

## The Creative Child

By Lucy Chaillé  
Creative Children's Center

What does it mean to be creative, to approach life with vision and inspiration? When professors, employers, and friends admire the creativity in others, is it a specific act or is it a way of being? "You're so creative! I would never have thought of that!" Being creative is often honored, celebrated, and sought after in society. To "think" creatively is to be visionary, to see all sides of an idea and contribute something new. To think it through, toss it around, let it grow and give birth to a creative thought or action, brings with it the POSSIBLE!

Every child is born with unlimited creative potential. Creative thoughts flow naturally as children search to make meaning of their world. Imagination becomes the tool for inquiry and understanding. It is a way of thinking that supports the growth of the brain and cements experiences into our memory. When a toddler pretends to care for a baby doll, he is practicing a wide range of skills from creative story development to the how & why of problem solving the role of every great Dad! When a preschooler pushes a truck through the sand, her creative play is allowing her to imagine the power of the truck, the movement of the dirt and the importance of roads. What better way is there to learn about how to get from one point to another? Be it a temper tantrum to get a new toy, or a scribble on a piece of paper that that is her name, every action a child does comes from a place of inventiveness.

Creative thinking supports connections between the real and the possible. It is not limited to art, as is often misrepresented, but seen in every walk of life and profession. In the adult world a creative thinker is acknowledged as a leader, valued for their insights and accomplishments. The thinking process itself requires fine tuned awareness, as people listen both internally and externally to the world. It involves time to reflect and to respond to our interpretations of what we have seen, heard and learned. This comes naturally to

children, as they are the professionals at watching, listening, and responding to people and things.

Creative thinking is a child's way of internalizing and expressing BIG IDEAS, no matter how small they seem to us. As adults we have a head full of information: facts, figures, to do lists, worries, joys, and noise! The space to think creatively is lost in the daily rush. Although we all value creativity, we don't always allow ourselves enough down time to let it happen.

All children are BIG THINKERS, so where does the creative mind go? Is it lost, or just buried under a world of "to do's"? Much research has been done on the subject. We are now facing what has been termed a Creative Crisis, in our schools and work force.

How can you protect and foster creative thinking in your child and in other children? Begin with the happy knowledge that it is already there! Your child is a gifted thinker. Simply watch the way he or she plays. Isn't it amazing that a human being can pretend such complex stories between the ages of two to five! As you engage in the play, facilitate the story without taking over or directing the play. Your intention may be to "help" but while you're leading, you could be derailing an idea that is emerging with a clear direction.

At Creative Children's Center we call this, "a ball toss." You toss out an



idea, and I will toss it back. We check ourselves to make sure we are not inadvertently stealing the ball! If done correctly ideas begin to bounce about in the air until one of them takes flight and everyone is lost in creative thinking!!

Learn to engage in the art of conversation. Listen and respond not only to what your child is saying, but also what is being expressed through facial expressions and body language. By asking open questions and supporting

your child's thoughts and ideas you are supporting the internal conversations he or she has when alone.

When looking at a child's work, art or otherwise, encourage them to tell you about their work. "Tell me how you made this." Use words that open the door to more questions and strengthen neural pathways. "I see several red lines, you decided to use red paint today? What other colors did you choose?"

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Volunteering offers many benefits ...

## Why Volunteer?

Here are some reasons to volunteer:

### Learn or develop a new skill.

Volunteering is the perfect conduit to develop a new skill or to discover a new talent. It is never too late to realize new skills or accumulate knowledge. Employers are often seeking well-rounded individuals who have good teamwork and goal setting skills. Planning and implementing a major fundraising event can develop goal setting, planning and budgeting skills. Serving on a volunteer committee or board is a great way to learn group dynamics and team work. Serving as a committee chair increases facilitation skills. Painting a mural or making banners could highlight your art talents. The possibilities are endless.

### Be part of your community.

There are so many options for being involved in your community, through professional associations, neighborhood organizations, arts and historic

organizations and social service organizations. No man or woman is an island. People and societies co-depend on each other for survival. We can bridge the expanding gap between communities and societies through volunteering. Volunteering is ultimately about helping others taking part in impacting people's welfare and happiness. What better way is there to connect with your community and give something back? Do you feel strongly about something that is happening or not happening in your community and want to get involved? As a volunteer, you certainly return to society some of the benefits that society gives you.

