



RVCP News

a newsletter for growing minds

What's inside...

- 2 A message from the Board co-chairs on the Vision and Mission statements.
- 2 Answers to frequently asked questions concerning the new co-teaching plan.
- 3 The Spring Carnival and fund-raiser will take contributions.
- 3 Your favorite family photos could help the pre-school.
- 4 The latest thinking on managing our children's exposure to television.

School Day Delivers Scoops of Fun



Jonah Talmadge, left, digs right in alongside his classmates Cece Walsh and Jasper Webb during a Sunflower class.

Treasure the Scribbles

"She just scribbles." Yes, and thank goodness.

Scribbling is the first step of becoming a writer, and because writing and reading skills develop simultaneously and are interconnected, progress in one fuels the development of the other. Scribbling is drawing and writing, *really*. (Yes, I mean those huge circle-like shapes and wavy lines.)

A child's first writing may be making a mark on the condensation of the car window, or dragging a stick through the sand, or marking on a paper with a crayon – ah the birth of: "I can make a mark." As children explore scribbling and the pleasure of "making a mark," they are motivated to continue and

learn that the marks on the page can symbolize objects or people. At first they may be uncertain of what their marks represent and may ask: "what did I draw?"

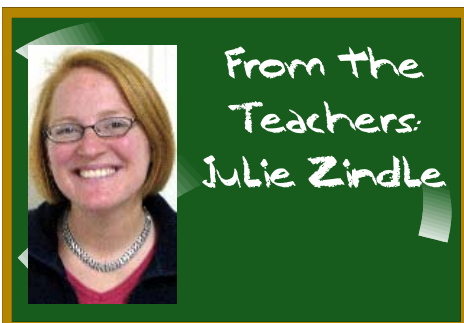
The next stage of scribbling demonstrates a cognitive "leap" into abstract thinking: children begin to label their scribbles "Look,

I made a dog." At this stage children become writers. The "dog" may resemble a tornado to us, but it indicates a shift for the child from the physical act of "making a mark" to a more clear understanding that the mark is a *symbol* for a *real* thing. The term "emergent writing" refers to children's understanding that

writing is a form of communication and that their marks convey a message.

In the early stages, children are not likely to distinguish between drawing and writing, nor should we. For the child, both drawing and writing convey meaning – and

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Stability & Change

From the Board

As you know, in early November, 14 people from the preschool met to develop a vision and mission statement that would reflect the values and practices in our classroom and our community of families. Most of the board members were present as well as a few other folks, including Cesily, our parent educator. After that initial meeting, Cynthia Steiner Ganz and Veronica Golden did a great job condensing a rich discussion into a clear statement. After some final edits, the Board has recommended that the statements be passed along to the school community for a vote in February.

How do the vision and mission statements help us – what's the point? Basically, we hope these statements let families know who we are and what guides our decisions in and out of the classroom.

The discussion at the November meeting was the genesis of the co-teaching idea. In a sense, the process of developing the statement has already encouraged our community to examine values and priorities and develop creative solutions to meet our needs. The nature of a family-run cooperative community is both stable and ever-changing. We hope that having our vision and mission clearly spelled out will continue to help us create policies and practices that are consistent with our community's values. We look forward to hearing what you think!

Sincerely,

Barbara Pastores
and Kelly Lippman
RVCP Board Co-chairs

Vision Statement

We are a community of learners creating a culture of care for one another and the world.

Mission Statement

1. We are a cooperative preschool where adults and children are equal and active participants in learning.

- We value play as the "work" of early childhood education.
- Weekly lessons are based on the children's emerging skills and interests.
- Caregivers have monthly meetings with a parent educator to discuss current child development, topics, and research.
- In daily school interactions, the teacher demonstrates concrete, developmentally appropriate methods of working with children.

2. We support adults and children to feel safe in being themselves as they learn and grow.

- Adults and children are allowed to represent truthfully their own feelings and current experience without judgment.

Answers on Co-teaching

As the co-teaching committee continues to meet about the changes for next year, we will do our best to keep you informed. Here are some answers to some of the questions that arose at January's parent meeting:

Will anything be done to assist double co-operators in the lottery?

No. Siblings will be given returning family status and be entered in the returning family lottery. No additional preferential treatment will be given.

Is there an upper age limit cut off for the 2-3 year old Tues/Fri class?

Yes. Children must be 3 through December 31st.

