


Parent Times

September 2020





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President's Corner

To the entire North Central Parenting Group community:

WELCOME! We are so excited to have you all with us as we kick off our 36th year of NCPG!

These past several months have been filled with challenges and uncertainties for families everywhere! Despite the numerous hardships, one cannot deny the shift in perspective and a deepened sense of gratitude for so many of us. As parents, we need NCPG now more than ever! We are here and committed to supporting and caring for one another, whether in-person or virtually, and our NCPG Family will be stronger for it!

There is no question that this is a messy time in all of our lives, so please be reassured that you are not alone in the challenges you face. We encourage you to please COME AS YOU ARE! Although the 2020-2021 NCPG year presents its own challenges, your Board has been hard at work over the summer preparing for a great year of learning, growing, friendship, and fun - no matter the circumstances! We have a wonderful, albeit different, lineup planned full of opportunities for you to continue to grow connections within this community.

We will initially be resuming classes in a **Virtual Learning Environment** (via Zoom) with the hope of returning to in-person classes once our community COVID-19 benchmark's have consistently been met and our meeting facility, Saint Barnabas on the Desert, has reopened to groups. We held a virtual teacher orientation this year which included zoom training so our wonderful teachers are well-versed in successful and effective virtual meetings. All NCPG instructors have been provided with Zoom memberships for conducting virtual classes in a consistent manner organization-wide (at the time and date of our regularly scheduled classes - see the full [2020-2021 Class Schedule here](#)). Your instructor will be communicating with you directly to provide your class syllabus and any relevant materials prior to our first class on Wednesday, September 9.

We are thrilled to announce that we will be hosting multiple **All-Class Guest Speakers** this year, as a supplement to your individual classes, as well! Our first speaker will be **Dr. Angela Veesenmeyer**, a board certified Pediatrician and Pediatric Infectious Disease physician in Phoenix, speaking on "COVID + Kids" Wednesday, October 21 at 10am. More details are forthcoming!

Additionally, we've welcomed a few **New Teachers** to our impressive roster, so please help us in welcoming: Chelsea Kunde (Class 3A), Emma Porter (Class 4A), and Jennette Zander (Pre-K/Junior Kindergarten). We are so glad to have them all along with our wonderful returning NCPG instructors.


THANK YOU in advance for your continued participation, support, and commitment. We are all fortunate to be a part of this amazing community, and right now this community needs you. It is our greatest hope that NCPG will continue to serve parents in our community long after this pandemic passes. In order for this to be possible, we will need everyone's understanding (and advocacy) as we navigate the current obstacles that are simply outside of our control. Although we are not able to start our meetings in-person, we are working closely with our Social and Special Events Directors to come up with creative and fun ways for us to stay connected during this unique time. While we do not know what the future holds, we are committed to providing valuable resources and support to our members in the safest way possible.

Lastly, thank you for the great honor of serving as your President for a second year! To the entire **2020-2021 NCPG Board**, thank you for your commitment and hard work this summer. I am forever grateful for the opportunity to learn from and volunteer alongside such strong women. To our **NCPG Members**, there are many ways to get involved in NCPG, and it's never too early to start thinking about a Board position for next year. If you are interested or have questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me personally. Our shared goal for our 2020-2021 NCPG Board of Directors is to be as transparent and inclusive as possible, and we sincerely appreciate your support and welcome your feedback. While we are faced with new challenges due to COVID-19, I am confident that we will make this our best year yet!

If you have any questions or would like more specifics on anything, please email me any time. **Please know your flexibility and understanding during this time is greatly appreciated.** We will be in contact with any additional updates and details as they are available. Sending you and yours all my best for continued health and happiness! Stay well! xo

Best regards,

Megan Garvey
NCPG President 2019-2021
president@ncpgaz.org





north central parenting group



2020-2021 Board of Directors

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NCPG is a non-profit, non-denominational organization providing classes to parents of infant to middle school aged children.

ncpgaz.org Like us on Facebook:  [ncpgaz](https://www.facebook.com/ncpgaz)

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! Please let us know if you have suggestions, comments, concerns, or any input that would help us to improve this publication. Shoot us an email at communications@ncpgaz.org. Thanks for your help!

Also, please send us photos of you and your family- we are always looking for photos of our community to include in the newsletter and on the NCPG website. Please keep in mind that when you submit photos, you are agreeing that we can use them in our newsletter as well as the NCPG website.

Editors – Ashley McFate & Amanda Shaw
Designer – Neill Fox, foxnoggin.com, neill@foxnoggin.com

Front Cover – Liz Blalock, Austin Blalock and Logan Blalock
Photographer – Hart Films LLC

The information provided by NCPG instructors should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.