### Meet a diverse range of people.

Volunteering brings together a diverse range of people varied backgrounds. Both the recipients of your volunteer efforts and your fellow volunteers can be a valuable source of

inspiration and an exceptional method to expand your interpersonal skills. You do not know who you will meet, what new information you will acquire, and how this could impact your life.

### Receive personal rewards and sense of achievement.

Volunteering is about donating your time, energy, and skills generously. As a volunteer you have made a decision to help freely -- free from pressure to act from others. Volunteers generally convey a sense of achievement and motivation which ultimately is generated from the desire and enthusiasm to help. For others volunteering may simply be a break in regular routine or an opportunity to create balance in their lives. Volunteering around a personal interest or hobby can be enjoyable, relaxing, and revitalizing. That energy and sense of fulfillment can even be carried over to

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# President's Corner

Welcome to cooperative preschools! As parents who have had their children in co-op preschools can tell you, you are in for a treat. Co-op preschools are a unique and wonderful experience. One of the best parts is that you get to be involved in your child's education as a parent volunteer. You will see firsthand all the exciting activities in your child's classroom.

My name is Elise Eden. I am a stay at home mom with three daughters. My older two girls both went to co-op preschools (my youngest is a toddler). Our family feels especially fortunate to have had this experience. I feel so strongly about supporting co-op preschools that I joined the PCPO board. I am pleased to be able to serve as PCPO president this year.

Co-op preschools are ideal for your child's first school experience. While each co-op is unique, many share important characteristics. Co-ops look at the whole child's development; social, emotional, physical and intellectual. Children have choices and explore their environment. Children make friends and improve their social skills. Teachers have developmentally appropriate programs. Children learn through play. Parents are directly involved in their child's school experience. Parents meet other families that value early childhood education. Families build community together.

Play is key to your child's education. Brain research shows that children learn best through play. When children play together they are actively learning and making important connections. Kids dress up, make believe activities, and games are their work. Just as we know healthy food choices and quality time with

parents are important, play time is essential.

PCPO is a group of dedicated volunteers who believe strongly in co-op preschools and want to support and strengthen our member schools. PCPO offers resources and support for our teachers, families and schools.

PCPO provides an annual conference, parent education, school officer training, president and representative meetings, teacher support, insurance, mediation and guidance, and much more. Our goal is to help provide schools with what they need to

be successful.

Call us or email with questions or potential problems. The sooner you call, the sooner we can send resources and collaborate! You can call or email our wonderful program coordinator, Jamie Maier, or contact any of us on the directory resource list. We look forward to being of assistance this year.

Now, let the adventure begin!

Cooperatively,  
*Elise Eden*

## Oswego Playschool Applesauce Recipe

### Ingredients:

3 to 4 lbs of peeled, cored, and quartered apples  
4 strips of lemon peel - use a vegetable peeler to strip 4 lengths

Juice of one lemon, about 3-4 Tbsp  
3 inches of cinnamon stick  
1/4 cup of dark brown sugar  
up to 1/4 cup of turbinado sugar  
1 cup of water  
1/2 teaspoon of salt

### Method:

1. Put all ingredients into a large pot. Cover. Bring to boil. Lower heat and simmer for 20-30 minutes.

2. Remove from heat. Remove cinnamon sticks and lemon peels. Mash with potato masher.

Ready to serve, either hot or refrigerated. Delicious with vanilla ice cream or vanilla yogurt.



[RIGHT] Students peeling and coring apples



[LEFT] Students mashing cooked apples

## From the Editor

Hello. My name is Robin Bunster. I am a teacher at Oswego Playschool and a PCPO board member. It is my pleasure to serve as your Connection Editor this year. The Connection is a great way to share information with other schools. We'd love to hear from you. If you have an article, photo, list of pet peeves, recipe or would be willing to write a book review, please contact me at teacherrobin@gmail.com. Hope everyone has a great school year!

## Parenting Bookshelf

### NurtureShock

### presents starting point for discussion

By Susan Hunsberger  
Oswego Playschool

As a determined new mama, I think I've given myself a case of Parenting Book Fatigue since my firstborn arrived almost five years ago. All the hours I read about solutions and methods and habits (when I could have been sleeping!) only made me more likely to trust my own gut.

