

# PARENT TIMES



Feb. 2013 Vol. 38 No. 4

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## Thank You!

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With all the things you do, the smiles you share, the laughter too, with all the dreams you make come true — it's great to have a child like you! You're always on my mind and in my heart!

We found this sweet Valentine's Day message on the internet and thought just how true it is. Our little ones are always on our minds and in our hearts and that's the reason we are here participating in NCPG so we can obtain the tools we need to be the best moms we can be. Whether it's the knowledge gained from our instructors, the camaraderie shared during "hot topics" or that cherished glass of wine at Moms Night Out. NCPG has been providing moms like us with parenting skills for over 37 years. So, as we welcome in 2013, we feel honored to be a part of this organization and hope you all continue to spread the word about how NCPG has benefitted your family and helped you be the best mom you can be!

We trust that everyone enjoyed the holidays and are ready to enjoy some fun NCPG events that have been lined up for you and your families over the next couple of months.

### NCPG Spring Event

Saturday, Feb. 16, 10:00 am to 12:00 pm at All Saints' Episcopal Day School

Our wonderful Special Events Directors, Debbie Alders and Kris Magin, have planned a morning full of fun for everyone! There will be a petting zoo with baby farm animals, bounce house and playground along with a catered lunch for the entire family!

### NCPG Annual Fundraiser – Corks for Kids

Saturday, Mar. 9 from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm at Phoenix Country Club

Our outstanding Fundraising Directors, Jennifer Rutledge and Kori Shapiro, are hard at work planning an evening to remember with great food, live music and a silent auction. Look for formal invitation in your mail soon!

Last, but not least, if you are interested in a way to give back to NCPG, contribute to the future success of the organization or just looking for a way to be more involved, we would love to have you on the NCPG Board of Directors for 2013-2014. If you are interested, please contact us at [director@ncpgaz.org](mailto:director@ncpgaz.org) for more information. We look forward to speaking to you!

See you soon,

*Lisa Barnes and Tricia Rochford*



love  
(your teeth!)

## NCPG COUPLE'S SPECIAL: \$199\*

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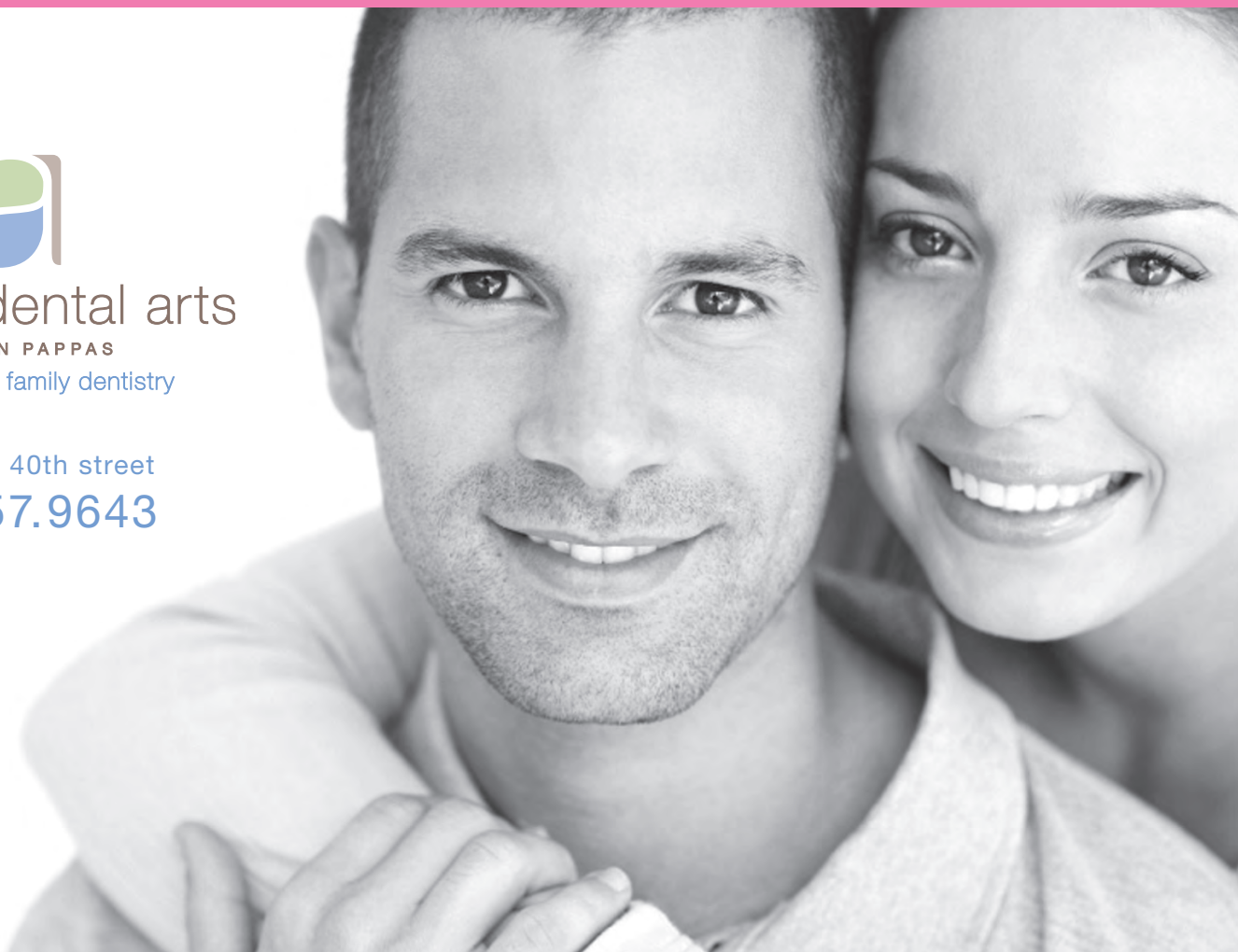
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# Join The NCPG 2013-14 Board!

