

# Little Bridges News

July 2020



## Calendar of Events

**CLOSED - Fourth of July**  
Friday 7/3

**CLOSED – Staff Training**  
Thursday 8/6  
Friday 8/7

**First Day of Pre School**  
Monday 8/10

**First Day of School Age**  
Tuesday 8/11

Our Infant/Toddler and Pre-School classes will begin on Monday 8/10.

Note that our School Age Program will start Tuesday – which is the first day of school for the SRVUSD.

**CLOSED – Labor Day**  
Monday 9/7

## Little Bridges Update

We have had a smooth start to the summer and we thank you for being patient and flexible as we all learn to run a school and teach your children while using “best practices”. Your kids are amazing and resilient – and just so, so happy to be back at school!

The entire Little Bridges staff are also thrilled to be back - doing what we love. I know the teachers miss the daily personal interactions with you as parents – and we hope to figure out ways to make communication happen in a better way as we get used to this new drop off and pick up system.

As of today, June 26<sup>th</sup>, Contra Costa County is continuing to recommend that children remain in stable groups of no more than 12. Our hope was that by July we would have updated guidelines of when this number would be increased. But so far – no new changes.

As we start to plan for the new school year, we are feeling “stuck”. Will we be able to have all our Little Bridges families back who want to come back? Can we plan to have 18 to a class or 12? What happens when classes are full and a child needs to “move up”? Even the San Ramon Valley School District hasn’t come out with a plan for the 2020/2021 school year.

So, we wait. I know so many of you have questions about the new school year – especially all you school age families. But until decisions are made by the county, the school district and licensing, we cannot make any concrete plans.

Please know that the Little Bridges admin. team have been busy designing back up plans for all the “what-ifs” and we will share with you AS SOON as we know what we are allowed to do as a child care center in the safest way possible.

The best case scenario would be we can provide care for as many children as we are licensed for. The most probable scenario (if classes stay capped at 12) is to move our older PreK students upstairs. We applied for a waiver to do this with the San Ramon Fire Department and Community Care Licensing several weeks ago. We have been cleared by the SRFD, but are still waiting to hear from CCL.

For now, all we can do is wait – and pray! Please join us and pray for continued protection and health for the entire LB community and for guidance as we plan for this coming school year.

## Little Bridges Closed For Staff Training

We will be closed for staff training days on Thursday 8/6 and Friday 8/7. We plan to address “Talking to Children about Race and Racism” as well as get our classrooms ready for the new school year.

## **Let's Talk About Racism**

Given the recent events, I have been thinking a lot about both the historical context of our country as well as the present-day issues of prejudice, systemic racism, and white supremacy. It has weighed heavily on my heart and has even led me to evaluate the curriculum we are teaching here at Little Bridges.

To kick off the new school year, our school wide theme is "I am Special", our life lesson is "We Are All Different" and our Bible learning is "God wants Me to Love and Care for Others". And while these concepts teach that each of us is unique, special and loved – I have paused to ask, "Is that enough?"

Every day I am touched by the beauty of the diversity of children we have here at Little Bridges and part of our mission is to make sure each child here is celebrated for who God made them to be – each with distinctive traits and abilities. We want every child here to know that God loves each of them them unconditionally. Additionally though, I feel led to teach our children to be aware of injustices and unfairness and empower them with courage and a voice to stand up for their own rights and the rights of others.

I am a firm believer that this starts by talking to our kids about racial differences from a very young age. When racial tensions bubble up in our country, I think we as parents feel a need to talk to our kids about these specific events, but it's important to note that teaching our children about racism and prejudice needs to be proactive. Our race conversations with our kids should include current events, but they should also be happening outside of external crises. Conversations about race need to be ongoing and interwoven into everyday life.

A study, outlined in the book *NurtureShock* discovered that most white parents don't ever talk to their kids about race - we don't point out skin color because we want our kids to be color-blind. We'll say things like "everybody's equal" but find it hard to be more specific than that. I think the idea is that we shouldn't talk about race because it reinforces racism. But teaching kids, particularly white kids, that they shouldn't talk about race isn't a step toward less racism or greater equity. Instead, it creates silence where existing systemic racism continues. It teaches white kids that they don't have to think or talk about race, and it contributes to a white, mainstream world that doesn't care about or acknowledge the ways that kids of color experience prejudice (and pride).

Children are never too young to start learning about racial difference and the importance of fighting prejudice. Because children love stories, often books can be the best way to start that conversation. I've pulled together some suggested books for varying ages that may help you start the conversation. Our teachers will be incorporating these books and others this month (and all year) to encourage truthful conversations about our differences.

Besides the attached booklist, here are a few other practical suggestions for developing an environment in which diversity is valued.

1. Take an inventory of your home's diversity. Are your toys sending a subtle message? Make it a point to buy dolls and action figures of every race. Watch how your kids react.
2. Be intentional in showing your children positive examples of other races in the media they watch. Some great examples for younger kids are Go, Diego, Go!, Little Bill, Ni Hao, Kai-Lan, Dora the Explorer, and Cooking for Kids with Luis.
3. Take inventory of your own racial biases. Be careful with the language you use around your children. Avoid making stereotypical statements or racial jokes in front of your children. (or ever).
4. Look for opportunities to immerse your family in other cultures. Try to find situations where your family is the minority. This is a great stretching and empathy building opportunity for you and your kids. Try attending a minority church event or a cultural festival. Again, observe your child's reactions and open a dialogue about how that feels.
5. Read books that depict children from other races and countries.
6. Just observe. Watch how your child plays with children who are different, whether it be skin color, gender, disability, or physical differences. Talk about it. Let your child know that you are a safe person to process their feelings and reactions with, while at the same time guiding them to accept children with differences.
7. Talk to your children about racial prejudice. Ask them to recall any they have observed. Encourage them to be advocates against bullying towards children who are different.
8. Lead by example. Widen your circle of friends and acquaintances to include people from different backgrounds, cultures and experiences.

PS...As a white parent with white kids, I know that my experiences, perspectives, and considerations differ markedly from those of parents with different ethnic backgrounds— so I realize that I know nothing about the racial landscape that minority parents have to navigate with their kids. For many minority parents, talking about race is not an option—it's essential in helping their children move through this world. My hope is to start dialogue about race and prejudice with all our children in hopes that their lives are filled with the light and love that Dr. King spoke about when he said **"Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that".**