Then this summer, my daughter's co-op teacher, Robin Bunster, passed along "NurtureShock" by Po Bronson and Ashley Merryman (2009). This one was certainly worth the time it took to read, even though it left me with more questions than answers.

"NurtureShock" addresses popular parenting assumptions and common practices in homes and schools, and then describes what scientific research has found. The results are fascinating and often run counter to what well-intentioned parents think they're doing right when they follow their intuition.

One example: The book looks at childhood aggression, from physical hitting to verbal insults. The assumption is that children who watch action shows like "Power Rangers" or "Star Wars" would exhibit more aggression, right? But research shows that children who watch so-called educational programs such as "Arthur" are much more verbally aggressive. One study of children's programs found that they're full of insults and put-downs, and almost none of the verbal jabs are reprimanded or corrected. Even more fascinating was that educational programs also increased the rate of physical aggression even more dramatically than violent programming. "The more kids watched, the crueller they'd be to their classmates," Bronson and Merryman write.

The authors also dissect language development, attitudes about race, sleep loss among children, lying, self control, arguing with teenagers, and sibling relationships, among other topics. Its first chapter is on the "inverse power of praise," which the authors originally addressed in a cover story in New York magazine.

The book is both wildly popular and harshly criticized, depending on whom you ask. Some critics argue that the book pushes a conservative parenting agenda. Others assert that the authors -- both journalists, not scientists -- may just want to sell books. My husband, also a journalist, wondered whether the studies described in the book were the ones with results most contrary to popular belief, excluding other studies with more gray areas. I found the book to be a bit gimmicky, spending plenty of energy setting up each chapter with popular assumptions so that the surprise revelation of "what the research really shows" grew a little tiresome. A more straightforward approach would have held more appeal.

But the book's strength is that it explains the complexities of how children develop in approachable language, rather than in dense academic jargon. It is a compelling starting point for reflection and discussion among parents and educators, making it an excellent book-group candidate.

And instead of prescribing a checklist of steps to "fix" our parenting like so many other books seem to do, "NurtureShock" leaves that up to us.

*Sarah Hunsberger of West Linn is secretary at Oswego Playschool. She has two daughters, ages 4 and 2.*

## PCPO would like to extend a warm welcome to all of our new Member Schools:

Ashland Village Preschool, Ashland, OR  
Creative Hands Preschool, Sherwood, OR  
Greenwood Tree Preschool, Mt. Vernon, WA  
Big Bend Co-op Preschool, Moses Lake, WA

We look forward to a great 2010-11 school year with all of our wonderful 65 schools!

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# New Names, Same Functions

By Heather Grossmann  
PCPO Conflict Prevention and  
Resolution Committee Chairperson

This spring the PCPO board of directors renamed two different committees to help increase awareness of how the committees assist PCPO schools. The School Relations Committee will now be known as the Conflict Resolution and Prevention Committee and the School Support Committee will be known as the Onsite School Support Committee.

The primary role of the Conflict Prevention and Resolution Committee is to provide an objective, confidential viewpoint to help schools find constructive ways to solve problems when they arise (or before they arise). All of the members of this committee have co-op experience and are able to listen to your concerns, offer advice, and if necessary, visit your

school to help mediate disputes. It's important to note that the Conflict Prevention and Resolution Committee members cannot offer legal advice or take "sides" in a conflict. The members often talk with all parties in a conflict and play the role of "devil's advocate" to each side. Many times, parties are full of emotion and just need someone to listen to their concerns and give them more neutral words to use to resolve the conflict.

The committee has assisted with a wide variety of concerns and disputes, ranging from disagreements between board members to conflicts with landlords. Sometimes a teacher needs another teacher to talk with in a confidential manner – the Conflict Prevention and Resolution Committee can assist with that too. If you, or another member of your school, have a conflict or problem that is not being resolved to your

satisfaction, you may want to give PCPO a call for assistance. Please consider contacting PCPO as soon as you notice the problem brewing, before it grows to an unmanageable state.

In contrast, if your school would like assistance with updating or improving itself, you may want to consider contacting PCPO's Onsite School Support Committee (OSS). This committee has members who, upon request, are able to visit your school to make classroom observations and provide assistance with school and teacher evaluations. Please note that PCPO is not an accrediting agency but rather an organization that is available to support your school.

