

Little Bridges News

September 2023



Calendar of Events

CLOSED – Labor Day

Monday 9/4

School Pictures

Monday 9/11

Lambs, Ducks,
Giraffes, Jaguars

Tuesday 9/12

Frogs, Koalas, Pandas

Book Fair

9/22 – 9/29

School Age All Day Camp

9/25 & 9/26

NEGU Bakesale

School Age Outreach

Tuesday 9/26

3:30 – 5:30

Pumpkin Patch Field Trip (preschool only)

Friday 10/20

Enrichment Classes

Tuff Tumblers

(preschool only)

Tuesdays

Art & Soul Music Classes

(school age only)

Wednesdays

The Book Fair is Coming!

Little Bridges will be hosting a Book Fair the last week of September. The store will be set up in the church lobby and courtyard area.

All purchases benefit Little Bridges. We earn 25% in Scholastic Dollar rewards that we can use for more classroom books and supplies.

The book fair will also have an on-line component which will include ALL of Scholastic's inventory. The on-line fair has over 6,000 items for all ages, from board books to adult literature. Plan ahead and shop our fair for birthday, Christmas or classroom gifts. One of the best gifts you can give our teachers is a new book!

Picture Days 9/11 & 9/12

School pictures will be taken on Monday, Sept. 11th and Tuesday, Sept. 12th. All orders must be placed on-line BEFORE your picture day. No order = no photo sitting (except for the class photo). Links for picture orders were sent out this week.

IMPORTANT! Please place one order per child as the order is automatically matched to each child's individual data. Orders are not able to be split between multiple children. For a SIBLING PHOTO to be captured a separate order must be placed for the package you want to receive for that session.

Communication Friday

If you are reading this *Little Bridges News* as a hard copy, you probably found it in your child's Friday Folder. If you are reading this on your phone or laptop, you are probably found it in the class *Friday Email* or on Brightwheel. We know how important communication is to stay informed – so make every Friday a Communication Friday!

September School Age Outreach

LBSA OUTREACH PRESENTS THE 2ND ANNUAL
**COURAGEOUS CUPCAKES
BAKE SALE**
& COMPASSIONATE CHANGE COIN DRIVE
IN HONOR OF
CHILDHOOD CANCER AWARENESS MONTH
Bake Sale:
Tuesday, Sept. 26
3:30-5:30pm or until sold out!
Coin Drive runs throughout the rest of September!
BENEFITTING
NEGU
AND THE JESSIE REES FOUNDATION

Boys 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 gunplay 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 can say "Gottcha!" when pelted by a Nerf gun, not "I killed you!"

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' "Bang, Bang" bravado.