

Prepare for the annual PCPO Conference —

Building Lifelong Learners

The 2011 PCPO Parenting and Early Childhood Conference is right around the corner.

And February 26 is coming soon. That is the postmark deadline for pre-registration for the PCPO Conference, **Building Lifelong Learners**. We encourage early registration as classes can fill up. But if you miss this deadline, walk-in registration is available on the day of the conference.

The 2010 PCPO Conference had 40 percent more attendees than in 2009. (I know, I couldn't believe it either, but I triple-checked my math!). Our new format, with three workshop sessions appears to be a big hit.

This year we will repeat that successful format along with important improvements. More workshops will be offered to meet the demand and lunch time has been shortened to an

hour, so that the conference day is more compact, as you requested. We are excited to be offering this day just for parents and teachers of preschoolers so you can learn more about your very important role.

You should already have your conference brochure, but if not, feel free to print one from www.OregonPreschools.coop. Encourage friends and family members to attend. There is a reduced rate for alumni of PCPO member schools and financial aid is available by written request.

Here are the details: Saturday, March 5, 2011 at Athey Creek Middle School, 2900 SW Borland Rd, in West Linn. Athey Creek is less than a mile off I-205, so it can be easily reached from anywhere, and has lots of parking. Registration is from 8:15 to 9, with the last workshop ending at 3 pm.

You will get to select three workshops from the 29 being offered. Two of the workshops are a double session for more in-depth learning: *Introduction to Positive Discipline* and *Coping with Challenging Behaviors*.

Many of our most popular workshops are returning, such as *Positive Discipline*, *Sign Language*, *Sensory Processing*, *Nurturing Young Writers*, and *Coping with Challenging Behaviors*.

Most of our workshops, however, are brand new. These include *Simplicity Parenting*, *Helping Children Negotiate their Social World*, *Conflict Resolution for Kids*, *Brain Aware Parenting*, and *Creative Re-use* (one for school, one for home).

It's a day of camaraderie with others who share your special bond with a preschool child. Please join us. If you haven't come before we'd like you to
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Barefoot Books, Discovery Toys, LE Bookman and other vendors will be open with items for viewing and purchase during registration from 8:15 am to 9:00 am.



PCPO Conference 2011

Mark your calendars now for Saturday, March 6, 2011 - the date of PCPO's 2011 Early Childhood Education and Parenting Conference.

Your conference committee has lined up a great roster of speakers, including both long-time favorites and many new presenters.

Last year's format, with 3 sessions rather than a keynote and 2 sessions, was a huge success. The 2011 conference will continue the 3-sessions format. Lunch time has been shortened to allow us to finish by 3:00 pm.

Learning to be the best parents and early childhood teachers we can be - that's our goal.

See you there!

Outdoor Kindergarten in Nature's Classroom

By Heidi Mann



Wood Haven School is expanding its program to include kindergarten. One of the unique aspects to the program is that it will occur outside every day. Beginning in September of 2011, the Forest Friends class will meet on Monday, through Thursday from noon - 4pm.

Parents of cooperative preschools often wish they could follow the cooperative model of learning into their child's kindergarten experience, and now that is possible at Wood Haven. Our students find magic in the careful way a mother robin builds her nest. This class of five year olds makes use of one teacher, one teacher assistant and one parent helper to create a ratio of 1:4. Nature trails and a wetland provide a lot of adventure tucked away in our

little wooded haven.

Join us for our Kindergarten Round Up on March 5 from 2pm - 3pm or at the open house that follows from 3pm - 5pm.

Our Waldorf inspired outdoor classroom is based on the model of a "Wald-kindergarten" or "Forest Kindergarten" in which children learn outside where their natural curiosities guide them and the parent helpers get to come along for the ride. As we are outside in all weather, it is vital to dress children in warm and water proof layers to insure that they can continue to play and learn without being slowed by the elements.

A covered picnic table creates some shelter from extreme weather. We use indoor bathrooms when nature calls.

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President's Corner

Parenting is one of the most challenging jobs you will ever have. Children are so dynamic. Once you begin to figure something out, their behaviors change and challenge you in another way. Children are growing and learning all the time. Learning new parenting techniques can be inspiring and immensely helpful.

The start of a new year is a great time for reflection and setting goals. In the busyness of our lives with small children it is easy to fall into ruts. When something is not working, this is a good time to try and figure out a new approach.

