



SMOKE SIGNALS

Parent Newsletter

February/March 2012

Dear Parents,

In the December 2011 issue of the journal *Exchange* was an article entitled "Preparing Children for Their Future". As I read it, I expected these outcomes to be "hard skills" such as early proficiency in reading, writing and math. Rather, experts in the field of business, workforce trends, and early childhood education strongly pointed toward the following five "soft" skills to pursue.

- **Social Intelligence** - "The ability to connect to others in a deep and direct way, to sense and stimulate reactions and desired interactions." The example: "Collaborating with fellow employees requires a keen ability to not only sense their mood or disposition, but to be able to process the information and respond appropriately, whether with humor, empathy, or discretion."
- **Creativity** - "In a world where change will only happen faster, workers who can creatively relate to new scenarios will be highly valued. Children should have many opportunities to think about cause and effect: What would happen if...? And, very importantly, the ability to think outside the box, which will require divergent thinking: the ability to explore questions such as, "What are some ways to ...? What is another way to...?"
- **Cross-Cultural Competence** - "Workers of the future must be able to successfully communicate shared goals, priorities, and values in a way that transcends differences and helps foster a spirit of collaboration."
- **Resilience** - "Children need to encounter limits and hardships to learn how to persevere and solve problems by themselves. Constant entertainment and indiscriminate praise prevent children from coping with risk, pushing themselves, and practicing worthwhile skills. Teach children how to work slowly and steadily towards goals. Show them how to make things with their own hands, transforming what is at hand. "
- **Love of Nature** - "Planet Earth is vulnerable to environmental threats of monumental proportions. Finding solutions to environmental challenges will require the best mind and the best efforts of this and future generations. However, young children today are much more intrigued by what they encounter on video screens than by what they experience in the natural world"

I must share that reading this article affirmed that the research-based goals for Smoky Row's children, written in 1983, are still right on. If you would like, please re-read SRCC's philosophy and goals for children. You will find them on page 2 of our [Parent Handbook](#).

Fondly, *Judy Chosy, Director*

HIGHLIGHTING OUR STAFF...

BOBBIE MILLION, Infant Room

When asked what she likes about working with infants Bobbie says, "Everything! The early years are a crucial time for growth and development and I love being part of this important job. I have a great group of co-workers and we all take our work seriously and plan activities that are enjoyable and appropriate for each child. We have fun together in our little community and we celebrate each new skill and milestone that we witness. I love your babies and look forward to being here each day."

We are every bit as excited about having Bobbie on our teaching staff for nearly **EIGHTEEN YEARS!** She brings a wealth of positive energy that gives all of us a boost. The babies also love her and "Bobbie" is usually one of their first words.

Some facts about Bobbie:

- * She and husband, Mark, grew up and live in Worthington. They have been married 32 years.
- * Mother of two children, Matthew (30 years) and Carly (21 years).
- * Enjoys reading, movies and spending weekends hanging out with her family and her two best friends who happen to be her sisters.

HIGHLIGHTING OUR STAFF...

MARIKA YOHO, Sunshine Room

Did you know that Marika attended SRCC as a preschooler?! After she graduated from Ohio University with degrees in Early Childhood Education and Elementary Education, she taught Kindergarten before returning to SRCC as a Teacher. During her **EIGHT YEAR** tenure she taught six years in the Butterfly Room before moving to Athens where she taught at O.U.'s Child Development Center for two years. Then she and family moved back to Dublin and Marika returned to Smoky Row where she has taught in the Dino and now Sunshine Room. Her two children were enrolled at SRCC, the same preschool that she attended! Lucky us!

When asked what she enjoys about working at Smoky Row she says she loves working with the SRCC teachers and Miss Amy, who used to be her preschool teacher ☺!! Building relationships with the families and sharing in their children's accomplishments are enjoyable parts of her job.

Some facts about Marika:

- Husband Scott is a first year Psychiatry resident at Ohio State U.
- Their children are Josie, 2nd grader and Riley, who is in Kindergarten.
- Enjoys cooking meals for families and friends, baking, running and crafts

HIGHLIGHTING OUR STAFF...