Member to Meet Taryn Ronning Kuman

Child & age: Ivana “ Ivy” – 2 years old.

Spouse: Victor Kuman.

How did you meet your spouse/partner: At a fundraiser in our hometown of Vancouver Canada.

Years married/together: 4 years married 6 years together.

Spouse/partners favorite date night spot: We love Maestros Ocean Club or Steak 44.

Career or previous career: Before my daughter I worked for Nordstrom both in Vancouver and Scottsdale as a part of the beauty stylist/personal shopping team focused on cosmetics along with makeup for tv and film. I have a big love for animals I have trained and continue to train dogs for various rescues and clients in AZ, it's my passion and something I'll do forever.

Five words to describe you:

Energetic, loyal, honest, passionate and optimistic.

Favorite family vacation spot? Tofino British Columbia it's a little slice of heaven that all Canadians treasure

Favorite family spot to dine in town? Pomo Italian Restaurant on Scottsdale Road. It's authentic, delicious and the staff is fantastic.

Do you have a hidden talent? I used to sing in a couple of bands. Now I sing in the shower or in a rocking chair :)

Favorite activity when you are child-free? I love working/training my youngest dog a German Shephard and getting him ready for scent competitions. It's my nerdy me time lol.

Favorite children's book to read? “I'll Love You Forever.” I cry every time I read it

Favorite adult book to read? “One Hundred Goodbyes” by Dr Nicole Anders. The author is my best friend. She's an amazing woman and a wonderful mother.

Where were you born and raised? I was born in St. Louis, MO but raised all over the USA and Canada.

What do you miss most about being a kid? Being carefree

When you have 30 minutes of free time what do you do? Try to workout or catch up with a friend.

What story does your family always tell about you? The time my parents took me to a petting zoo when I was 4 and I decided to ride one of the sheep. It wasn't very happy — rodeo moment!

What's your favorite thing to do with your child/children? Everything! I love looking at the world through her eyes...we love the zoo and miss being able to explore freely since Covid.

Most meaningful moment as a parent? When Ivy grabbed my face when we were watching Cinderella and said “I wuv you momma!” I melted into a puddle.

Most “OMG did that really happen” moment as a parent? Since Ivy has started talking, I feel like I say that at least once a day!

What is your favorite family tradition? Cooking with my entire family is always special, for Italians cooking is tradition. I love making dishes like pastas that have been past down to me from my mother, nonna and Zias

Best parenting advice given to you? In a moment of frustration... stop, pause, take a deep breath and then react. This has helped me navigate toddlerhood thus far. Also helps me when dealing with my husband.. kidding!

How do you balance meeting your children's needs as well as your own? This is always a hard one. I think every day is different. I just always try to make a weekly schedule for myself and look at my week on paper. That always seems to give me the boost I need.

If you could give your pre-baby self advice, what would it be? Haha...oh! Girl, sleep while you can! Please enjoy staying in bed on Sundays and always remember motherhood is a roller coaster of emotions but don't worry the highs are worth the lows!26.

Best thing learned in NCPG? Everything! Blair, our 2019 teacher, was a wealth of knowledge and support. She taught us so much and gave me so much confidence in myself as a mother.

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2020-2021 Calendar

NOTE: Classes will be offered virtually until in-person classes are able to resume.

Class Schedule

8:45 am	Nursery opens
9:00-9:40 am	Refreshments served
9:45*-11:30 am	Classes are held
*Teachers will start promptly at 9:45!	
11:45 am	Nursery closes
11:30 am-1:15 pm	Pre-Infant & Pre-Teen Class

Class Dates

September 9th **	January 6th
September 23rd	January 20th
October 7th **	February 3rd **
October 21st	February 17th
November 4th **	March 3rd **
November 18th	April 7th **
December 9th **	April 21st
	May 5th **

** Parent Times magazine distributed.

Board Meeting Schedule

October 5th	February 1st
November 2nd	March 1st
December 7th	April 12th
January 11th	May 3rd



Saint Barnabas on the Desert Episcopal Church
6715 N. Mockingbird Lane
Paradise Valley, AZ 85253

Board Announcements

Membership

Registration for the 2020-2021 NCPG year is open and spots remain available in several classes! Anyone interested in registering can do so online at <https://ncpgaz.org/join-ncpg/>. Feel free to reach out to the Membership Co-Chairs at membership@ncpgaz.org with any questions.

Communications

WE WANT YOUR PICTURES!

Next month's theme for Parent Times is

FALL FUN!

Send us your high-resolution photos of the kids for our photo spread — Who knows... your child might wind up on the cover!



Please send all birth announcements, snapshots of NCPG kids and parents, and professional photos to be considered for the front cover to communications@ncpgaz.org.

Education

We have some new Class names within NCPG!