Just like our children, our brains need inspiration and new information to keep growing. Looking for parenting information can be as simple as reading an article or visiting with a friend. You could also sign up for a class or read a book. The library is a great resource. Ask your preschool teacher for reading recommendations.

Cooperative preschools are great places to learn new parenting ideas. Co-op teachers are wonderful resources. They have a wealth of information

on preschoolers. When you parent help watch the strategies that your teacher uses. Ask your teachers questions. You can also learn from other co-op parents. You can observe other parents' styles and techniques. And talk to parents about how they handle challenging behaviors. Cultivate friends and parents you admire and build a support network. So you can call a friend when you need someone to listen, or to bounce ideas off of.

Taking care of young children is an enormous job. Striving to parent well is incredibly important and a lot of hard work. Let yourself not be perfect. We are all only human. All we can do is the best we can do. Take it day by day. Try something new. Learning new strategies will strengthen your parenting skills.

Sometimes the most helpful thing you can do to improve your parenting, is to make time for yourself. If you are feeling overwhelmed or empty you probably need a break. Parenting young children is exhausting. Figuring out how to get exercise, the

support you need and just some time for yourself, is critical. Everyone needs to recharge. Figuring out what you need to become recharged is important.

Another excellent way to refresh your parenting skills and perspective is to attend PCPO's annual Early Childhood Education and Parenting Conference. This year's conference has lots of great parenting workshops to choose from, with excellent teachers and presenters. It is inspiring and delightful to be around so many other parents who are also there to learn and grow. It is satisfying and worthwhile to come home with new ideas and techniques to try out.

I encourage you to go to the conference this spring. Put the date on your calendar, Saturday, March 5th and register. Enjoy a break from your routine and get inspired about parenting!

Cooperatively,
Elise Eden
PCPO President

Legislation Reminder:

As I am sure you've now heard, a new law was passed in 2009 requiring most programs serving children to be recorded with the Child Care Division (the Division). This law went into effect on July 1, 2010. The Child Care Division was charged with implementing the statute (ORS 657A.255 & 257).

The statute requires that preschool programs and school age youth development programs comply with three requirements:

- To become recorded with the Child Care Division
- To certify that criminal background checks on those who have contact with children have been completed,
- To post a notice that the facility is recorded

The Child Care Division has reported that many Oregon PCPO member schools have recorded successfully. Member schools that still need to finish getting fully registered have been contacted.

Westside Kindergarten Fair Set for February 23

(Raleigh Hills) Valley Christian Preschool will host their 2nd annual Kindergarten Fair on Wednesday February 23 from 6-8:00pm. Last year the Fair was open to just parents of Valley Christian preschoolers and parents in the neighborhood. This year, all parents of preschoolers are invited to attend.

Event organizer and Valley Christian Preschool Director, Taundra Pitchford, said "We received such great feedback from parents and presenters last year that this year we decided to open it up to more families seeking school options."

While the title is Kindergarten Fair, attendees don't have to have in-coming Kindergarten students to attend. Any parent who is seeking school options for their K-8 student may attend.

The Fair is designed to give parents the opportunity to look at several school options all under the same roof. Representatives from various elementary schools will be on hand to answer questions and provide materials about their programs. Staff and parent volunteers from private schools, faith-based

schools, International schools, language immersion programs and more will be there.

Similar to last year, this year's fair will include schools from the greater southwest Portland and suburban areas.

St. John Fisher School Marketing Representative Susan Menendez said, "We love the opportunity to stand side-by-side with our fellow schools at this very worthwhile fair. For a family who is considering something other than their neighborhood public school, the time to research options can be exhausting. First, there's the question what program is right for my child? Then there are Open Houses to attend and on-site visits to be scheduled. A lot of that legwork can be done going table to table that evening."

The Fair is free and no reservations are necessary. Valley Christian Preschool is located at 8060 SW Brentwood Street, Portland, Oregon 97225. For questions or more information call Taundra at 503-292-3537, ext. 146.

Parenting Bookshelf:

Simplicity Parenting

Deep, uninterrupted play is a child's work; how a child discovers, and comes to understand herself and her world. When is child is absorbed in imaginative play, she is developing as a full human being; head, hand and heart.