If your school is interested in scheduling an onsite visit, please contact PCPO early in the school year. It takes time and money to coordinate these visits and PCPO performs only a few visits each year. Last but not least, please keep in mind that most of the members in these committees are volunteers who are giving their time to assist you and your school. We hope all of you have a safe, fun and rewarding 2010-2011 school year.

## PCPO would like to Welcome New Teachers and Teacher assistants:

Katrina Edwards- Cedar Hills Kindergarten & Preschool  
Jennifer Souders (assistant)- Red Barn Preschool  
Amy Bazile- Marysville Cooperative Preschool  
Carol Panowicz- Calvary Presbyterian Coop Preschool  
Michelle Olson (assistant)- Burlingame Preschool  
Sherrie Deaton- Alpine Co-op Preschool  
Julie Miller- Gabriel Park Preschool  
JiAna Dollarhide- Patterson Preschool  
Julie Kim-Knapp (assistant)- Big Bend Preschool  
Taegen Reed (assistant)- Tigard Preschool  
Kayla McAfee (assistant)- Tigard Preschool  
Jennifer Bruce (assistant)- Tigard Preschool  
Heidi Berntsen- Bryant House Preschool

## Why Volunteer?

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other situations and sometimes help to relieve tensions and foster new perspectives for old situations.

### Create Leadership.

Watching those around you can allow you to identify leadership qualities that you most appreciate and can develop in yourself. Volunteer groups are often groups of peers that respond more to leadership than management. Opportunities are available to lead by persuasion, show innovation, and share your ideas and values. Volunteer settings allow you to learn strategic thinking and conflict resolution skills. You will learn about your community, about trends and concerns, about people and about resources--all of which can help you develop your leadership potential.

### Enhance Career Opportunities.

- Networking - Volunteering offers an incredible networking opportunity. You will develop lasting personal and professional relationships. Not only is it a great way to learn about people from all walks of life, different environments, and new industries, but you can also hear about job open-

ings, gather valuable employment information and develop great references.

- Retain or sharpen old skills - Sometimes job duties change and you may no longer be doing things you used to do and liked. Volunteering is a perfect means for keeping those skills sharp and current.
- Practice skills - It is much more effective to practice a new skill than to read about it or study it in a classroom. Volunteering is an excellent venue to experiment, practice, and test new techniques and skills. The opportunity to build your self-confidence through practice is offered. Additionally, volunteering provides opportunities to observe others to determine best practices.
- Explore new career options - Volunteering is a perfect way to explore new fields. Sometimes a volunteer experience can direct you to something you never thought about or help you uncover a new skill or interest. You can strengthen your personal/professional mission and vision by exploring opportunities and expanding your horizons.

From Ten Professional Development Benefits of Volunteering (*Everything I Learned in Life I Learned through Volunteering.*) Mary V. Merrill, LSW, Merrill Associates

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—Sharon, Calvary Co-Op Preschool

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—LaJeana, Metzger Preschool



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# Taking the Step Towards Equitable Wages

By Susie Skousen Goodell, MA

What is a quality early childhood program and how much does it really cost? Many different factors make for a good early childhood program. Some indicators of quality are:

- happy and thriving children
- families who are viewed as partners in care
- small group sizes
- low adult/child ratio
- educated and experienced teachers

In order to attract and retain qualified teachers, the program should offer competitive pay and benefits, including health benefits. Unfortunately, most early childhood programs struggle with offering teachers reasonable salaries because in most cases, the majority income of the program comes from tuition. Everyone suffers when salaries remain low. Teachers subsidize the program with their low wages. They often leave the field altogether. Children and families deal with high turnover rate and poorly qualified teachers when salaries remain low.

The quickest and the seemingly easiest way to increase the income of the program is to increase group size which increases the program's income. But everyone suffers from this option as well. Larger groups often lead to more regimented routines, less flexibility, and children receiving less individualized attention. Teachers have to stretch even farther to meet the needs of children and families which contributes to their own "burnout."

In most cases, the government does not offer any financial support to early childhood programs as it does for schools for older children and young adults. So, while we know that early childhood is a fundamental period in the development of human beings, it is not supported by public funding. Its up to us, as

parents and teachers of young children, to urge our local and national government to designate taxpayer dollars to support early childhood programs for all young children.