We are currently looking for members who want to become more involved with NCPG. We have 19 Board positions, most of which work with a partner to keep NCPG running efficiently and successfully. If you are interested in joining the Board for next year or know someone who would be a great addition, we would love to speak with you! Please contact Lisa and Tricia at [director@ncpgaz.org](mailto:director@ncpgaz.org)

## Valentine's Day Ideas for Kids

By Kelly Ladd Sanchez, [parenting.com](http://parenting.com)

Get your family together for Valentine's Day with these fun activities:

**Cozy up on the couch.** Bring out the pillows and blankets, and get comfy for a V-Day favorite, like A Charlie Brown Valentine, or a sweet Disney classic, like Lady and the Tramp.

**Add a splash of color.** Deck out your dining room in red, white, and pink with streamers and heart-shaped place mats made from construction paper. Heck, go ahead and decorate yourselves with temporary heart tattoos from [Tattooofun.com](http://Tattooofun.com).



**Eat in Cupid's kitchen.** Put a twist on dinner with a Cupid-inspired menu. Serve a Slice of Heaven (pizza) and In the Clouds (a root-beer float) for dessert.

**Create a house of hearts.** Hide a few construction-paper hearts all over the house for the kids to find, suggests Kim Stoegebauer, a children's party designer and blogger with [Thetomkatstudio.com](http://Thetomkatstudio.com). The one who finds the most wins a special V-day treat, like a new book.

**Say "I love you."** Go around the table and have everyone share five reasons they love each member of the family, or have them write down their lists beforehand and pass them out at dinner.

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*NCPG is a non-profit, non-denominational organization providing classes to parents of infant to pre-school age children.*

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[www.ncpgaz.org](http://www.ncpgaz.org)



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## Parent Times

*Members, this monthly newsletter is for YOUR benefit, so we want to ensure our team is publishing content that is valuable, useful, informative, and fun! We don't want this to be something that gets lost in your stack of mail. Please let us know if you have suggestions, comments, concerns, or any input that would help us to improve this publication. Thanks for your help!*



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# A Good Preschool for Your Child

by the National Association for the Education of Young Children — Promoting excellence in early childhood education.

In a very real sense, your child is an explorer who faces a future in unknown territory. As a parent you are doing everything you can to get her ready for this great adventure.

Many of the skills your child will need in the years to come you can only guess at. A generation ago, whoever thought that young children would use computers, let alone tablets and smart phones? But we can be sure of some things. Those who succeed will have the flexibility of mind to find solutions to problems they encounter. They will be curious about how things work. They will be able to get along with and work well with others. They will continue to learn and adapt as their world continues to change. As crucial as it is to master life skills for the future, your child's present life is what's important now. Addressing your child's needs now will help her prepare for the future.

## How Preschoolers Learn

Preschooler, ages 3-5, follow their own individual developmental patterns, which may vary greatly from child to child. Nevertheless, at this age children learn best when they:

- **Feel safe and secure in their environment.** Children should feel that their teachers like having them around and that they are important to them and to the classmates. Children learn best when activities and materials offer just enough challenge—they are neither so easy that they are boring nor so difficult that they lead to frustration. For instance, most preschoolers don't have the self-regulation skills needed to sit still and listen to an adult talking for long periods of time. Instead, they need to be actively involved and engaged in their learning.
- **Can connect what they learn with past experiences and current interests.** Learners of any age—and especially young children—understand and remember new things that relate to the experiences, knowledge, and skills they already have. A new thread of learning stays with the child when it is part of a fabric, not an isolated strand.
- **Have opportunities to explore and play.** Preschoolers need materials and equipment that will spark their interest: they thrive when they are able to experiment, test things out for themselves, and draw their own conclusions. For instance, when a preschooler sets up boards at different heights and watches how far marbles roll down each one, he is learning about inclined planes and experiencing the scientific method.

## Good Preschool Programs Promote Learning and Development

In quality preschool programs, the curriculum, teaching strategies, and environment reflect research-based knowledge about the way children develop and learn. Such programs are said to be developmentally appropriate. Teachers in programs like these consider the strengths, interests, and needs, as well as the culture and home language, of each child in the group.

Here's how a developmentally appropriate program approaches important areas of development for preschoolers.

### Intellectual Development

Three- to 5-year-olds are most likely to remember concepts and strategies learned through hands-on experience. Effective preschool teachers allow ample time for experimentation. They watch closely and take advantage of opportunities to extend children's play and challenge their thinking and reasoning processes. If a child is looking at the bean plants on the windowsill, for instance, the teacher might ask, "Why do you think some of the plants are taller than the other ones?"