- Pre-Infant is now Newborn A
- Newborn is now Newborn B
- Pre-K is now Pre-K/Junior Kindergarten
- School A and B are combined to Elementary
- School C is now Middle

We want to welcome back our veteran teachers and introduce you to three new teachers:



Chelsea Kunde
(Class 3A)



Emma Porter
(Class 4A)



Jennette Zander
(Pre-K/JK)

Childcare



Our number one priority at NCPG Childcare is the safety of your children. Childcare will remain closed until we have consistently met the benchmarks set forth by the CDC and Arizona Department of Health for childcare settings, our facility lifts their restrictions on groups, and when we confidently feel that we can safely offer childcare.

In the meantime, if you need childcare during the virtual meetings, **Busy Bees Babysitting**, our trusted provider, is currently offering in-home sitters and has implemented procedures and guidelines to ensure the safety of your children and their Bees. If you don't already have an account, please feel free to reach out to us at childcare@ncpgaz.com and we can help get you registered.

We look forward to serving you and your children again soon. Thank you for your patience during this time.



Public Relations



Please continue follow along on our private **NCPG Instagram** [@ncpgaz](https://www.instagram.com/ncpgaz) for helpful information and updates!



Please continue to use the members-only **NCPG Facebook Group** to ask questions, share advice, local events, deals and to buy & sell. We ask that we keep everything positive and respectful on the page. Please request to join the group, if you haven't already and join the fun!

Community Outreach

A donation has been made by NCPG Cares to **Phoenix Children's Hospital** in honor of an NCPG Family. If you know someone going through special circumstances who could use support or an extra hand, please send nominations to outreach@ncpgaz.org



NCPG  CARES

Special Events

October 3rd
8am-9am

Member Swag Bag Pick up!

We're excited to share our awesome Member Swag Bag for this year and invite you to grab a coffee, a donut and of course your bag! Join us at our drive-through event at:

Christ Church School
4015 E. Lincoln Drive
Paradise Valley, AZ 85253

Swag bag, coffee & donut pick-up will be in the parking lot roundabout (adjacent to the school playground on the SE corner of the CCS campus. **Please enter and exit by turning south on N. 40th Place ONLY (off Lincoln Ave).** **More details are still to come!**

October 21
Guest Speaker:
COVID + KIDS
with Dr. Angela Veesenmeyer



Dr. Angela Veesenmeyer is a board certified Pediatrician and Pediatric Infectious Disease physician in Phoenix.

Originally from Tucson, she attended the University of Arizona College of Medicine where she also completed her pediatric residency training. She completed fellowship in Pediatric Infectious Disease at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City.

For the past several years she has lived and practiced at a large children's hospital in Central California. Unable to resist the pull of home any longer, she moved her family to Phoenix in June and has settled here to be closer to family.

She enjoys spending time with her 8 year old son, husband, and rescue dog and looks forward to hiking and exploring the area when the temps dip below 100°.

When she's not working or trying to stay cool, she can be found running, lifting kettlebells, reading, and is becoming a certified Life Coach.

Meet Our Amazing Teachers!

NCPG is delighted to have an outstanding group of teachers returning to NCPG this year, and we have also expanded our teacher community with the addition of several new teachers. We encourage you to get to know each of these highly educated and knowledgeable women.



Monique Nelson

NEWBORN A & B

Monique is an Arizona native. She received her Bachelor of Science degree from Arizona State University in biology/premed. She holds an additional degree in nursing with a clinical focus in pediatrics. Over the past 28 years she has enjoyed many nursing roles, primarily in the field of pediatrics. The majority of her nursing career, over 20 years, was spent as a pediatric triage/advice nurse. She currently works at Soleo Health Specialty Infusion Pharmacy as their Director of Patient Advocacy and she is an IG certified infusion nurse. The nursing role she loves more than any however, is parenting instructor. This is Monique's 21st year with NCPG. Monique is married to her college sweetheart and they are the proud parents two kids, Taylor (21) and Dylan (16).



Blair Hinks

CLASS 1A

Blair is a native to Arizona. She grew up in the Madison School District and went to Xavier College Prep for high school. She graduated from University of Arizona in 2002 with a BS in Business Marketing. She went on to help manage at the Hubbard Swim School. During her 17 years at the swim school she was in charge of staff training, the special needs program and taught countless number of swim classes to babies and young children. Blaire has been married to her husband, Otto, for 16 years and they have six children; Tommy (14), Maggie (12), Joe (10), Will (8), Rosie (5), and Grace (4). After years of teaching new moms in the pool and having six babies of her own, she realized there was need for support in the home for new moms after birth. Blaire opened her own business, Lille Landsby Postpartum Village, in 2018. She is a lactation counselor, postpartum doula, and baby-wearing instructor that provides a holistic in-home care approach for all families with little ones. Blaire's favorite things to do during her down time are going on adventures with her family, date night with her husband, and working out.



