



# April Showers & May Flowers

## Registration Update

Registration for fall went very smoothly this year in the new one-day format. Our Board did a great job of working closely with Mary Saunders, our Registrar.

**We still have openings at each age level, but hope to fill these in the next few months.**

Please be our voice in the community letting folks know that we take children two by the end of August and they do NOT have to be potty-trained. Many schools do not offer this op-

tion. We also have openings for threes and a few for fours, which supports the changes we made during the budgeting process.

**Nadine Williams, Kindergarten teacher at Hidden Hills Elementary, paid us a visit recently. This is what she said:**

**"Shadow Rock**

***Preschool does the best job of preparing children for Kindergarten. You are developmental and we love to receive your students in our***

***classrooms.***

***The ones you send are perfectly prepared for Kin-***

***dergarten success. Please keep up the good work!"***



## Beautiful Desert Outings

Have you discovered Holly Hunter's fabulous website? For ideas about things to do and places to go in Arizona with your children, subscribe to the **AZ Active Kids** newsletter.

Check out :

**<http://azactivekids.com/calendar.asp>**

**Visit her website: <http://www.AZActiveKids.com>**

**Join her new Meetup Group so you can join her on upcoming outdoorsy events!!**

**<http://www.meetup.com/The-Active-AZ-Families-Meetup-Group/>**

## Shadow Rock Preschool

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### Special points of interest:

- ☺ Check out the awesome moving art exhibit from the Unicorns class. It's been at Barro's Pizza and Home Depot and moves now to Cool Cuts for Kids and Hubbard Family Swim School.
- ☺ April 5 & 6—Hearing Screening for fours.
- ☺ April 30—Ice Cream Social

### Inside this issue:

Booster-Seat Caution	2
Multi-Cultural Families	2
Heard in the Halls	3
Playtime in Peril	3
New Procedure	4
Say What? Tips for Good Communication with Your Child	4

## Booster-Seat Caution

A shocking number of car booster seats won't adequately protect kids in a crash, found a new report by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety.

The organization rated the safety of 60 boosters based on how they fit a 6-year-old when placed in different cars and concluded that 11 models are "not recommended".

Most of these—popular brands such as Eddie Bauer, Safety 1st and Evenflo—have the same flaws: they position the child so that the lap belt crosses the tummy, which can lead to internal organ injury in a crash.

The belt should lie flat against the upper thighs.

Another problem is that the shoulder belt doesn't fit snugly across the middle of the shoulder; it hangs too low and could slide off in an impact.

For a full list of seats and ratings, go to [parents.com/boosters](http://parents.com/boosters).

To get help adjusting your child's booster, go to [usa.safekids.org](http://usa.safekids.org) for a child-safety-seat inspection station or event near you.

March 2010 *Parents Magazine*



## Multi-Cultural Families

Recently we looked through our Directory and realized that we have a dozen children whose parents are from India and another sixteen international children. What a gift they are to our preschool community!

Wanting to understand more about India, I talked one morning with Swetha Nagaraj, mother of Rishi, and Khushi, mother of Aarav. Both have husbands who are IT consultants, both are educated in commerce (and Khushi in education, as well) and both are very pleased to have their child at Shadow Rock Preschool. They told me that the hardest thing about being here is that they feel alone. Both were part of a joint family in India, an arrangement where they lived with their husband's parents. The best part about American life is that they have learned so much, met all kinds of people, and experienced what they perceive as a very "social" America.

I asked them how they are teaching their culture to their children, as it is important to both of them and eventually they expect to return to India. The first answer is that they speak at home in their mother tongue. Language holds so much of a culture's information. They also attend a local temple, but it is a distance from where they live, so they have created a temple in their homes where they share religious education. Large religious celebrations are shared within Phoenix's quite extensive Indian-American community.

Travelling in Phoenix is a problem since we do not have very good mass transit. Typically, with only one family car, the moms feel re-

stricted. Both said that without the transportation problem we would have many more of their friends' children. Both women think their own children's behavior is improving because of preschool, where the young ones are so excited to have playmates and wonderful activities.

In India children begin preschool at age 2 and by 3 attend regular school with entrance exams and rigorous academics. Another difference is that children are not allowed to call elders by their first names, but rather use the terms Auntie or Uncle. Older children learn four languages: Sanskrit, Hindi, English, and their state language. Beginning in 8<sup>th</sup> grade French or Spanish is added.

Both Swetha and Khushi love living in a joint family. They say that Americans misunderstand how wonderful it is. Their mothers-in-law treat them the same as their own daughters and everyone pitches in to tackle the work. As parents age, they are loved and cared for by their family unit. Until recently there were no "old folks' homes" in India. When Khushi worked, her mother-in-law often sent

her a fresh lunch to enjoy. When Aarav was born she was given movie tickets for a husband date. Such actions are commonplace. The women remain close to their families using web cams and telephones. When pressed about disagreements, both revealed that occasionally differences arise, but "when there is trouble of any kind, the parents are there". They explained that family get-togethers are very large. When all the children and grand-

children come, there are easily 100 people. For holidays 150 would be the minimum. Swetha is going to India mid-May for her sister's wedding and over 3000 people will be in attendance. It takes at least two months of preparation because gifts are purchased for all family members, cards are ordered and hand-delivered, a menu is created and chef hired, a party hall is booked, the jewelry and traditional dress must be planned, henna artists hired and music chosen.

