease in days all the students made

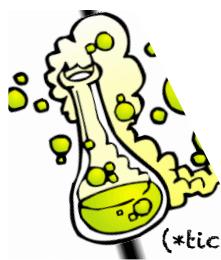
kissing hands with their working parent, be sure to check them out on the 4 Day wall if you haven't yet!

The students have also been enjoying using the felt board to act out nursery rhymes, stories and songs. In social emotional learning we are working quite a bit with impulse control and empathy, which we will of course be working on throughout the year.



Save the date for our 2019 allergy aware.....

Science-tastic Halloween Carnival and Pumpkin Patch!



Saturday October 12th
2-5pm

\$15 child / \$5 adult

(*tickets will be available for pre-order from Sept 27th
and under 18 months are free)



From spectacular science to spooky games,
bounce house, face painting, crafts and more!
Pumpkins will be available for pre-order so this
is definitely one event not to be missed!

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Dropping of your child

It's so hard to say goodbye

Many parents are feeling unsure about leaving their children at school.

For some, it's the first time a child has been left somewhere. For others, the struggle over separation is a familiar one. For still others, their previously easy separators are suddenly balking and wanting a parent to stay with them.

It's important to understand that there are two parts of the separation process. The first part is being somewhere without your parent, and the second is saying goodbye to your parent. These are very different struggles.

If your child truly isn't comfortable being without you, we'll ask you to stay. Children who truly aren't comfortable functioning without their parent aren't ready to do so yet. They will only be stressed by having to be on their own, and won't benefit from their school experience. That's simple.

It's hard to say goodbye, it can be scary, and not being able to convince you not to go is distressing and frustrating. It can be even harder on the parent. Leaving your child crying for you can break your heart, and make you doubt your decision to leave. Your child's anger at you later for leaving when they didn't want you to, and their anxiety over whether you'll leave them again, can only add to your guilt and doubt.

So why bother? Because there's a lot your child can learn from navigating that goodbye:

- She learns that she can DO things even if they're difficult.
- He learns to form trusting relationships with other adults.
- She learns that emotions are transient, that being unhappy doesn't mean she'll always feel that way.

- He learns that he has the power to respond to his own distress and make himself feel better.
- He learns to take pride and esteem in his independent experiences.

So once you and the teacher determine that your child is ready to be on his own at school, you have a choice to make. Either stay with him because you choose to do as he asks on this, and he'll learn that you're willing to do him favors and that you're there for him; or leave him, and let him learn the coping, independence and resiliency skills that come from that experience

If you decide you'll stay, then stay cheerfully, without stressing your child by making him feel guilty or as if he's displeasing you. Resist continually ask him if he's sure you should stay. If you choose to stay, but are worried your child is limiting his interactions because you're there to be an easy partner, there are several things you can do. You may want to make yourself "boring" at school to encourage your child to explore a bit more independently. Bring a book and sit in a corner reading, or do a task for the teacher than keeps you in one place.

If you decide to leave, be calm, and be clear about when you'll leave ("after group time") and then leave quickly and decisively. Waffling, offering to stay "just 5 more minutes" if your child looks upset, or renegotiating will leave her more stressed.

Help your child choose an adult to help her while she's sad. For some, the teacher is preferred, but other kids might have another parent who feels safe to them and who they'd like to connect with. Take your child to their chosen support person, and let them know you're leaving.

Create a ritual for leaving. Some

parents say goodbye at the gate, others hug and count down 5 to 1 to the moment of leaving, some read a story and then leave. But a predictable ritual will help.

Don't try to leave while your child is distracted. You'll feel better because you don't hear your child crying, but your child will probably be even more distressed when he discovers you've left, or isn't sure where you are. She needs to know she can trust you and that you'll do what you say, and that she doesn't need to fear you may sneak off at any time, which will make her more anxious, instead of more relaxed.

Don't try to convince your child that he'll have fun, that he is fine, or that you'll be back before he knows it. Acknowledge his sadness, and reassure him that he'll be cared for. "Debbie will take care of you while you're sad."

If you're worried after you leave, call in to check on how your child is doing. If your child needs you to come back, we'll call you. But most likely, your child will spend some time crying, and then watching, and then enjoying their day at school, and learning that they can get through saying goodbye.

When you return, tell your child you're happy to see him, and congratulate him: "It was hard staying at school by yourself, and you DID it!" He'll likely be worried until the next class day. Just keep reassuring him "Debbie will take care of you if you're ever sad at school." Each day, he will handle it a little more easily, gaining a little more confidence, building his resilience and coping skills day by day. Over time, it will get easier, and you'll be amazed how quickly you'll reach the days when your child will not want you to be seen dropping him off.



Transform your child's amazing artwork onto custom keepsakes!

It's that time of year again for your aspiring artists to see their amazing artwork in print! Timed perfectly for holiday gifts for grandparents or family members – Original Works is a unique opportunity to order an array of products whilst raising significant funds for the school!

Product samples, information packs and price lists will be available at the All School meeting on September 23rd and members of the fundraising team will be available for any questions or support. All orders need to be submitted by October 16th and will be ready for collection before Thanksgiving.



LET'S CELEBRATE
Creativity!