TARYN WHEATON, Tree House Club

How lucky for us to have Taryn in her **FOURTH YEAR** of teaching at SRCC. She came to us after graduating from OSU with a degree in Human Ecology with a focus on Early Childhood Education, and with two years of teaching preschool. Taryn is always positive with the children as she encourages them to solve problems and make appropriate choices. It is evident that she enjoys working with young children by the care and respect she demonstrates daily.

When asked why she likes teaching at SRCC, Taryn says. "People at SRCC are friendly, including parents, our staff and the children! Being part of such a warm environment makes this a great place to work! It's a very professional group of teachers who constantly raise the bar for the children by planning challenging curriculum ideas and new ways to help children learn. No wonder the children love coming to school. Learning is fun at Smoky Row.

Some facts about Taryn:

- Married to Steve for five years and the parents of 10 month old Quintin.
- Enjoys spending time with her family and Brutus, their dog.
- The whole family are loyal Buckeye fans!

JUDY CHOSY, Director

Judy's professional life began in 1960 (yes, before you were born!) She worked with the HEADSTART program for 14 years, which included teaching Child Development to preschool teachers at Columbus State Community College, before opening SRCC in 1983. **TWENTY NINE YEARS** ago! Her interest in starting a childcare center began when her first child was born in 1965. "I can't tell you how upsetting it was to try to arrange quality care for our four daughters over the years. Now, nothing makes me happier than hearing from you that you don't worry about your children while you work. Everyday, as I walk around the classrooms seeing children happily involved in developmentally appropriate activities, I feel proud of our teachers and the work they are doing and the wonderful service we offer."

Some facts about Judy:

- Earned Masters degree in Early Childhood Education at OSU.
- She and husband Robert (who is retired from his practice of OB-GYN) love to travel.
- Enjoys sharing what she has learned over the years by presenting sessions on Leadership and Management at the National Association for the Education of Young Children's (NAEYC) conferences.
- Delights in spending time with her family, especially the three grandchildren. Judy says that being a Grandparent is the dessert of life.
- In 2005, she was honored with the Ohio's Administrator of the Year Award and proudly displays the plaque in the lobby. Stop by and check it out.

IS MY CHILD READY FOR KINDERGARTEN?

by Judy Chosy

The question most often asked of preschool teachers this time of the year. Here is a checklist to help you evaluate your child's abilities. It is merely a guideline to see how she is coming along developmentally. Remember, he doesn't have to have it all mastered in order to be ready, willing, and able to benefit from and enjoy kindergarten.

Academic Readiness: A child is likely to approach kindergarten tasks with confidence if she can handle most of the following:

Identify common shapes, such as circles, triangles, squares and rectangles.

Recite the alphabet.

Recognize rhyming words.

Write name - recognize letters in the alphabet

Count to 20 and recognize the numerals 1 through 10.

Draw a person with several recognizable features.

Understand basic contrasts such as up/down, in/out, empty/full, top/bottom.

These skills are often cited as signs of academic competence in young children. But-more than all of these specifics-the two basic tools of learning are **curiosity and attention.** Your child's curiosity leads him to explore new places and objects and his ability to pay attention enables him to remember the answers to his questions and stay focused on a task long enough to complete it.

Social Skills: The single most important benchmark of a five-year olds social readiness is her ability to interact successfully with peers. A child is ready for the social demands of kindergarten if he can:

Play cooperatively with friends.

Follow the rules of a game.

Respect other children's property.

Communicate his feelings and ideas.

Wait for his turn.

Ask for help and demonstrate independence from his mother and father.

Emotional Maturity: A child is emotionally ready for kindergarten when she can:

Say goodbye to Mom and switch her focus to a task.

Form friendship with peers.

Develop affectionate but non-clinging attachments to teachers.

Be flexible when confronted with a new situation or with frustration.

Physical Adeptness: Your child is physically ready for the activities of kindergarten if he can:

Coordinate large muscles, as in balancing, running, jumping, hopping, skipping.

Coordinate small muscles, as in cutting with scissors and putting puzzles together.