Amy Stewart

CLASS 1B

Amy has a Masters of Science degree in Nursing and is a Certified Pediatric Nurse. She has worked as a Registered Nurse at Scottsdale Healthcare Shea for over 16 years. In addition to hospital nursing, Amy works as a University nursing professor. She also runs Hope in Adoption LLC, providing online parenting workshops geared to parent's hoping to adopt a better approach to their parenting, online workshops and support groups to parents who have been blessed through the adoption of children, and online workshops and parenting support groups to same gender parents. Amy feels her greatest accomplishments are found in her home. She loves being the wife to her husband Drew and mother to her 5 children Merik (11), Sophie (9), Olivia (4), Gracie (3), and Spencer (1). Amy has taught for NCPG for 8 years.



Debbie Hurst

CLASS 2A

Debbie is a native Arizonan. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Brigham Young University in Elementary Education with a minor in Child Development and Family Relations, and her Ma. Ed from the University of Phoenix. Debbie taught elementary school for twenty-nine years, specifically in grades one and three where she provided parenting tips and benchmarks of child growth and development in her weekly parent newsletters throughout the school year. While in the classroom, Debbie trained and mentored numerous interns, student teachers, and new faculty members in addition to serving on school advisement committees. She is currently under contract as adjunct faculty with Grand Canyon University in the College of Education. In addition to teaching ground classes, she supervises and mentors student teachers during their field experience. Debbie has also received training with the Rosemond Leadership Parenting Institute as a certified parent coach. She believes a nurturing environment containing love, leadership, communication, positive reinforcement, and mutual respect are paramount and fundamental in a child's life. Debbie has been married to her husband Craig for forty-two years and they are the proud parents of three amazing children (including Amy Stewart, a fellow NCPG instructor) and nine precious grandchildren. She enjoys traveling, cooking, playing the piano, and spending time with family and friends.



Kristin Klecka

CLASS 2B

Kristin is an educator who has been working with children since the early 2000's. Trained in Elementary Education, she has worked fulltime with two different grade levels (fourth and second) for six years and has also substitute taught in grade levels K6, including leading gift-ed/honors classes. Teaching in both California and Arizona, Kristin has a firm grasp of critical early years teaching skills and methods such as Core Knowledge. Kristin's course work at the University of Arizona resulted in a Bachelor of Arts in Family Studies and she subsequently obtained a Master's Degree in Elementary Education at the University of Pepperdine in Los Angeles, CA. She also achieved her teaching credential in California. But, her greatest accomplishment has been being a wife and fulltime mom to three children Ashlyn (14), Reid (12), and Beau (10). They have taught her more about love and life than anything else. Kristin likes to cook, exercise, spend time with friends, and travel.



Chelsea Kunde

CLASS 3A

Chelsea has her Bachelors of Art in Psychology from The University of Arizona (Go Wildcats!) and her Masters in Marriage and Family Therapy from The University of San Diego. She has worked extensively with children, families and couples specifically helping them with parenting skills and/or training. She has worked as a behavior interventionist, parent trainer, therapist providing individual,

couple, family and group services and a sleep consultant. Chelsea owns her own company called Building Blocks Family where she provides consultation services on sleep, discipline, and potty training to families with children ages 0-6 years old. BBF was created to provide loving family solutions to families. She helps families to create a safe and predictable world for their children while maintaining healthy and safe practices. Most importantly, she helps them to create a happy environment for both parents and kids to thrive and enjoy! Chelsea enjoys in her free time taking a pilates or spin class, watching bad reality tv, hanging with her girlfriends and spending time with her family. Chelsea is married and has two daughters Harper (6) and Reese (3). This is Chelsea's first year teaching at NCPG and she is excited to be part of this wonderful community in her new role as teacher!



Barb Grady

CLASS 3B

Barb Grady begins her 28th year teaching for NCPG. She is a nationally certified counselor, certified teacher and parenting coach. In 1999, Barb began her business, Parenting-Plus, where she offers parenting classes, personal growth groups, individual consulting and life/parent coaching for both adults and children. Barb has taught preschool, Kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grades as well as high school and college. Barb has two daughters: Jody, who is a director for Honor Health in charge of the Covid patients and has two children (Carter 8 and Grady 7), and Annie, who works as a senior program coordinator for the non-profit Daily Acts in California and just had a daughter in July. Barb loves being an involved grandparent! She is delighted to return this year to share her passion and to motivate and inspire parents. You can learn more about Barb and access parenting resources from her website: www.parenting-plus.com and her YouTube channel Barb Says.