Through sand and water play and constructing with blocks, children begin to learn the basics of scientific and mathematical concepts—what floats or balances and what doesn't; what happens when you pour sand from a tall, skinny container into a short, fat one; how many square blocks equal one long rectangular block.

Teachers promote language and literacy by reading stories aloud, encouraging children to talk about their work, creating a classroom environment rich in different examples and uses of print (in English and children's home languages), and helping children turn their ideas and artwork into books. They encourage children to talk with each other and engage them in meaningful conversations about topics of interest to the children.

A variety of art materials, such as markers, crayons, paints, and colored papers, is readily accessible to the children and within their reach. Teachers invite children to express their feelings and ideas through these media.

### Social Development

The teacher actively fosters a sense of community within the group. For

instance, photos of children's families are prominently displayed; different aspects of the children's homes, cultures, and home languages are part of the classroom; and children sometimes work on group projects (such as creating a mural). Every child feels like he or she belongs. Children learn that it's important to respect others, despite differences, and to work together as a team.

The teacher observes and responds as needed to help children resolve social conflicts, such as fights over toys. He talks to the children about what has happened and helps them come up with a solution acceptable to all—thus helping children build problem solving skills they can use in the future. Most preschoolers want to be friends with their peers, but lack the verbal skills and ability to see the other child's point of view. Teachers help them think through what happened and find the words they need to express their feelings and their suggestions for solving the problem.

Typically, 3-year-olds can follow simple directions and enjoy classroom tasks such as setting the table for lunch or watering the garden. Most 4- and 5-year-olds can pour juice and get their own snacks.

Four-year-olds begin to engage in real cooperative play ("I'll be the baker," one child says, "and you come to my store to buy cupcakes"). Five-year-olds expand their play, incorporating complex props and scenarios. Teachers provide stimulating opportunities and materials. They also make sure that 3-year-olds, who like sitting next to each other and chatting while they use toys (associative play), have the space to do so.

## Large Motor Development

Three- and 4-year-olds need to move their bodies frequently, so teachers plan plenty of well-supervised physical activities throughout the day. These activities challenge children, but they also can be adapted to accommodate a wide range of abilities. For instance, a teacher might set up a low four-inch-wide balance beam for 3-year-olds, while older children have access to a three-inch beam.

Inside the classroom, preschoolers dance to music, exercise ("jump in a circle" as the teacher suggests), and play games that promote coordination ("Simon says, 'Stand on one foot and touch your nose'").

## Small Motor Development

Since 3- and 4-year-olds in any given classroom vary in their small motor dexterity, teachers provide a wide range of materials for various levels of development. At this age, children practice and hone their fine-motor coordination by playing with pegboards, playdough, blocks, Duplos and Legos, and large beads.

Teachers encourage children to dress themselves. But if a child becomes frustrated in zipping her coat, a teacher comes to her aid.

Three- and 4-year-olds can pour juice from small, manageable containers into their cups and wipe up any spills.

## Language Development

Preschoolers improve their language skills by listening to and speaking with adults. Teachers talk to the children at center time and in small groups. They also make sure to have individual conversations with each child throughout the course of the day.

Children this age frequently talk outloud to themselves while they are playing. ("Don't make the building break," a child says as he adds another block to his tower.) Teachers know the value of this private speech and do not discourage it.

Preschoolers learn simple rhymes, songs, and finger plays. They are encouraged to talk about what they are doing during the day and to tell simple stories.

## The Integrated Curriculum

In a good preschool classroom, teachers focus on all areas of learning at a time. They pay attention to children's interests and develop themes or projects through which the children can expand their knowledge and skills in various areas. Children are able to reach a deeper understanding of a subject when they can make connections across several disciplines. For instance, the class visits a pizza shop and learns about making and serving pizza to customers. Watching the dough rise leads to discussions about cause and effect and related science topics. Back in the classroom the children set up a restaurant and use math skills as they set prices and collect payment for cheese versus pepperoni pizzas. They also write orders on pads of paper and draw pictures of their trip to the restaurant and tell stories about the people they met there (language and literacy). In a developmentally appropriate preschool program, children will learn the following:

- **Language and literacy skills:** Adults read to children every day, sometimes one-to-one and other times in a group. They invite children to join in while reading books with repetitive or rhyming words and phrases, and they engage children in discussions about the characters, setting, and plot. Throughout the day, children talk with adults and with other children. Younger children begin to experiment with writing, at times making scribbles (for example, under a picture) that they identify as writing. Some children can write their names or other short words; others are not ready to do so. Teachers plan learning experiences that help children hear distinctions and patterns in language sounds and begin to make some letter-sound connections. Teachers support literacy learning in English and in the children's home language.
- **Mathematics and science:** When children construct with blocks, they learn about measurement (how many small blocks in a line it takes to equal a bigger block) and physics (whether things will balance, for example). They talk about the weather every day, go on nature walks, and measure and record the changes in the environment. Children learn about levers and gears and other wonders.
- **Social studies:** Children learn about their communities and about local, national, or world events of interest to them. Teachers plan experiences that make these events meaningful to children this age. Teachers include and show respect for the children's home cultures while connecting children's experiences to those of children and families in other places.
- **Art, music, drama, and dance:** The children have easy access to a wide variety of dress-up clothes and props they need for dramatic play. Daily, there are times for singing songs and listening and moving to music. Songs and music connect children to their home languages and cultures. The classroom is well stocked with crayons and markers (which 3- to 4-year-olds can easily manipulate) as well as paints and paper, and children are encouraged to express themselves through these media.