(Joy and interest is much more important than the finished product.)

Speak clearly enough so that others can understand him.

Take care of his bodily needs for dressing, eating and toileting.

Age is an important Factor: Older children are generally more mature initially, more able to sit still for longer periods of time and more successful at academic tasks. Each child develops at a unique pace and for some children an extra year in preschool may be best.

As you debate your child's readiness, visit kindergartens to see if they are ready for your child. For five year old children, learning is playful, noisy active and messy. You're looking for an environment that encourages your child to love school and feel joy in learning. These are the true building blocks of a successful academic future

A GLANCE AHEAD TO SUMMER & A NEW SUMMER SPECIAL

As I write this it is snowing outside but the calendar indicates that it's time to begin to work out the details for our 2012 summer session. Since our summer enrollment tends to dip significantly, we are offering you a special incentive. We will provide a \$100 Smoky Row credit to any current family who refers a new full time summer enrollee and a \$50 Smoky Row credit to any current family who refers a new part time summer enrollee. This is a good way to help solve a perennial Center problem and to say Thank You at the same time.

Summertime provides an excellent time for children to learn by doing. Therefore, activities are planned that engage all children's participation. Those activities are structured so they are interesting, challenging, rewarding and fun. Children are encouraged to explore ways to work both as individuals and together as a team, building friendships.

- A School Age Summer Camp for children ages 6-10 will be offered. Just like last year each week will have a different theme. In addition, there will be sports clinics, special visitors, field trips and regular visits to the pool. Children may attend two to five days a week for one to eleven weeks, 7AM to 6PM.
- Smoky Row will again offer a Preschool Fun Camp to potty-trained children who are 3-5 years old. Each camp will run Monday through Friday, from 8:45 until 11:45A.M. and will be held in the East Building. Parents can pick whichever weeks they would like their children to attend.
- Summer is always fun for the children attending full day preschool in the West Building. Teachers take their classrooms outside. Then they design curriculum that will keep kids moving and learning new things in a nurturing and fun environment.

Details of the summer 2012 will be available in March. Priority will be given to our current and former families before opening the registration to the community.

MISCELLANEOUS

We are pleased to welcome two Columbus State students, Ashton Borrer in the Super Star Room and Ellen Helpman, Butterfly Room. They will be doing their field placement at the Center during Winter Quarter. Please take a minute to read about these students whose information is posted on the wall outside their classrooms.

Thank you parents for your generous holiday contributions, which allowed donations to needy families. It was heartwarming to hear your children's excitement in experiencing that joy of giving.

Our poinsettia sale was a success again, thanks to you. We will use the proceeds to help spruce up our buildings before our NAEYC Re-Accreditation visit. As you begin looking forward to spring please keep in mind our annual sale of bedding plants which is held in April. Plants will be delivered on Wednesday, May 2nd in time for Mother's Day.

Creative Images is coming to SRCC to photograph each child and each class. After viewing the photos, parents can then decide if they would like to purchase them. East Building photos will be taken on February 7th & 8th. West Building will be taken on February 9th & 10th. Details are forthcoming.

It is important that the Center have current, accurate parents' phone numbers in case an emergency should occur. Therefore, we are asking all parents to take a few minutes to update the information on the Child Enrollment and Health Information cards. These pink cards are kept in each classroom and are taken along on field trips. Please do not take the current card home to update, but do so while you are here. Thank you.

A year-end tax statement will be given to parents (via the lunch-box express) during the first week of February. If your child is in the Part Time Preschool program (East Building) and you need a tax statement, please talk to Lora or Lisa.

We strive vigorously to give the children our best. In order to continue to do so we must periodically assess where our strengths and weaknesses lie. That's where we need you. In March you will receive a Parent Feedback Form. Please take a few minutes to answer and return it to the box marked "Parent Feedback". This information will help us as we conduct our annual Center review at the April staff meeting. The classroom with the highest percentage of parent feedback returns will be given a special treat.

With pride, hard work and professionalism, Smoky Row will continue to strive to preserve and enhance our quality childcare and education. Let's hear it for **TWENTY NINE** more years!