Emma Porter

CLASS 4A

Emma is an Arizona native and currently lives in north central Phoenix. She received her degree in Early Childhood Education from Arizona State University. Emma has taught multiple grades over the last ten years ranging from fourth grade to preschool. Currently, she is teaching preschool part-time at Christ Church School and tutoring for families around the valley. Emma is expecting her second boy in late November. In her free time, she enjoys spending quality time with her husband and two-year old son. She is excited to be joining the community of professional women at NCPG for a successful year.



Lesley Isaak

CLASS 4B

Lesley is a Licensed Professional Counselor, specializing in the treatment of children, teenagers, and young adults (ages 6 and up), as well as their families. Lesley graduated with a business degree from the University of Arizona and worked in administrative and management positions until becoming a stay-at-home mom. After 9 years of fun and exhaustion at home, which included enjoying classes at NCPG as a new mom, Lesley returned to school and earned her Masters in Professional Counseling from Ottawa University. For the last 9 years, she has focused on providing education, therapy, and ideas to assist families in creating a healthy, supportive environment at home. When she has free time, Lesley enjoys being outdoors – hiking, biking, working in the yard – and most importantly, hanging out with her husband and their four boys (now ages 15, 16, 17, and 19 years old). At NCPG, Lesley is excited to be starting her fourth year of teaching the parents of 4 year olds.



Jennette Zander

PRE K or JR. KINDER

Jennette Zander feels so blessed to be part of the wonderful community NCPG community. Originally from Seattle Washington, she moved to Phoenix with her family 7 years ago. Jennette's been in education for over 15 years and has taught students ranging from preschool up to high school, however, her heart is early childhood education. She has a degree in Special Education from the University of Arizona and attended the University of Notre Dame completing the graduate certificate Program for Inclusive Education. She is also fluent in American Sign Language. She is passionate about early childhood education and understands the positive impact that a strong foundation has on a child when it is rooted in love, curiosity, and enthusiasm for learning. Jennette is currently the interim principal and Saint Theresa Catholic School and director of the STCS Little Flower Preschool. When not focused on all things education-related, she enjoys the outdoors with her husband and two boys (8 and 10 years) camping, hiking, kayaking, and biking. Jennette is thrilled to join the NCPG team of teachers this year and looks forward to partnering with the pre-k parents!



Jemeille Ackourey

KINDERGARTEN

Jemeille is a Licensed Professional Counselor and has a master's degree in counseling from the University of Phoenix. She provides services to individuals, couples and families at her uptown Phoenix office. Jemeille served the Boys & Girls Clubs of Metropolitan Phoenix for 23 years, before retiring in 2005 as their Vice President of Operations. Throughout her career, she has been volunteering her time and expertise at various community agencies, associations and schools where she trains staff, educates students, mentors youth, and advises on program and organizational development. She has served on numerous educational and community boards and advisory committees. In her leisure time, Jemeille enjoys working in her garden, cooking, entertaining, loom weaving, yoga, travel and long walks with her 2 golden doodles, Ellis and Adler. Jemeille's greatest joy is her family. Her marriage to Karl has brought together a blended family of 5 children, their spouses and 5 grandchildren.



Michelle Cox

ELEMENTARY & MIDDLE SCHOOL

Michelle has been married for 24 years and is the mother of two adults and two teens. She loves to spend time with her family as they discover new places and explore the outdoors. She also loves to create - the messier the art project the better. Michelle is the founder of Build Family Connection and has coached and taught hundreds of parents over the last 10 years. Michelle graduated with a BS in Education from Northern Arizona University, completed "The Choice in Coaching: Arbringer Mastery Training for Coaches," a graduate of the Coachville School of Coaching, and is a PCC certified coach with the International Coaching Federation.



How to Manage Back-to-School Stress and Anxiety During All This Uncertainty

When worries over the coming school year seem to fly through the roof, turn to these expert tips for helping the whole family to feel more relaxed.

By Kelsey Ogletree, July 21, 2020, [RealSimple.com](#)

Working mom Stephanie Smith, vice president of content and marketing for an Atlanta-based company, rates her anxiety a 10 out of 10 right now. “It came down a little from May to June, but once [COVID-19] cases started spiking again, and we started to know people first-hand who had it and second-hand who had died, we [thought], whoa—what if we don’t go back to school in the fall?” she recalls.

It’s not only fear of the coronavirus causing Smith’s anxiety to flare. She and her husband, who works in advertising, are also gravely concerned about their ability to continue to do their jobs while trying to homeschool their children, 6-year-old Gibson and 19-month-old Tilly. “I’m not nearly as productive of an employee when I am teaching school as well as working,” she says.