# News & Events



## NCPG Spring Event

Feb 16, 10am-Noon

All Saints' Episcopal Day School

Please join us this Saturday, February 16 from 10.00 am - 12.00 pm, for a morning full of family fun for everyone! There will be plenty of tents for shade and blankets to relax and chat with other families. For little ones' fun, there will be a petting zoo with baby farm animals, bounce house and playground. Bring your cameras to capture photos of your little ones having a blast.

A catered lunch will also be provided, so bring your appetite. The event will be set up on the far back playground and playing field at All Saints' Episcopal Day School. We hope you can make it!

## NCPG Class Calendar

This is just a reminder of our remaining class dates and our class schedule:

### Day Classes

- Nursery Opens at 8:45am
- Refreshments are served in Nelson Hall from 9am to 9:25am
- Classes are held from 9:30am to 11:30am (Please be on time to participate in "Hot Topics")
- Nursery closes at 11:35am
- Pre-Infant class is from 11:45am to 1:45pm
  - February 27th
  - March 13th
  - March 27th
  - April 10th
  - April 24th
  - May 1st

### Evening Classes

- Classes are held from 6:15pm to 8:15pm
- February 20th
  - March 6th
  - March 20th
  - April 3rd
  - April 17th
  - May 8th



## "Corks For Kids" Annual Fundraiser Party & Silent Auction

March 9, 2013, 6pm - 9pm  
Phoenix Country Club

Tickets are on sale now! You can purchase your tickets with cash, check or credit card for \$35 each or \$60 per couple at all pre-class breakfasts leading up to the event or you can visit [www.ncpgaz.org](http://www.ncpgaz.org) to register and pay online. Tickets will not be sold at the door and please note that all credit card purchases will be charged a 4% processing fee.

***This is an event you won't want to miss!***

We will have a Silent Auction, Light Dinner, Live Music and Cash Bar.

***Please wear cocktail attire.***

We hope you will all come out to support NCPG and enjoy a really fun evening.

For more information, please contact Kori and Jennifer at [fundraising@ncpgaz.org](mailto:fundraising@ncpgaz.org)







# Hello!



Please welcome these new additions to our NCPG family!



**Jasper Thomas Alders**

December 11, 2012

Weight: 7 lbs 2.3 oz

Height: 21 inches

Parents: Debbie & Michael

Big Brothers: Darian (2) & Logan (9)



**Lyla Anna Shapiro**

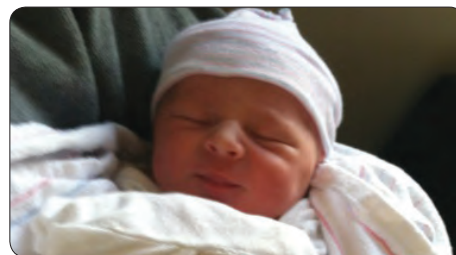
December 12, 2012

Weight: 7 lbs 8 oz

Height: 19.5 inches

Parents: Kori & Sean

Big Sister: Scarlette (3 yrs, 10 mo)



**Jackson "Jack" Scott Keating**

December 27, 2012

Weight: 7 lbs 10 oz

Height: 20 inches

Parents: Caroline & Jim



**Kathryn "Khaki" Taylor Livak**

January 7, 2013

Weight: 8 lbs

Height: 20.5 inches

Parents: Molly & Luke

Big Sister: Alice (15 mo)



**Chester Charles Burley, V ("Chase")**

January 8, 2013

Weight: 7 lbs 14 oz

Height: 21 inches

Parents: Shelby & Chip

Big Sister: Sutton (3)

## Mom's Night Out

Thanks to all the moms who made it out to Timo Wine Bar on January 24th. We had a blast!



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Pueblo, an "A" school, offers free full-day Kindergarten, pre-K, library, music, art, P.E., band, strings, computers, and extracurricular activities. Valley-wide open enrollment available for K-1 students.

**Pueblo Elementary School**

Home of the "Dust Devils"

For more information or to schedule a tour, please call (480) 484-3100 or visit <http://pueblo.susd.org>

# February Things to Do!

## Circus Vargas Through Feb 18

One of the last traveling Big Top Circus acts featuring elaborate illusions, unbelievable feats of courage and amazing acts of acrobatic and aerial artistry. Call for times. \$25-\$65 ages 11 & up, \$20-\$55 ages 2-10. Feb 1-4 at Metrocenter Mall, 9617 N Metro Pkwy W; Feb 7-11 at Superstition Springs Center, 6555 E Southern Ave, Mesa; Feb 14-18 at The Pavilions at Talking Stick, 9180 E Indian Bend Rd, Scottsdale. 877-468-3861 or [circusvargas.com](http://circusvargas.com)



## A Brown Bear, a Moon and a Caterpillar: Treasured Stories by Eric Carle Sun Feb 24

Performance celebrates three of author Eric Carle's most beloved tales with music, visual effects and innovative puppetry.