In order for play to be effective and nourishing for children, children must remain present; to the input of experience, their senses, and their creative expression. It is our job, as parents and teachers to create environments that are responsive to a child's rhythms, cycles, and developmental needs.

In his book, *Simplicity Parenting*, Kim John Payne explains that the pace of our modern world is way out of balance with the rhythms and space that children require. He points out that too much stuff, too many choices, and too little time takes a toll on children in a way that has led to grave consequences – anxiety, behavior problems and even developmental disorders.

Payne even makes it into a kind of formula. Quirk (a child's natural state) + Stress = Disorder. He states that stress can push children along an established behavioral spectrum towards turmoil. He notes "when you simplify on a number of levels, back they come."

He's even proven through a number of studies that it seems to work. "68% of children whose parents and teachers adhered to a [simplicity] protocol in his studies went from clinically dysfunctional to clinically functional within four months."

Consultant, trainer, and counselor Payne has spent many years helping families simplify. Simplicity, he argues, is the essence that allows a child to live and function in a healthy, well-balanced and resilient way.



In *Simplicity Parenting*, Payne outlines four areas that need attention; environment, rhythm, schedules, and filtering out the adult world.

Through simplifying a child's environment with a drastic reduction of 'stuff'; increasing the rhythm of daily activities and home life; creating balanced and spacious schedules for children with plenty of downtime; and filtering out the adult world by limiting exposure to the stress of adulthood, technology, television and unconscious dialogue, parents can create the space and freedom that children need to flourish.

Payne's book is an echo of slow movements everywhere; slow food, slow travel, slow clothing and slow planet initiatives have been calling for us to slow down, be present, pay attention, and most of all enjoy the moment. Children naturally know this already. It's our job to help them do it – mostly by simply getting out of the way.

Simplicity Parenting is a unique and thoughtful look at the impact the dizzying pace of modern life has on children, and what we might do about it.

You are invited to attend a *Simplicity Parenting* workshop at the PCPO conference, in March!

Meet the Author: On Friday February 25, 2011. The Portland Waldorf School will be sponsoring an evening lecture for the public at First Unitarian Church, entitled "Simplicity Parenting: Using the Extraordinary Power of Less to Raise Calmer, Happier and More Secure Kids", facilitated by Kim John Payne, M. Ed. On Saturday, Feb 26, Payne will offer a 4-hour *Simplicity Parenting* workshop at the PWS campus in Milwaukie. Tickets to both events are available online at www.portlandwaldorfschool.org.

EDITORIAL MATERIAL & ADS FOR
THE APRIL ISSUE ARE DUE BY
March 20, 2011



Published four times a year by
**PARENT CHILD PRESCHOOLS
OF OREGON**
P.O. Box 230327 • Tigard OR 97281
503 / 293-6161 • pcpo@pcpo.info

Web page: <http://www.oregonpreschools.org>
Editor: Robin Bunster: teacherrobin@gmail.com
Advertising: 503/293-6161
Production: PC Desktop Design: 360/835-0106

The Connection is published in September, November, February and April. Submissions are welcome. Advertising rates are furnished on request.

The opinions expressed by individuals and advertisers in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of PCPO as an organization. Response to any article is welcomed; it may be sent in writing to the *Connection* staff.

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Toddlers Thrive at Southwest Parent-Child Collective

Recess at Southwest Parent-Child Collective looks a bit like a family picnic: one-year-old Naomi weaves a pink baby stroller among older children riding bikes and drawing chalk mazes; five-year-old Kaitlyn leads her younger sister and friends on a worm hunt; Lucia and John, both two, work intently on hanging freshly laundered doll clothes. Kids as young as twelve-months join the ranks of the 'regular' preschoolers outside each day for an extended period of exploration and play.

In addition to the traditional preschool-age classroom, Southwest Parent-Child Collective offers a daily, four-hour program for one- and two-year-olds; a rare find, allowing children to engage in something "big" — a community — from an early age. "Toddlers are so joyous in exploring the world," says Teacher



Liz Parker. "Their language is blossoming, and early friendships are charming." What a fruitful time to be together.

Parents also benefit by entering a vibrant learning community when their children are young. Parent Juliette Oase found opportunities for connection and support unavailable at home. "Through the year, we developed extremely close relationships — whole family relationships. In the process, I became a better parent."

Rather than the typical two-year preschool experience, parents at SWPCC tend to share four years together, and six-plus years if families have more than one child enrolled.