Smith’s family is far from alone. Millions of families around the country are grappling with decisions surrounding

whether to send their kids back to school—that is, if they even have the option. Some schools are planning to re-open for classes in August, while others are offering virtual learning or remaining closed entirely, leaving parents to make difficult choices for themselves and their children. A recent poll from ABC News/Ipsos showed that 45 percent of parents don’t want their children in the classroom at all. The stress surrounding back-to-school this year can feel unbearable at times, but knowing that it’s normal to feel this way—and that you’re not alone—is a good way to begin to manage your anxiety. Here’s what else mental health and medical experts recommend for keeping your cool amid the uncertainty of the moment.

Acknowledge the stress.

Everyone’s situation is different, and we all have unique support systems (or lack thereof), whether or not we live near family and friends who can help care for children when they’re out of school. Regardless of your arrangement, the first step toward dealing with the anxiety you’re experiencing is to notice it. “I would encourage parents to share this feeling with their partners or other family and friends,” says Michael Consuelos, MD, a senior medical advisor with mental health management platform NeuroFlow in Philadelphia.

Build a support network.

Once you’ve identified your anxiety, look to your support system to help reduce or at least manage it. This might include reaching out to other parents for help and support,

(continued on page 12)

Class Descriptions

NEWBORN A

This class provides the foundation for a successful transition into motherhood. There are many new things to learn about a newborn’s development, behaviors, and most importantly needs. Feel free to bring your infant with you to class if you have him/her during the school year!

NEWBORN B

All the infant “firsts” are shared and cherished in these important first six months. Bedtime routines are established and new foods are introduced. Please feel free to bring your infant (0-6 months old) to class with you!

CLASS 1A

The entirety of the first year is discussed and celebrated. The child is developing new behaviors and reaching milestones in crawling, walking and babbling.

CLASS 1B

Bye-bye baby-hello toddler! Mobility and exploration are under way. In this class we cover discipline, napping, language development and social skills. We also discuss preschool readiness, preparing for siblings and potty training. The goal of this class is to help prepare parents for the many transitions that are a part of this stage of development.

CLASS 2A & CLASS 2B

Helping parents prepare and guide their children through the major transitions of this stage and year ahead. Preparing for preschool, potty training, moving from the crib to the bed, behavioral changes and social interaction are the goals of this class.

CLASS 3A & CLASS 3B

This class focuses on the struggle for power between child and parent, providing useful and effective parenting strategies while respecting the child’s need for independence. Sibling interaction and the family are discussed as well.

CLASS 4A & CLASS 4B

This class devotes much time to children’s social development, covering a variety of issues from anger management to conflict resolution to peer relationships. Additionally, topics in this class will include: establishing family rules, building self-confidence and self-reliance, and encouraging cognitive and physical development.

PRE-K OR JR. KINDERGARTEN (Enrolled in Pre-K or Junior Kindergarten)

Parents discuss and prepare for the next step into kindergarten, including but not limited to: choosing a school that meets their child’s and family’s needs, learning math and reading tools that will enhance kindergarten success, and finding ways to encourage self-confidence and independence. Also, every class features take home crafts and recipes that focus on kindergarten readiness skills.

KINDERGARTEN (Enrolled in Kindergarten)

