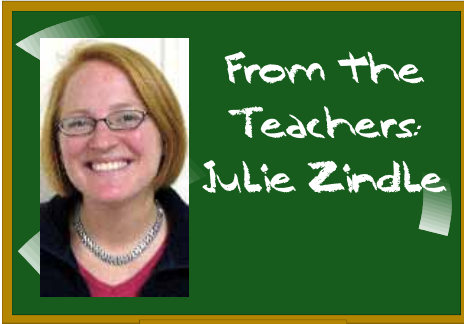




RVCP News

a newsletter for growing minds



Parenting -- A Noun And A Verb

As I met with families for conferences, again, I was struck by your commitment to being reflective about your parenting. You take time to consider your child's strengths and challenges. You work to create routines that support your child's needs, foster independence and contribution. You try to be aware of the futility of comparing your child's development to another's. You are participating in a co-op preschool – best. You seek out new learning along with your child and supporting one another's efforts. You are thinking ahead to what ideas to support yourself and your child through schooling choices you think may suit your child the often joyous, and often trying preschool and active experiences for your child. You seek out more information and ideas to support yourself and your child through the often joyous, and often trying preschool and active experiences for your child.

What's inside...

- 2 Message from the Board Co-chairs
- 3 Sunflower Owen Harrison shares his list of favorite books and music.
- 4 A message on helping to protect our children from disease.
- 4 Allison Singleton reminds us to think ahead about our major fund-raiser, scheduled for next spring.

Three Kids?!

By Alliniece T. Andino
A Caterpillar Mom



Alliniece Andino at home with (clockwise) Olivia, Roberto (Caterpillar student) and Isabella.

Ahh, the first child. We had wanted a baby so badly, tried so hard, prayed so long, wished so much. Then, he came. Our gorgeous little black-haired, bright-eyed sensitive Roberto.

Twelve months later, I'm complaining, as I always do: I feel sick, I'm so tired, I've got aches. Victor says, "You know what... you might be pregnant."

Oh my, I thought. The first one took time, planning, waiting. And now, just like that? Another one could already be brewing? Before we had any, I could have had a whole busload of kids, but this was somehow unexpected, too soon, so scary. How could I handle two, TWO, TWO kids ... at the same time? I told God 'I thought we had an understanding, that the kids would come more spaced out.'

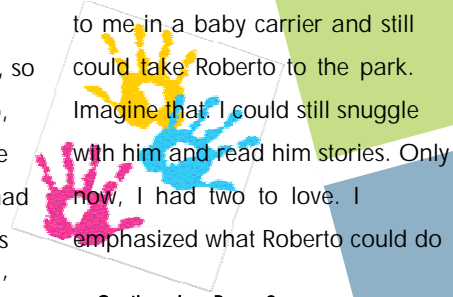
And you know what? Sometimes you struggle. Sometimes you are terribly worried. Sometimes you feel baffled. Sometimes you are mad, scared or lonely. Sometimes you think there is something *wrong* with your child. It's my hunch that these two paradigms are just that –the other side of the same coin. They go together. Being reflective requires us to

Continued on Page 2

Well, fine, I thought. Here we go again.

Beautiful, dark-haired, big-eyed, smiley Olivia came. I strapped her to me in a baby carrier and still could take Roberto to the park. Imagine that. I could still snuggle with him and read him stories. Only now, I had two to love. I emphasized what Roberto could do

Continued on Page 3



On A Mission

Parenting

From the Board

Last month, Teacher Liaison Duane Best led a group of board members and interested families in a process to create a current mission statement for the school. Twelve of us met for just over four hours and had a rich discussion about the school's current practices and ideas for the future. Several interesting themes emerged and we were able to begin discussing a couple of them at the last board meeting. A couple of group members developed a draft mission statement that will eventually be brought to the school for discussion and approval.

Parent interaction was identified as a strong value for the co-op and many people felt that we could do a better job of encouraging relationships between families in each class. Those parent relationships were identified as playing a critical role in building community and providing support for informal conversations about parenting. Over the next months, we will be taking a look at our class meeting structure and possibly proposing changes that might better support these parent connections and parent education.

The other theme that emerged in our discussion was the idea of co-teaching in the classroom. Both teachers expressed their wish to team with another professional teacher as a way of increasing their ability to skillfully respond to developing issues in the classroom. A small group of the Board has taken on the task of exploring the viability of

occasional co-teaching and will make a specific proposal to the school.

These have been exciting discussions and we'd love to involve as many families as possible in advancing them further. At the next Board meeting, there will be additional discussion about the mission statement and, as always, we welcome attendance by any interested families at Board meetings.

Finally, speaking of community, our large group had a chance to come together at the anti-bias training and the response was overwhelmingly positive. We look forward to taking our discussion further at the next two follow up trainings in January and March. As a reminder, those anti-bias follow up sessions will occur during the whole school meeting and individual class meetings will still occur.

Sincerely,

**Barbara Pastores
and Kelly Lippman
RVCP Board Co-chairs**

Continued from Page 1
evaluate and if our evaluation leads to information supporting change, and we don't –well... we are likely to feel that disconnect as frustration, anger or loss.

Does being a reflective parent mean that your child doesn't scream, cry, protest, challenge you in public, whine and complain? No, none of us get a free pass on any of that. We get to develop and practice our parenting skills and values, just as the children get to practice using: "word messages."