Do more full day slots (over 4) limit the 2-3's class?

No. The 12 slots in the 2-3 class will be protected and that class will not be over-enrolled.

Will the 2-3's class have a consistent teacher? How many teachers will be working on Friday?

This class will have both teachers working directly with the children on Tuesdays. On Fridays, one teacher will be working with the children and one teacher will be prepping for the following week – the teachers will alternate between these roles.

How will snacks/lunches be handled?

Snacks will be provided by the working snack grown-up. Children and grown-ups who are there for the entire day are responsible for providing their own lunches.

What does the AM/PM schedule look like and how do the full day children fit in (will they repeat in the afternoon all the things they did in the morning)? Also, how does the 2-3's class mix with the full day children on Tuesday?

The Tuesday class will be mixed ages with the 2-3 class and the full day children.

The teachers will continue to create a curriculum that provides interesting and relevant activities and facilitates authentic experiences that reflect the different interests and individual needs of the children in any given class.

What are the age requirements for the full day slots?

Children must be 3 by August 31st and 5 through December 31st. There will be no age preference/priority given to the full day slots (i.e. 4 year olds will not be given preference for these slots.)

How do "gap" year families fit into the lottery system?

"Gap" year families refer to families who have at some point been a member of the RVCP community. "Gap" year families will enter a lottery after returning families and before the general public.

Can a part time person go full day if there is a space in the other part time class?

There will be a specific order in which open slots will be offered once enrollment is complete. A handout is coming soon to your mailbox addressing this.

Stay tuned for more information and, as always, please continue to ask questions as they arise.



Now's the time to start getting excited for our spring event! This year's event is a carnival with loads of fun activities for the kids like a bouncy house, face painting, temporary tattoos, animal balloons and more (it is a work in progress, after all).

The event will be May 5, 11 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Delridge Community Center. The fundraising portion is a silent auction and raffle. As a group we have some work to do between now and then, (it can't be all fun and games!) Our first task will be procurement – the obtaining of goods. There are a few ways to go about this: ask a neighborhood organization for a donation, look through your *unopened* and *unused* holiday gifts, or make something! Are you a chef in your spare time? Do you love babysitting? Donate your time or craft. Of course, we need a healthy mix of things so please keep that in mind. Refer to the sheet on the easel in the school's entryway for ideas. All of these businesses have been solicited for things in previous years. Don't be shy, ask again! They like us!

After procurement, we'll talk about raffle ticket sales, potlucks and event help. But let's not get ahead of ourselves! First we need to procure the STUFF!

Please feel free to contact any of us with any questions. Your fundraising team: Allison Singleton, Kelly Forebaugh and Rachel Harrison.

Fund-raiser Lets Pre-school Earn Cash Back on Photo Gifts from Picateers

With the popularity of digital cameras, parents are taking more pictures and spending more on photo products. The Picateers Photo Gift Fundraiser is a simple and effective way to raise money for our school. RVCP can earn 25% cash back from all purchases made on Picateers.com. This is a simple, fun and sugar-free fundraiser that doesn't ask our students to sell anything!

Parents can create great gifts from their favorite digital photos at www.Picateers.com. Picateers offers prints, mugs, mouse pads,

ties, T-shirts, Greeting Cards, Photo Books, and much more.

How to Participate

- 1 Go to www.picateers.com/gifts/Rainier
- 2 Sign-up by providing your name & e-mail address
- 3 Click on "Shop" from the home page
- 4 Browse over 30 quality 100% satisfaction guaranteed gifts
- 5 Select a gift and upload a digital photo from your computer
- 6 Gifts ship directly to your home in 4-10 days depending on desired shipping method

Scribbling is Step Toward Writing

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that is what we are celebrating – children's attempts to put tool to paper and convey a message. As children begin to label their drawings consistently, and they observe us writing their caption or label, they begin to understand that drawing and writing are related and that both can communicate ideas and feelings. Children may perceive the difference between writing and drawing but still draw when asked to write or vice versa.

To support and encourage future attempts, we should treat their effort as they describe it. It may really look like a dog, but she may say "This says toor-naaa-do." As they begin to notice print in books and their environments, and when we act as their scribes,

they begin to try to create products that look like "real" writing – you may notice letter-like forms or lines of continuous, recurring figures from left to right. Eventually, they learn to form alphabet letters and write their first names or other meaningful words.