Women in India are becoming better educated and are moving into the workforce. Because in the large cities distances are long and traffic bad, this can mean long days. Once again, the joint families provide services and comfort. Everything in India can be obtained by a phone call. If you need someone to iron your clothes, it can be arranged. Khushi says that her next door neighbor took in ironing, so she could just hand something over from porch to porch and then immediately wear it. If you need vegetables, they can be brought to your home. "Everything comes to the front of your house", not just home-delivered pizza. Swetha says you can even hire toilet-cleaners! Maids, drivers, housekeepers, chefs...all are available. Khushi explained that even teachers have maids or *aayas* to help in classrooms. Those who perform these jobs can be upwardly mobile with more education. Our conversation ended because these two moms were off to share Indian foods and customs in their children's classrooms. We are so blessed to learn firsthand about our most amazing world.



## Heard in the Halls

Gaige Veit in the Unicorns was holding a mealworm when he began screaming, "I think he's eating me!!!!" Class questions asked were "Do they poop?" and "What color is their blood?"



Mrs. Stangl and her Dragonfly children were in the hall having a tasting party of dried apricots, dates, etc. Emily Wolk was overheard saying, "These are great appetites!"

Mimi Brown in Rainbows is always ex-

cited to have a newsletter in her bag. "Mom, we have NEWS today!"

A Teddy Bear child was having a difficult time drawing a picture and Isabella Medina came to him and said, "I mess up sometimes, too. You have to believe in yourself. You can do it!"

Brennan Korn in Bumble Bees was singing in Jammin' with Mr. Jim, who had just shaved off his beard. Brennan sang a few songs and then turned perplexed to Miss Heather. "Where did Mr. Jim go?" he asked.

While experimenting with baking soda and water, Molly Caris in Unicorns exclaimed, "Look, I made Sprite!"

Another day when the Unicorns were

asked to crawl like caterpillars, Houston Hull tried and then hopped up and started flapping his 'wings'. "And now I'm a butterfly," he claimed.

One day the Unicorns were guessing what snack would be. There were lots of guesses from brownies to cookies to pudding. Justin Kelly piped up with his guess—"Buckwheat!"



During clean-up one day the Unicorn teachers noticed Ada Keilman playing. She was asked if she was playing or cleaning. Ada replied, "I'm playing AND cleaning." A future diplomat, perhaps?

## Playtime in Peril

The September 2009 issue of *Monitor on Psychology* has an article which extols play and laments how today's kindergartens contain on average three hours per day of reading and math instruction and test prep, and less than half an hour each day on "choice time," or play. Children today have eight fewer hours of free, unstructured playtime a week than they had 20 years ago—time lost to organized sports, video games and educational computer programs, among other activities.

Psychologist Kathy Hirsh-Pasek, PhD, a child development researcher at Temple University, says that "Play is really important for young children, for social and cognitive development, and yet we're taking it away."

She believes that the reason for this is that we believe we're at risk of falling behind. She and national leader David Elkind argue that parents and educators are ignoring decades of evi-

dence that young children learn best through active, exploratory play rather than through direct, lecture-style classroom instruction, flash cards and push-button computer learning toys that can push them to memorize facts that they're not cognitively ready to understand.

Research shows that children learn spatial skills and counting through activities like playing with blocks. They can pick up a rich vocabulary simply by hearing books read aloud.

Imaginary play and make-believe give children practice working with others and substituting one object for another—which is knowledge of using symbols that lays the foundation for reading and math.

Children are rational little scientists

in their approach. They need to learn the properties of objects around them—an oven is hot, ice is cold, etc. Sensibly, they do this by recognizing

that objects in similar categories have similar properties: if one ice cube is cold, the next one likely will be, too.

Researchers do believe that preschoolers who are exposed to social problem-solving, pre-math and pre-reading, are better prepared for the transition to school...The issue here is not whether we should have content for children, but how it should

be presented.

Playful learning leads to literacy and math skills. Creativity, critical thinking and the ability to learn from failure are also skills best learned through play.



## Shadow Rock Preschool

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### New Procedure—

Place your lunch boxes on the marked carts each day. This helps Nikki, our hardworking Kitchen Coordinator and our Board member Kitchen Volunteers.

If you haven't tried KDO all year, check it out in April or May. The cost is \$5.75/hour, your child will be very excited about bringing a lunch, and this is a good opportunity to experience a longer day.

KDO billing is in two-hour increments.

## Say What?

### Tips for Good Communication with Your Child

Communication is the sharing of a message between two or more people. What if that message gets "lost in translation?" Here are some practical tips from NACCP that work with young children:

- Get down on the child's level. Kneel or sit at your child's eye level and maintain eye contact.
- Speak firmly and calmly, even if you are about to lose your cool.
- Give clear instructions. Children can become confused if there are too many steps involved.
- Take time to listen. Put away distractions (like your cell



phone!), make eye contact and pay attention to your child's words. If you cannot listen right then, give a specific time when you can and make it happen.

- Respond with questions or Conversation Builders. Ask for clarity or more details. Engage your child in conversation.
- Share your thoughts, but do not take too long. Make sure you say only a sentence or two. Remember, children are still in that stage where everything is about them!

#### Some Conversation Starters:

- Encourage your child to talk about his/her day.
- Say, "Tell me the best thing that happened at school today."

- Ask your child about the book you just read together. Ask him/her to tell you about the king in the book. What do you think he was trying to do? Why did he say that?
- Encourage your child to tell you about his/her favorites. Ask, "What is your favorite food/place to go with mom and dad/color? Why?"
- After a difficult or scary event, ask your child how he/she is feeling. Say, "It was hard getting those shots. How are you feeling now?"

Remember that what children want most is to feel important and loved by you. One of the best ways to show this is to encourage communication from an early age.