The beauty and challenge of Co-op is that you get to practice and learn from and with your peers. Sometimes that means you'll get a great idea observing another parent "support" their child through something tough and it will work for you and your child, and sometimes that means another parent will observe you "support" your child, and you feel embarrassed or judged. "Supporting" your own child is unique to him/her and you. Sometimes "supporting" my daughter looks an awful lot like me putting on her shoes while she screams. Being a support to your child is rarely pretty and quiet. For me it's especially loud if I am supporting Chloe around a boundary (no, we *have* to go: yes, you *need* to wear shoes; no, you *can't* bring your bedspread... We are the grown ups, we really do know what is best for our children even when we aren't at our best. We can't be "the best" all the time, so the next time a parent in the co-op is struggling as they "support" their child, remember we are all learners here at the co-op, and no one has to be their best, just themselves.

Stay Warm,
Julie Z.

The Work Crew



Members of the Salmon class put some team work into a construction project.

Having 3 Kids Hones Survival Instincts

Continued from Page 1

that baby Olivia was unable to. After his little sister's birth, I saw Roberto emerge as more of a leader than the follower I had seen before.

Fifteen months pass.

Oh, my. Not again. Too soon. Too scary. God, hello, *understanding*. 'What about out understanding, Lord?' I kept thinking, I'll have three kids and still only two hands.

I would have two hands to feed three mouths, wipe three bottoms, scrub 30 wriggling fingers. So people ask, "What's it like with three kids?"

Yes, it's difficult at times because one or two are crying and need your TLC while you're changing a messy diaper or nursing or fixing breakfast. I never pass on offers of help. But sometimes the two older ones talk in high pitches to baby Isabella, while showing her which toys are best. Sometimes, 2-year-old Olivia sits on the couch with baby "Belly" on her lap and it's just too adorable for words. Sometimes Roberto is so concerned about Isabella's crying he looks intently for the pacifier. And then there are the times Isabella stares and laughs as Olivia and Roberto run around and around and around...

The best advice I've received is to not think about it. Don't think about the dishes that need to be cleaned, the snacks that need to be made, the diaper changes and the clothes washing. Just do what you have to, do what you can when you can. I always say to myself, "I can't do everything." A heavy weight was lifted from me some time around Isabella's first month birthday when I learned and accepted this.

I've coaxed my children to be as independent as possible. Roberto could feed himself around a year old and dress himself between age 2 and 3. Olivia was feeding and nearly dressing herself by the time baby Isabella arrived.

Another gem of advice: take advantage of children's offers to help. It becomes difficult or impossible to get them to help if you wait until later. When Roberto asks to help with dishes, I let him wash his own plastic plates and his spoon or fork. I let Olivia do the same. Other times when I ask them to help in other ways, they seldom refuse. Roberto gets the baby blanket or "binky" when needed. Olivia gets diaper wipes when it's time to change the baby's diaper.

Dealing with three children is as overwhelming and difficult as dealing with one or two. Dealing with three children is as beautiful and fun as dealing with one or two. The difference is in what we decide and will it to be. I have a friend who has two children and we laughed at our mindsets when we were new mothers of one child. We would say to our husbands, "I can't go shopping (or fill in any activity here), I have a *child*. I need you to watch him." When that second child came, we were popping them in the car and taking off without hesitation.

If you want three, go for it. Just don't *think* about it.



Owen Harrison's Top 5 Books

1. *Don't Let The Pigeon Drive The Bus* by Mo Willems
2. *Click, clack, Moo: Cows that Type* by Doreen Cronin
3. *Don't Mention Pirates* by Sarah McConnell
4. *The Milkman* by Carol Fosskett Cordsen
5. *More Parts* by Tedd Arnold

Owen's Top 5 CDs

1. *Happy Lemons* by Ralph's World
2. *For the Kids* by Various Artists
3. *Rocket Ship Beach* by Dan Zanes
4. *At the Bottom of the Sea* by Ralph's World
5. *No!* by They Might Be Giants

Thank you, Rachel and Keith for sharing your list! Let us know what's on the hit parade at *your* house. Send an e-mail by Dec. 21 to victor@onpointwriting.com

Plan ahead- RVCP Activities

Things you should know



Communicable Diseases

At the last Board meeting a policy was developed to address information sharing about Communicable Diseases. A number of children at RVCP have immune system issues that make having good information about communicable disease exposure really important. When a family learns that a child has been exposed to a communicable disease or has developed a communicable disease, that family should immediately inform the Parent Coordinator for their class. The Parent Coordinator will then share the information about the exposure with the other Parent Coordinators and each of them will share it with the respective parents in their class. Please note that the name of the child will not be disclosed beyond the Parent Coordinator in that child's class.

December						
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31						

- Dec 5 7:30 Monthly parent meeting
- Dec. 12 7 p.m. Board meeting
- Dec. 18 - Jan. 1 NO SCHOOL

Let's Think Spring!

I know, I know, we haven't even made it through New Year's yet and it's *snowing*, how can I possibly be thinking spring? Well, it's not just warmer temperatures and tulips that I'm thinking about, it's the SPRING FUNDRAISING EVENT. Granted, it is my parent job so I'm probably thinking about it more than the average RVCP parent. But, part of my job is to get all the RVCP parents 'thinking spring' so here we go.

The Spring Event is, well, in the spring, but the planning and fun (read: work) starts soon. The event will be very similar to ones in the past – a raffle and silent auction along with a potluck and fun toys and activities for the kids. Each family will have two responsibilities: procurement of items for the silent auction/raffle and selling of raffle tickets. This may seem overwhelming to you if you haven't been involved before, but it sounds more daunting than it really is. My team and I will gladly walk you through it, don't you worry. And we will start with all of that after the New Year. This article is just to get you to start thinking spring...and to let you know that if you get any gifts for the holidays that just aren't doing it for you, don't give them to Goodwill just yet. It may be a perfect fit for the raffle!

Allison Singleton
Salmon Class
Major Fundraising Event Coordinator