Performed by the Mermaid Theatre of Nova Scotia. 3 & 5pm. \$9-\$29. Scottsdale Center for the Performing Arts, 7380 E 2nd St, Scottsdale. 480-499-TKTS (8587) or [scottsdaleperformingarts.org](http://scottsdaleperformingarts.org)

## Canyon Condor Wed-Sun Feb 20-Mar 3

Informative, musical show that follows a baby condor as he explores life in the Grand Canyon. 10am Wed-Sat, 2pm Sat-Sun. \$9 adults, \$6 children, under 2 free. Reservations recommended. Great Arizona Puppet Theater, 302 W Latham St. 602-262-2050 or [azpuppets.org](http://azpuppets.org)

## Click Clack Moo: Cows That Type Sat-Sun Jan 20-Mar 3

When the animals of Farmer Brown's farm get fed up with their working conditions, they take to their typewriters and turn the barn upside down. Presented by Childsplay. 1 & 4pm Sat, 1pm Sun; preview Sun Jan 20 at 4pm. \$12-\$25; \$12 preview. Tempe Center for the Arts, 700 W Rio Salado Pkwy, Tempe. 480-350-2822 or [childsplayaz.org](http://childsplayaz.org)

## Disney's Little Mermaid Jr Fri-Sun Feb 22-Mar 24

Ariel, the mermaid, longs to leave the sea behind and live on land. 7:30pm Fri-Sat, 1 & 3pm Sat-Sun. \$15. Reservations recommended. Scottsdale Desert Stages Theatre, 4720 N Scottsdale Rd, Scottsdale. 480-483-1664 or [desertstages.org](http://desertstages.org)

## Rapunzel Fri-Sun Feb 8-24

The Brothers Grimm fairytale comes to life onstage. 7:30pm Fri, noon & 3:30pm Sat, 12:30 & 4pm Sun. \$20. Valley Youth Theatre, 525 N 1st St. 602-253-8188 x2 or [vyt.com](http://vyt.com)

## Three Little Kittens-The Mewsical Wed-Sun Feb 6-17

A sing-along show with the kittens who lost their mittens. 10am Wed-Sat, 2pm Sat-Sun. \$9 adults, \$6 children, under 2 free. Reservations recommended. Great Arizona Puppet Theater, 302 W Latham. 602-262-2050 or [azpuppets.org](http://azpuppets.org)

## Da Vinci - The Genius Feb 10-June 9

The most comprehensive exhibition on Leonardo da Vinci brings to life the full range of his genius as an inventor, artist, scientist, anatomist, engineer, architect, sculptor and philosopher. 10am-5pm. \$26.95 adults, \$20 ages 3-17 (\$8-\$10 members); includes general admission to the center. Arizona Science Center, 600 E Washington St. 602-716-2028 or [azscience.org](http://azscience.org)

## Children's Dental Health Month

All ages. The Tooth Fairy will visit the museum to brighten kids' smiles with her puppet show. Presented by Delta Dental of Arizona. 9:30, 10:30 & 11:30am. Included with admission: \$11, under 1 and members free. Children's Museum of Phoenix, 215 N 7th St. 602-253-0501 or [childrensmuseumofphoenix.org](http://childrensmuseumofphoenix.org)

## McCormick-Stillman Railroad Park's Exclusively Little Free Event March 2nd 10:00a.m. - 3:00p.m.

This special event is held for children six years and younger and is a FREE event. The activities include game booths, moonwalks, face painting, petting zoo, health demonstrations and entertainment! Children are invited to bring their favorite stuffed animal and enter it in the Stuffed Animal Contest. Prizes will be awarded to the most loved, cutest and best dressed. Train & Carousel rides are available for \$2.00 each with children under three riding free with a paying adult.





## Arizona Renaissance Festival February 9th through March 31st

The Arizona Renaissance Festival is a wonderful combination of amusement park, shows, comedy, music, feats of daring, street performers, shopping, and indulging. Open every Saturday and Sunday (rain or shine) from 10am to 6pm from February 9th through March 31st as well as President's Day. Take State Highway 60 East, east of Apache Junction, just east of Gold Canyon Golf Resort. Parking is free.



Advance discount tickets to the Arizona Renaissance Festival are available at Fry's Stores and Fry's Marketplace, \$20 for adults, \$10 for children 5-12. Children under 5 are free. Tickets are \$2 more if purchased at the event. Senior (60+) tickets can be purchased at the Festival Ticket Booth for \$19. The admission price includes parking, all entertainment shows, including the Tournament Jousting and Birds of Prey show. It does not include the purchase of arts and craft items, food or beverages, or rides and games. Tickets may also be purchased online at [www.royalfaires.com](http://www.royalfaires.com) and

printed from your own computer. Those are \$21 for adults and \$12 for children with no additional service fees. You can also buy a season pass that's valid for any festival day.

## Camp Fair February 23-24

Join us for our 10th Annual Camp Fair! Meet with day camps around the Valley and overnight camps around Arizona, throughout the Southwest and across the country. Talk with camp staff and directors, pick up registration information, ask questions and find out just how fun the camp experience can be! Visit <http://www.raisingarizonakids.com/camp-fair/> for a complete list of participating camp exhibitors.