The four-hour school day offers children ample time to settle into the environment, choose activities at their own pace, and form attachments to the teacher, parents, and peers. Karen Barrett, the young toddler teacher for the past 18 years, explains, "Here very young children have open-ended opportunities to experience the joys of discovery, friendships and trust."

The safe environment invites toddlers to take reasonable risks and develop a sense for their own needs and boundaries.



The cheery atmosphere in the classrooms is maintained with the support of parent helpers, who keep the adult/child ratio to about 1:3. With weekly shift responsibilities, parents provide the consistency necessary for relationships to flourish. "The children form trusting relationships with other adults," says Teacher Katy, "and also learn to share their parent with classmates."

The toddler teachers coach parents to use positive phrases that help little ones navigate limits, while fostering the precious spirit of each toddler. "Give your ears a wiggle and your lips a tap." "Make a safer choice." "Let's be a team." The teachers infuse the classrooms with practices that reflect, as Liz puts it, "what's appropriate for their ages and stages, creativity and playfulness."

"We go beyond stressing compliance with rules," Liz says, "to encouraging children, even as young as one- and two-years-old, to learn to make choices within safe limits, speak up for themselves, and negotiate with age-mates and adults."

Liz believes the toddler program "helps young children develop genuine empathy at a much younger age than what child development professionals often lead us to expect."

The Southwest Parent-Child Collective offers a unique opportunity for very young children and their parents to thrive together, among a diverse and interesting group of friends. Teacher Karen continually tells people, "It works!"

Come visit and see for yourself!

Outdoor Kindergarten

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The day begins with lunches the students bring from home. Later in the afternoon, the class shares a snack and herbal tea. On a cold day, we might enjoy hot oat meal for snack with mint tea we grew and dried ourselves.

Students who participate in Forest Friends kindergarten get to follow their own curiosities to their knowledgeable ends. How do carrots grow in our garden? How do the roots get water from the soil? Why do worms come out in the rain? How does a nuthatch song sound different than its alarm cry? We will explore these ideas and so many more through daily creative play, nature games, journal entries, puppet stories, songs, and nature walks. Children will be active agents in their own learning and will leave the program prepared for any first grade experience.

Many adults today remember childhood as time spent outside in exploration. However, many children today have very restricted access to the outdoors and will not think of climbing trees or holding earthworms when they look back on their childhood.

In Forest Friends, math skills will be put to the

test in our 150 square foot garden. We will gain self confidence and problem solving skills. We will learn with all of our senses as children in early development are so apt to do. Rather than giving them one desk and some paper and pencil, we will give them one forest and a giant canvas. They supply the deep desire to know everything and the curiosity needed to learn it all.



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New Fund Raising Ideas Create New Opportunities

By Vicki Krutzikowsky,
Mouse Factory Treasurer

Like most of us co-op preschools, at the first board meeting of the Newport Mouse Factory Preschool this year we were brainstorming fund raising possibilities. Our biggest fundraiser has traditionally been a pancake feed or spaghetti dinner with a silent auction with items donated from the community. It has been a fun community event, but involves lots of work and much of the profit has come from the silent auction.

Even with an energetic group of parents, this year we wanted to try something different. The Annual Newport Seafood and Wine Festival at the end of February gives local non profits the opportunity

to pour wine for specific wineries and keep all the profits. It's a three day event that draws in thousands of people and non profits do well.



We weren't sure how everyone would feel about selling wine to support a preschool, but with no objections from our families, the next step was to figure out insurance.

I quickly found that this type of event didn't quite fit into the PCPO special event paperwork, but that was quickly remedied with an email and subsequent phone conversation with Linda Henegar. Linda was super supportive and immediately went to

work with our PCPO insurance agent to make this fundraiser a possibility for us. I know it took a lot of coordination to cover this non-traditional event, but from the Mouse Factory's perspective everything was taken care of in the same window of time as we were applying for participation in the festival, with minimal effort on our part. Thank you Linda and PCPO insurance for making this opportunity possible!

Now we're all set up to pour for Columbia Crest Winery on February 25, 26 and 27th. Look for us if you come over to Newport for this fun event.

Meeting the Challenge of Bringing the Idea to Life

By Linda Henegar

I imagine some jaws have dropped while reading Vicki's account of this experience. For those of you who have worked through the Liability for Special Events reporting and alcoholic beverage service requirements on the PCPO group insurance program to get your school's fundraising event set up well, the Mouse Factory story may sound impossible.