Hawthorne Family Playschool is an early childhood community that offers an exceptional program for our young children. The teacher, Susan Eisman, has twenty years of experience in the field and has completed her master's coursework in human development. She is a fully qualified teacher that is gifted in working with adults and children. It is a privilege to be a part of such a community that offers so much to parents and children.

Last spring, Hawthorne Family Playschool took a step in the direction of supporting the full price of quality. During the contract negotiations with the teacher, it became clear that the community wanted to compensate the teacher fairly and be a program that families can afford. The community voted to raise tuition to support an improved salary for the teacher. Although the salary increase is still not at a rate that reflects the qualifications and work of the teacher, it's a step in the right direction. The progressive move has prompted other cooperative preschools to examine the possibility of moving toward more equitable wages as well.

Hawthorne Family Playschool also agreed to try a new sliding scale method for charging tuition. A wide range of incomes exist for families and families differ in how much they can afford to pay in tuition. Adopting the sliding scale model makes it possible



for each family to pay what they can afford and a sliding scale enables the preschool to draw families with a range of income levels. Tuition assistance continues to be available to families as needed.

To reach the full cost of quality, early childhood teachers must be paid a fair and equitable wage. As it stands, early childhood teachers are paid far less than public school teachers, who should also be paid more. Early childhood teachers make far less than paralegals, computer technicians, medical record clerks and many other professions. Does our society place more value on computer health and record keeping than on our children? Salary comparisons certainly seem to reflect that we do. Fair compensation for teachers and good quality programs are goals worth working toward. Children and their teachers are worth it.

## The Creative Child

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Oh, yes, there are spots of green too!" By taking a deeper look at the work and making comments, we encourage children to reflect and revisit the work as well. Praise may seem appropriate, but often it cuts short any chance of discussion and reflection. "Wow, this is beautiful! You did a great job!" might feel right, but does it support the child's potential for creative thought?

Creativity is not an outcome, but a way of interpreting our thinking. Some call it mental research, while others look at it as inspiration. Creativity supports early academics as children desire master letters and numbers the skills needed to move forward their creative ideas. When they are ready academic skills will help to expand, document and share their BIG IDEAS!

As the new school year begins, I encourage you to enjoy and celebrate **your creative child**. Let their ideas rub off on you! Follow those ideas! Slow down your busy day, and bring watercolors to the park, take a long walk and talk, read a good book, or alter a recipe and make an original cake. Enjoy and relish your child's fresh perspectives on life. I believe that to be creative you simply need to be encouraged. Perhaps you will find your creative side blossoming too!

*Lucy Chaillé, MFA is the director of Creative Children's Center in Beaverton. CCC is a cooperative school for children ages 2 to 2<sup>nd</sup> grade.*

## The Hundred Languages

The child is made of one hundred.  
 The child has a hundred languages  
 a hundred hands  
 a hundred thoughts  
 a hundred ways of thinking  
 of playing, of speaking.  
 A hundred always a hundred  
 ways of listening  
 of marveling, of loving  
 a hundred joys  
 for singing and understanding  
 a hundred worlds  
 to discover  
 a hundred worlds  
 to invent  
 a hundred worlds  
 to dream.  
 The child has a hundred languages  
 (and a hundred hundred hundred more)  
 but they steal ninety-nine.  
 The school and the culture  
 separate the head from the body.  
 They tell the child:  
 to think without hands  
 to do without head  
 to listen and not to speak  
 to understand without joy  
 to love and to marvel  
 only at Easter and at Christmas.  
 They tell the child:  
 to discover the world already there  
 and of the hundred  
 they steal ninety-nine.  
 They tell the child:  
 that work and play  
 reality and fantasy  
 science and imagination  
 sky and earth  
 reason and dream  
 are things  
 that do not belong together.  
 And thus they tell the child  
 that the hundred is not there.  
 The child says:  
 No way. The hundred is there.

## Pet Peeves

Submitted by Linda Callantine

- Study groups
- Being late
- Rude behavior
- Ignoring the rules
- Rehashing the same ideas again!
- Winning above all
- Believing everything you read on the internet
- Book groups when people don't read the book (but still feel they can offer an opinion!)
- Homework before 4<sup>th</sup> grade - just can't let that one go
- Cap and Gown graduation for preschoolers — or any age before high school

*Rainy Dayz*



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Loris Mallaguzzi  
 Reggio Emilia Educator