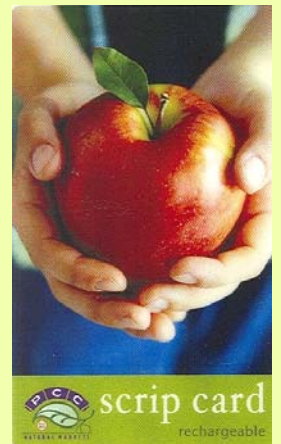
Making marks in the sand with a stick and writing their names on their paintings are both important steps to becoming writers. Remember, learning to write is a social process – requiring the support and engagement of parents, teachers and peers. Helping to write the grocery list or make a birthday sign for a friend are meaningful, authentic literacy experiences for our "emergent writers."



When families, friends and school employees continue to use Picateers.com for photo sharing and their personal print and photo gifts need, RVCP earns 25% cash back on purchases!

Picateers automatically sends checks monthly to RVCP when our participants' purchases yield total cash back amounts that meet or exceed \$50.

And There is Always Good Old PCC Scrip



See Kathryn Schmid at the monthly all-school meeting to obtain a PCC Scrip Card. These pre-paid cards allow for cash back to RVCP. Give them as gifts or use for yourself.

Plan ahead- RVCP Activities

February						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28			

- Feb. 2 NO SCHOOL
- Feb 6 All-School Meeting 7:30-8:30 p.m.
- Feb. 9 Caterpillars visit fire station
- Feb. 10 Open House at RVCP 10 a.m. - 12
- Feb 13 RVCP Board Meeting
- Feb. 19-23 NO SCHOOL
- Feb. 27 Open House at RVCP 6-8 p.m.

Things you should know

A Reminder From The Teacher Liaison Duane Best:

During class time, it's important for working grown ups to be sensitive to the needs of the students, the teachers and the other working grown ups. Too much socializing with other adults can distract us from really focusing on what's happening in the classroom. Is talking among adults forbidden? Of course not. But remember a big part of our job as working grown ups is to give the kids our full attention.

The Fungus Among Us



There are mushrooms growing in the playground grass and the "official response" to children is that, "we only touch mushrooms from the grocery store." The mushrooms were identified and found non-poisonous. Adults are encouraged to rub them out with their shoes when they see them.

Good, Clean Fun



Lillian Tran makes colorful use of a dab of shaving cream during a Sunflower craft.

Tune in to the Latest Advice on Kids and TV

By Victor Andino

Caterpillar dad

A book written by the Directors of the Child Health Institute at the University of Washington takes on the minefield subject of television viewing by children.

The book, *The Elephant in the Living Room - Make Television Work For Your Kids*, by Dimitri A. Christakis, MD, and Frederick J. Zimmerman, Phd., says parents can become distracted by how much time a child spends watching television, without considering the quality of television.

"Television viewing can be beneficial. It can be entertaining, broadening, and

educational. It just has to be used properly," the authors say. "Much like a food processor or a power saw, television can be dangerous. But properly used at the appropriate age and with the requisite adult supervision, it can produce wonderful things."

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends kids 2 and older watch no more than one to two hours of TV daily. The AAP recommends that kids under 2 not be exposed to any television at all. According to an article on Babycenter.com, kids who watch a lot of television tend to eat more junk food, exercise less, and be more overweight, are likely exposed to hours of televised violence and other disturbing

images and bombarded by advertising.

In a study, the authors of *The Elephant in the Living Room* found that children under the age of 3 spend up to 20 to 30 percent of their waking hours watching TV and videos, despite the fact that at this age, their attention span is only a few minutes at a time. They also found that children too young to go to school are old enough to be schooled by TV, typically starting their TV-viewing careers as early as 6 months old.

"We believe that there is a right amount of television for every child, and it is different for each one. The right amount depends on the child and what the show is. Parents know their children better than anyone

else, which is why we're not fond of age-based television ratings," the authors write.

The book-related web site www.maketwork.com includes several useful resources for parents, including links to:

- Detailed ratings and reviews of TV shows, movies, videos, and computer and video games.
- Official TV program age ratings (such as TV-G), including what they mean, and how to use V-chip technology
- Tips about how keep TV viewing safe and age-appropriate.
- Articles about TV viewing from the National PTA and The American Academy of Pediatrics.

Also visit Babycenter.com for articles with tips on how to control TV viewing at home.