

# Little Bridges News

June 2018



## Calendar of Events

### **Donuts For Dads**

Friday 6/15

### **VBS**

#### **Vacation Bible School**

June 4 – June 8

### **Summer Camp Starts**

For kids entering 1<sup>st</sup> -6<sup>th</sup>

June 11 – August 8

### **CLOSED**

#### **Fourth of July**

Wednesday 7/4

### **CLOSED**

#### **In-Service Staff Training**

Thursday 8/9

Friday 8/10

## Enrichment Classes

### **Science**

Tuesdays & Fridays

### **Tuff Tumblers**

Thursdays

### **Soccer Shots**

Wednesdays

## **Parent Survey – Thanks for the Feedback!**

Thank you to the families who took the time to fill out our Parent Survey. Your responses affirmed what we are doing here at Little Bridges. We take pride in all areas of our program – from the curriculum and the environment to the teachers and ways we communicate with you. Of course we are not perfect, and your comments are useful to us as we plan our goals for the next school year.

## **VBS at Canyon Creek**

Canyon Creek's annual Vacation Bible School is happening here the first week of June. There will be LOTS of activity going on. Little Bridges preschool continues to run as normal and our school age children have the opportunity to attend the fun filled week to hear the Gospel. The whole church gets involved - including the high school and middle students who learn to be leaders. The week ends on Friday with a 6pm Family Night. Please join us for some food, games, worship and to watch a video of the week's events.

## **Sunscreen & Water Wednesdays**

Please apply sunscreen to your child EVERY morning as they are getting ready for school. We will re-apply mid day before your child's afternoon outside time.

Kids love water play! Look for specific information from your class about Water Wednesdays. These will start in June.

## **Fall Registration/Welcome Packets**

All children enrolled in Little Bridges for this fall will be receiving a Welcome Packet from us in July. Please read through all the material carefully and return any forms by July 20<sup>th</sup>. The packet will contain a 2018/2019 calendar, parent handbook, new Fall tuition schedule, specific class information, bios on your teachers, daily schedules and enrichment information. The first day of school this year is August 13<sup>th</sup>.

## **Children and Gun Play**

In the world of hot parenting topics, boys and imaginary gunplay ranks at the top. In a culture already filled with violent video games, TV programs and images of a real war, it can be unnerving to see an innocent child pretending to shoot someone. Yet no study has yet linked pretend gunplay to future violent behavior.

While we do discourage pretend gun play at Little Bridges, I am not convinced that we should be banning it all together, all the time. I have started to think that a more healthy response to weapons play has little to do with restricting or forbidding and everything to do with engaging children's imaginations and connecting to their inner world. Forbidding anything usually gives it far more power and excitement than it deserves.

The first reaction of many parents and educators to children engaging in violent play (not real violence) is telling them to stop and even punish their behavior. But by doing this, we are abandoning the knowledge that children are cognitively very different from adults. Children must search for different ways in which to make sense of their world and they do that through imaginative play.

It may seem trivial from an adult standpoint, but play is an essential component to childhood development. Children lack the cognitive ability that adults have to dissect and make sense of the world around them. Since they are visual and concrete learners, children explore through play. They control the situation, making it safe for them, and then explore the facets of it. To put it simply, play is exploration, thinking with your hands, control, coping, and practice. Play is the way children make sense of the world.

As a mom of four boys there was always some sort of pretend battle going on in our house with a variety of weapons. In the 80's, tinker toys and backpacks turned into Ecto Blasters and Proton Packs (Ghostbusters) or sticks and kitchen utensils became Bo Staffs and Daggers (Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles). My second set of boys born in the 90's turned Legos into Dino Morphers and Rex- Blasters (Power Rangers) or toilet plungers in Light-Sabers (Star Wars).... And all of them used their "good guy" thumb and pointer fingers to take care of the "bad guys" - running around the house and yard, ducking behind furniture and pot plants, shooting one another... just as we did when we were growing up.

In our home we made a personal choice not to buy violent toys or allow any violent TV programs – however when our 3-year-old son pointed his finger at us and said "bang bang", we knew he was playing - not being actively aggressive. (If he really wanted to hurt us or his brothers, he was perfectly capable of real hitting, kicking, biting, etc.) Our son was engaging with his world in a playful way and inviting us to connect with him - not asking for lectures. Play is the language of childhood and by playing with your children you can help them understand life complexities in a meaningful and safe way.

If you have boys, I highly suggest the book, "Raising Cain: Protecting the Emotional Life of Boys," which says "Parents often overreact when confronted with toy guns and other games: "Play is play. Violence is violence." Young children are searching for ways in which to find power and control, and play is the perfect outlet. Pirate fights, ninja attacks and Jedi rescues all give kids the ability to feel powerful and in control. To squander this behavior is telling children that they must hide these feelings from adults.

Assuming you're willing to take my word for it, what should you do? How can you allow your kids to experiment and use their imagination, guns blazing, without losing your cool? Here are a few tips:

### **Shaming Is Never Helpful**

Despite our potential discomfort, we must be careful in how we deal with children who want to play with pretend guns. The last thing you want to do is shame your child – because that can lead to masked feelings. Instead, ask open-ended questions about the gunplay, and even play along to better understand your child's perspective.

### **Use Props That Have Multiple Uses**

Real Nerf guns were not allowed in our house until first grade. Before that, guns and light sabers were made out of blocks, toothbrushes, branches, rolled up newspapers, popsicle sticks and even celery! Avoid realistic commercial toy guns. The idea is to have props that can also easily transform into a sword, thermometer, microphone, or baton. Gunplay should be just one part of a broad repertoire of play possibilities.

### **Make Decisions Together**

If your child's play is making you or another child uncomfortable, then come up with some boundaries together. Imaginative play is not "play" if someone is feeling scared or hurt. For example, in our house, even at the ages of 10 and 11, my boys were allowed to say "Gottcha!" when pelted by a Nerf gun, not "I killed you!" And, as soon as someone says "stop" or "I don't like that", the play needs to cease immediately.

### **Clarify Your Values**

A child participating in gunplay is usually yearning to understand power in relationships. By getting the "bad guys," he can, in his mind, exert some control over his world. Model ways of problem solving that are respectful of everyone concerned, and that are not hurtful either physically or emotionally.

Most of all take a deep breath and realize this is a stage, like any other. It doesn't mean your child is destined for a life of crime. Curiosity and vulnerability often lie underneath our sons' (and daughters) "Bang, Bang" bravado.