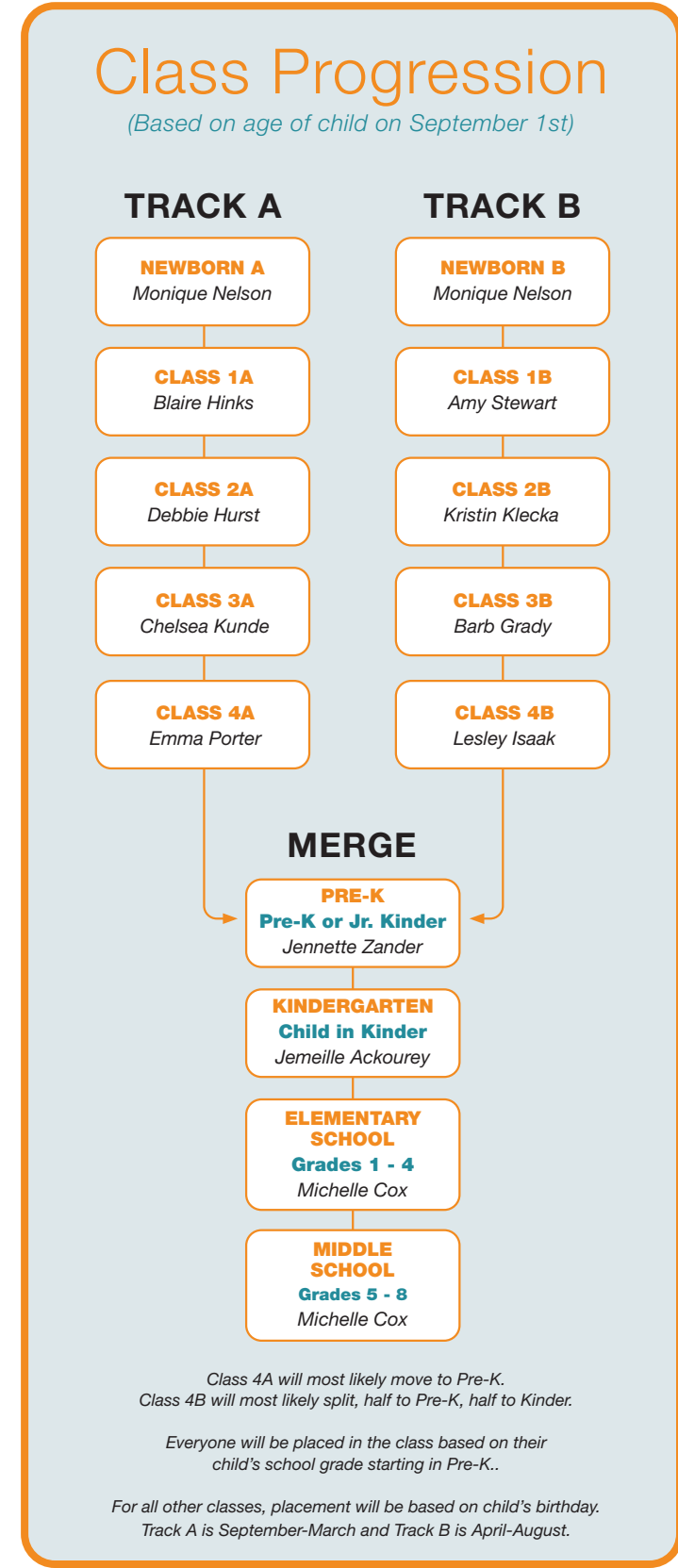
Come to this class for support, encouragement, and many laughs as we help moms and their children transition into elementary school. Topics will focus on nurturing a child’s autonomy, helping them set appropriate boundaries, fostering their awareness, and encouraging responsibility.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (Grades 1-4)

NCPG has added elementary classes to help Valley parents navigate the challenges of parenting increasingly independent children. These classes will cover topics such as: how to partner with your child’s teacher and school, bullying recognition and prevention, nutrition for learning, deepening your relationship with your child as he/she gets older, parenting in the digital age, raising your child to be an innovator, and encouraging autonomy.

MIDDLE SCHOOL (Grades 5-8)

NCPG has added Pre-Teen/Middle School Coaching class to help parents prepare for the teenage years. These classes will help you communicate without arguing, build a relationship that will last, and become a trusted resource your child will turn to for guidance. Come learn the skills you need to enjoy the teen years and parent with confidence.



says Dr. Consuelos. Commiserating with those who are in the same boat as you can help alleviate some of the stress you’re feeling, and allow you to collectively brainstorm solutions, rather than wallow in the problems.

If you anticipate having to do some teaching from home, tag-team supplemental learning with your support systems. “Find a friend who’s good at math, or use the person who’s always correcting grammar to help with language skills,” advises Elizabeth Derickson, MSW, LCSW, RPT, a therapist with online therapy provider Talkspace. Don’t be afraid to reach out and join forces with other families to help not only yourself but your friends and your school community as well, she adds.

Practice self-care.

This is vital right now, says Derickson. You should have a self-care plan in place and find a few people in your net work who can help you stick to your plan. Virtual support can also come in handy. For example, Smith found she started stress-eating more in the first few months of quarantine. She has since made changes to stay accountable and make healthier choices for her body—especially when the stress-eating temptation kicked back in after learning her son’s school would be doing at least the first nine weeks virtually. Smith is also taking salt baths a few times a week, practicing meditation every morning, and walking outside during phone meetings to prioritize her health.

Get into meditation as a family.

It can sound hokey if you’ve never practiced it before, but meditation does help a lot with anxiety—and you can include the kids, too, says Kathleen Rivera, MD, a psychiatrist who specializes in children and adolescents, at Nuvance Health in Danbury, Conn. She recommends using the PeaceOut podcast, which blends short stories with visualization and breathing exercises to help children to calm down and relax.

Repeat this mantra: “The kids will be fine.”

“In many ways, this is easier for the kids than the parents,” says Charles Herrick, MD, chair of psychiatry at Nuvance Health. Parents are juggling so many other responsibilities—jobs, finances—and they’re now having to deal with decision-making around education in a way they’ve never had to before. On the other hand, the good news is that kids are pretty resilient, says Dr. Herrick. In study after study of people exposed to traumatic events, kids tend to do the best adapting to their new or changed circumstances.