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# Raising Successful Children

by Mindy Sobraske, Paradise Valley United Methodist Church Preschool Director



“Tiger Mom” and “Helicopter Parent” are common names used to describe certain parenting styles. These terms are often thought of and discussed when talking about over-parenting and trying to determine if over-parenting helps or hurts in raising successful children.

As parents, we all want our children to be happy, successful and have bright futures filled with endless opportunities. How do we make sure all of these good things happen for our children? Many of us find ourselves drawn to the idea that with just a bit more “parental elbow grease” we can make sure our children surpass every milestone that we as parents view as being successful.



Authoritative parents are generally more involved, responsive, and set high expectations while respecting their child’s autonomy. These types of parents generally raise children who do better academically, psychologically and socially than children whose parents are either permissive and less involved, or controlling and more involved.



Dr. Carol Dweck, a social and developmental psychologist at Stanford University, has found that authoritative parents actually help cultivate motivation in their children. Dr. Dweck found that telling children how bright and capable they are and praising their talents and abilities can actually rattle their confidence. When children are tackling new or more difficult challenges there is the risk of losing one’s status as “smart” if they are not successful. It also deprives children of the thrill of choosing to learn, explore and work on things they are interested in, because there is an underlying need and concern with meeting parental expectations and approval versus just simply enjoying the process.



The happiest, most successful children have parents who do not do things for them that they are capable of doing; and do not do things for their children that satisfy their own needs rather than the needs of the child.

The central task of growing up is to develop a sense of self that is autonomous, confident and generally in accord with reality. Once your child is capable of doing something, congratulate yourself on a job well done and move on. Continued, unnecessary intervention makes your child feel bad about himself (if they’re young) or angry at you (if they’re a teenager).

While doing things for your child unnecessarily or prematurely can reduce motivation and increase dependency, it is the inability to maintain parental boundaries that most damages child development. When we do things for our children out of our own needs rather than theirs, it forces them to circumvent the most critical task of childhood: to develop a robust sense of self.

So how do parents find the courage to discard the malpractice of over parenting? It can be hard to swim upstream and to resist peer pressure. But we must remember that children thrive best in an environment that is reliable, available, consistent and noninterfering.

A loving parent is warm, willing to set limits and unwilling to breach a child’s psychological boundaries by invoking shame or guilt. Parents must acknowledge their own anxiety. Your job is to know your child well enough to make a good call about whether he or she can manage a particular situation.

Parents also have to be clear about their own values. Children watch us closely. If you want your children to be able to stand up for their values, you have to do the same. Parents also have to make sure their own lives are fulfilling. There is no parent more vulnerable to the excesses of over-parenting than an unhappy parent. One of the most important things we do for our children is to present them with a version of adult life that is appealing and worth striving for.



## NCPG Philanthropy Donations

Thank you to NCPG members for all of your contributions toward our philanthropies this year. We are helping to make a difference in our community.

We donated 25 new toys to Toys for Tots, which were given to less fortunate Phoenix area children to help brighten their Christmas.

We also donated several shopping bags full of sippy cups, children’s dinnerware, diapers, wipes, developmental toys and an infant car seat to the International Rescue Committee (IRC). All of our contributions will be used for IRC’s International Maternity Program and Early Childhood Care Program. The IRC International Maternity Program partners with St. Joseph’s Hospital and Medical Center and Phoenix Baptist Hospital to provide pre and post-natal care to refugees up to six months following delivery. Participants receive a car seat to safely transport their infant to medical appointments. The IRC Early Childhood Care Program helps families with children establish a medical home and establish routine preventative health behaviors.

***Thank you again to all of our members who contributed to these worthy causes.***










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# What's the Difference Between Discipline and Punishment?

by Barb Grady

Discipline comes from the word “disciple” and it means to teach. It's our job as parents to teach our kids what is OK and what is not OK. We teach children by the example we set. The number one determinant of whether discipline is effective or not is how we are when we implement it. Discipline leaves a child's sense of self intact and is respectful. Discipline teaches children how to be self controlled and creates an internal locus of control. Children behave appropriately because it's the right thing to do—not because they are afraid of being punished.

Punishment used to be synonymous with discipline but the world has changed and so has what is considered harmful disciplinary measures: physical punishment, yelling, criticizing, blaming, and shaming. Punishment is used to control a child, is hurtful to children and creates an external locus of control. The yard stick I use to measure the difference is if the 60 Minutes camera was filming you and showing it to America later that night would you be proud of how you handled the situation?

## How is the “safe place” different from “time out?”

A time-out is an enforced time alone used as a consequence for unwanted behavior. Many parents and early child educators use time-outs as a form of discipline as it has become an accepted method of behavior management. It is thought to be a humane and sensitive means of disciplining children because using time-out appears less injurious than hitting, spanking, or yelling. The technique can be deceptive because immediate behavior is controlled and extinguished. Some early childhood experts have suggested the use of time-outs as a preferred method for setting limits with preschool children. According to many other educators and psychologists, however, time-out is not as innocent as it seems and can be a harmful way to discipline children and especially toddlers. In fact, the National Association for the Education of Young Children includes the use of time-out in a list of harmful disciplinary measures.