So how did it work?

First, I was contacted by the school very early in their process of considering the event, with about five months' notice to try to work things out! And the treasurer and fundraising chair, Vicki and Stephanie, responded to every request and question very promptly, sometimes within hours. Their responsiveness helped to keep the momentum going as various issues were discussed and pursued weekly for a couple of months before a final okay to proceed was received from the liability insurance underwriter.

Actually, the true "first" goes back to the mid-70's when the Clelen family joined Multnomah Playschool. John Clelen continues to work with me to manage the PCPO group insurance program that his father, Stew, was certain could be established to benefit not only his grandsons' preschool but many

cooperative preschools. John's insurance knowledge and access to good markets is, of course, respected as a great agent, though it is his co-op background that brings the perfect perspective to topics valued by PCPO and our member schools.

It was immediately evident to both of us how participation in the festival could bring not only a stable fundraising source, but the networking and public visibility for a small, coastal co-op that may provide a solid foundation for the preschool's success for many years to come, as well as potentially open new fundraising options for all participating schools. It was these underlying goals that kept us motivated through the challenges. Mouse Factory was spared the various times that we thought we'd reached a dead end, and I'm not sure I even remember all of the times we brainstormed another approach, but I am confident that John's firsthand knowledge of what is important to co-ops aids the PCPO group program time after time. This is simply an example of a concrete victory that may help the rest of you see some of the exceptional service we receive.

Finally, the PCPO Insurance Review Committee and PCPO Board are fabulous — open-minded and true advocates volunteering for our member schools' needs and desires. Once an acceptable insurance plan for this event was reached, there was unanimous approval to support the preschool in this unique opportunity.

Though our roles may change, the phrase "once a co-op family, always a co-op family" is so true!

If you make your way to Newport during the last weekend of February, stop at the Columbia Crest booth and say "Hi - We're a co-op family too!"

PCPO Conference

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be the next person to say, "This was my first conference - I really enjoyed it."

Conference workshops

Parent focused:

- Simplicity Parenting
- Coping with Challenging Behaviors
- Parent Development
- Brain-Aware Parenting
- Sign Language: Beginner Basics for Early Literacy and Fun
- Leave No Child Inside
- Introduction to Positive Discipline
- Raising our Sons & Daughters: It Does Take a Village
- Adult and Child Develop Together
- Connected Parenting
- Creative Re-use to Extend Learning at Home
- Boys Alive! Bring Out their Best!

Parent and Teacher focused:

- Kids Can: Talking with Children about Personal Safety
- Resources for Integrating Music with Preschoolers
- Sensory Processing: The Glue that Allows Learning to Stick
- Sing, Sign, and Storytime for Parents and Educators
- Helping Children Navigate their Social World
- Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Conflict Resolution for Kids

Teacher focused:

- I've Observed, Now What?
- Kindergarten Readiness: What Does it Really Mean?
- Creative Re-use in a Classroom Setting
- Nurturing Young Writers
- Under the Lily Pads: A Project-based Approach to Early Childhood Curriculum
- A Shade of Green: Sustainability at Preschool

Moving?

Have friends or family looking for a co-op preschool in their neighborhood? For referrals to PCPO schools, call (503) 293-6161 or email pcpo@pcpo.info.

WESTSIDE KINDERGARTEN INFORMATION FAIR

February 23rd • 6:00-8:00pm

Valley Christian Preschool
8060 SW Brentwood Street
Portland, OR 97225

Looking for kindergarten and elementary school options?

Come to the Fair!



Talk to representatives from a variety of westside schools. All parents of 2011 K-8 students are invited to attend!

FREE! No reservations required

Call **Tandra Pitchford** for more information: **503-292-3537 ext. 146**

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PCPO Mission Statement

PCPO's primary purpose is to act on behalf of the needs and interests of young children by:

- promoting developmentally appropriate programs according to the current consensus of the early childhood profession;
- strengthening and expanding the interdependence of the parent-teacher cooperative philosophy;
- promoting the development of cooperative schools through the exchange of information, while respecting the diversity of educational philosophies without compromising the standards of PCPO
- providing resources and services for teachers, families and schools; and
- studying and promoting activities and programs designed to further the health and well-being of children and families.