A safe place is different from a time out in that it creates emotional safety and is not meant to be used as discipline.

A safe place is where a child can go to calm down and be removed from a situation. Discipline begins when both the parent and the child are calm.

So whom do you believe? In such cases, I try it out and see if it works for my kids and me. I consciously chose to raise my children differently from the way I was raised. My parents were

extremely authoritarian and believed that children were to be controlled by them rather than taught how to be self-controlled. Beneath the surface, time-out is an authoritarian approach and only works with children trained to comply with the power and authority of adults. Children who have not been brought up in an authoritarian environment will likely refuse to go to another room or sit in a chair. Both my kids refused to comply with the time-out by staying in their room. I actually remember a time with my oldest daughter where I was outside her bedroom door, holding the door shut with all my might, to keep my daughter in there. I became frustrated, angry, and finally had to laugh at the ridiculous situation. Fortunately, I was able to recover my sense of humor and the loss of my dignity. I would not have wanted the 20/20 cameras rolling on that one. In hindsight, I am grateful to have children without a history of punitive authoritarianism that produces children docile enough to obey.

From a child's point of view, time-out is definitely experienced as punishment. Who wants to be isolated from the group and totally ignored? Time-out can be perceived by children as abandonment and loss of love. Children under the age of seven do not have the capacity to process words in the same way that adults do. Being isolated and ignored is interpreted as “Nobody wants to be with me right now. Therefore, I must be bad and unlovable.” No loving words, however well intended, can override this feeling of rejection. Nothing is more frightening for a child than the withdrawal of love. Along with the fear come insecurity, anger, confusion, resentment, and low self-esteem. Time-out can also cause embarrassment and humiliation, especially when used in the presence of other children. The young child has to have a deep sense of psychological safety that refers to feeling connected and supported. Safety grows out of being able to trust people to respond positively and help them make sense of their own experience.

Painful feelings are one consideration, but the information conveyed about human relationships is another. What messages are we giving our children demonstrating that love and attention are commodities to be doled out or withheld for purposes of controlling others? Is this a conflict resolution skill that will be useful to them? How will it influence their ability to interact with friends, and someday a spouse and coworkers?

Time-out is usually an undesirable practice for several reasons:

1. An imposed, external control of behavior circumvents a child's need to build internal controls. She may come to rely on adult intervention, and the development of autonomous problem solving may be affected. The child may begin to feel ineffectual when trying to resolve her conflicts independently. Intervention that involves a time-out makes a child feel powerless, so her feelings of being ineffectual become self-fulfilling.
2. The adult's need to maintain order is met by banishing a young child to a time-out chair/room, but the child's needs are not addressed. Time-out does not teach the child alternative strategies.
3. The repeated use of time-out can have a negative effect on a child's developing sense of self-worth and self-confidence. A child may come to believe that his own feelings and desires have little value because adults' feelings and needs consistently take precedence.

*(continued on back cover)*

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# Valentine's Day Hand Print Craft

Here are two versions of the same idea. It's a really simple and impressive idea of two hand prints inside a big heart. It makes a beautiful and memorable gift.



## Version 1

### Materials:

- 1 large pink construction paper heart
- red glitter
- pencil
- glue
- scissors

### Directions:

1. Cut or tear out a pink heart large enough to fit both hands into.
2. Trace both hands inside with a pencil.
3. Spread glue around inside the hand prints with your finger.
4. Sprinkle glitter all over. Pour off the excess. The picture here used a LOT of glitter.
5. If desired, add a lacy border to your heart.



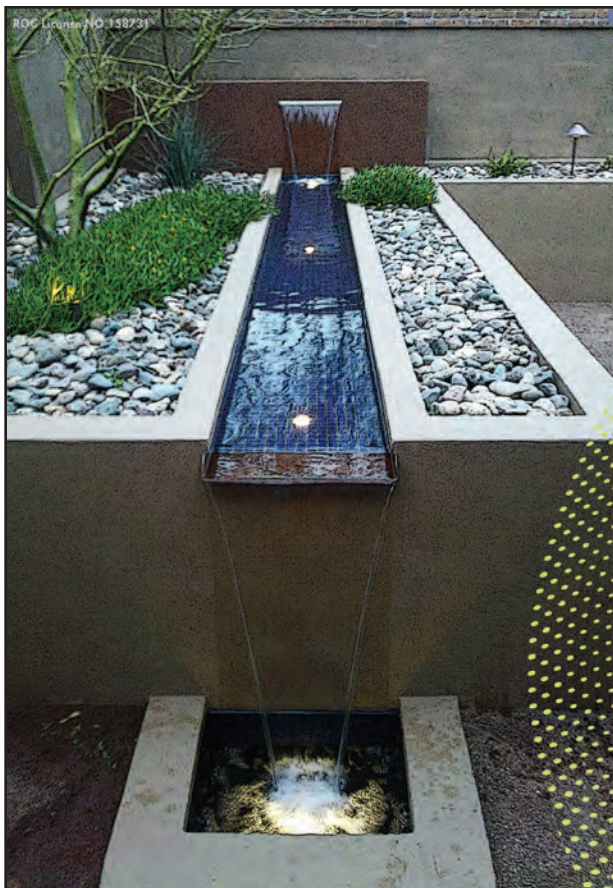
## Version 2

### Materials:

- white paper
- red and pink paint
- pencil
- glitter (optional)

### Directions:

1. Draw a large heart on the white paper.
2. Press one pink and one red hand print inside as shown.
3. Sprinkle with glitter while it's wet, if desired. Allow to dry.
4. Write a Valentine's Day message on the heart



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4. The indirect relationship between action and consequences is confusing to young children. Lillian Katz writes, "If the child's mental ability is reasonably normal, it is not necessary to circumvent the mind by insisting on a time-out chair. The cognitive connection between sitting on a particular chair and granting another child's request for a turn must be fairly obscure if not confusing to a four-year-old." Katz points out that four-year-olds do not understand the relationship between behavior and the resulting punishment. Imagine the bewilderment of an even less experienced child (toddler).
5. Opportunities for valuable learning experiences are forfeited during these periods of isolation. Toddlers benefit from direct and immediate assistance while they acquire the tools to help them resolve their difficulties independently. Young children need a present and alert caregiver. The presence of an adult who can reflect feelings and break down complexities into manageable terms helps resolve problems or keeps them from occurring.

Many conflicts arise because young children's normal experimentation with their rapidly developing independence. A basic social and emotional challenge for toddlers is learning how to resolve their conflict between their drive for autonomy and their dependence on adults. They need to feel they have some control.

Adults can help a young child have an appropriate amount of control by giving frequent opportunities to make choices and decisions. Too many choices can be confusing though. Toddlers are also managing the complexities of language. Their ability to verbalize their needs and desires is limited. Adults can model effective means of communication and demonstrate how to negotiate. Responsive caregivers can verbally interpret the relationship between the child's action and another person's response.

Taking toddlers by the hand and demanding that they "Say you're sorry!" does them little service. The concept of "sorry" is complex for two-year-olds to understand. Toddlers are egocentric and unable to see the world from another's point of view. They are not yet able to be truly sorry and forcing them to say that they are contradicts their true feelings. A child may come to believe that saying, "I'm sorry," resolves the conflict and that he is no longer responsible for the situation.

Similarly, "Take turns!" and "Share!" can be confusing demands for most very young children. I have noticed that when a parent or teacher automatically tells a toddler, "Use your words!" the response is usually a blank look. I think that if the child could use her words, she probably would. What do you suppose "Use your words" means to a two-year-old? What is a word? In response to the query, "How would it feel if I took your truck?" the toddler might say, if she could, "I'm not even sure what I feel right now!" Even very bright toddlers do not comprehend linguistic abstractions such as these. Verbal guidance must be regulated by what the child is able to understand and relevant to what the child is doing. Consequently, I like the term time-in which implies that responsive caregivers are there to mirror the child's feelings, because when we try to change a behavior without addressing feelings and needs, we do not help children very much at all. Why? Because the underlying problem is still there. Teaching children to conform to our wishes does not resolve the deeper issues. Far more helpful than isolation is an attentive listener who can encourage the expression of honest feelings.

The healthy release provided by talking, crying, or raging, may even prevent the occurrence of unwanted behavior. Holding children who are out of control is much more effective than silencing them. Holding creates safety and warmth, inviting the expression of genuine feelings amid the power not of a parent, but of the parent-child bond. It is paradoxical yet true: children are most in need of loving attention when they act least deserving of it. Telling a child to sit quietly rarely accomplishes anything constructive.

### Helpful Practices for Guiding Toddlers

- Look for underlying needs. Give your child something to play with while waiting in line.
- Look for underlying feelings. If your child hits his baby sister, encourage him to tell you why he is upset, and to express his anger and jealousy in harmless ways.
- Change the environment. It's easier than trying to change the child.
- Find acceptable alternatives and redirect your child's behavior.
- Demonstrate how you want your child to behave.
- Give information and reasons.
- Be clear as you explain limits and expectations. For example, you can say, "You may not bite Tommy! That hurts! You can bite an apple."
- Be consistent. Limits should be predictable.
- Have age appropriate expectations. A toddler should not be expected to share a favorite toy.
- Take social conflicts seriously. Listen to children: physically get down to their level and make eye contact. Empathize equally with all children involved in a conflict.
- Use a positive approach for guidance. For example, "Please give Jody some blocks" instead of "Don't take all the blocks." Tell children what you want them to do, rather than what you do not want.
- Give children a chance to try again.
- Give young children adequate time. Children need to process, then act on the information they are given.
- Give choices rather than commands.
- Give I-messages.
- Hold, hold, and hold. This expression of love enables children who are acting aggressively or obnoxiously to channel their pent-up feelings into healing tears.
- Take a parental time-out. Leave the room and do whatever you need to do to (cry, call a friend, meditate, take a shower) to regain your sense of composure and good judgment.

It is not necessary to isolate children or withdraw our love to teach them how to "behave." In fact, it is entirely possible to help children learn to become cooperative and decent members of society without ever controlling them, without issuing punishments or rewards of any kind. No quick and easy method will solve every conflict. Instead, we need to treat each situation as the unique challenge that it is and be flexible and creative while giving our children the love and respect they deserve. Time-out or time-in...it's your choice.