But don’t be anxious in front of them.

Kids pick up on their parents’ well-being. “If parents are anxious and making statements that they’re worried about this or that, younger kids especially are going to pick that

up,” says Dr. Rivera. They might parrot the same phrases you used without necessarily understanding the meaning behind it. If you do need to vent to your partner, friend or family member, do so behind closed doors.

Have open conversations.

Dr. Rivera strongly encourages talking with your children about the situation, no matter their age, asking them specific questions about their feelings. For example, she’s asked her own daughter, who’s going into first grade, the following: What do you miss the most about being in school? What are the things you don’t miss? How is learning this new way working for you? “Not every 5-year-old is able to have this conversation, but you can bring it down to their cognitive level,” she adds.

To warm up younger children to conversations, try providing them with paper, colored pencils, crayons or markers, says Claudia Kohner, PhD, a licensed psychologist and creator of the IntroDUCKtion to Very, Very Big Feelings app. Help them create a homemade book you can read together that describes the changes and feelings your child is experiencing. You can also encourage imaginative play, in which dolls or toys represent the teacher and children in a classroom, so your child can communicate feelings about returning (or not returning) to school through playtime, Kohner says.

Involve them in decisions—to an extent.

Having kids involved in the parents’ decision-making process, particularly adolescents, is very important because they value the social interactions they get at school so highly, says Rivera. “This doesn’t mean a 5- or 10-year-old should be making a decision [about whether to go back to school], but it is important to take into consideration what their needs are,” she says.

Equip your kids with situational knowledge.

This is the best thing you can do to help keep your kids safe if they will be going back to school this fall, says Fran Walfish, PsyD, MFT, a family and relationship therapist based in Beverly Hills, Calif. Talk to them about what social distancing means, how to wash their hands thoroughly (and often), and other timely lessons.

She advises role playing: Pretend you’re your daughter’s classmate and come very close to her, asking to borrow a pencil—then ask her what she would do in that situation. Or, question your son about how he’d handle it if a friend came up and grabbed a basketball out of his hands on the playground. “Make up real-life situations and get your kids to think in advance about what they would say or do to protect themselves while preserving a friendship,” says Walfish. The key is to equip them with the necessary tools and strategies they will need before the real situation arises.



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Evaluate your stress levels.

Think about your mental health in terms of functioning, says Dr. Rivera. Feeling stressed is very normal right now while we’re all facing so much uncertainty about the future. But if your anxiety gets to a point where it becomes so overwhelming that it’s affecting your daily functioning—in your job, in your relationships, in your sleep habits—it may be time to seek the help of a professional, she adds. To help improve your overall well-being, focus on sleeping well, eating well, and exercising—all shown to be natural ways of releasing some anxiety and staying in a healthy place from a mental health perspective, says Dr. Rivera.

Take back control where you can.

While the world feels like it’s changing by the minute, it helps to gain back some semblance of normalcy by controlling what you can control, says Dr. Herrick. For example, if you decide you want to homeschool your children, take initiative to build some socialization into their program during the week by coming together with your community. It’s important for parents to network with other parents and build a variety of activities for their children that include not just cognitive learning, but the emotional and social components that go along with it. This can give the feeling of control over your child’s learning situation, even if they aren’t in a “normal” school routine.



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If you decide to send kids back to school, regain control by creating a ritualized transition for them when they arrive back home: things like using hand sanitizer, undressing, putting their clothes in a plastic bag, and heading straight for the bath, Dr. Herrick says. “This will help alleviate anxiety about bringing COVID-19 into the home,” he adds.

Know that you can change your mind.

“Flexibility is the most important thing in this whole process,” says Dr. Rivera. Regardless of what decision you make today, things might look different in a few months, or even a few weeks from now—and that’s OK. Ultimately, you should base your decisions around what feels comfortable for your family right now, but also be honest with yourself that it could change. You have every right to reverse the decision you make down the road.

Give yourself a break.

Be kind to yourself as a parent. That’s the number-one piece of advice Derickson would give to families continuing to struggle with back-to-school anxiety. “You don’t have to do it all,” she says. Set yourself up with realistic expectations, and understand that you’re going to have both good and bad days. Then, “allow yourself to learn from the bad days, move on, and rock those good days.”

10 NCPG Parent Times

NCPG Parent Times 11

9 Ways to Build More Self-Esteem in Your Child

By Katherine Lee, July 12, 2020 [verywellfamily.com](https://www.verywellfamily.com)



A healthy self-esteem is one of the most important characteristics of healthy child development. In fact, a child's social, behavioral, and emotional health will play a crucial role in how they handle setbacks, peer pressure, and other challenges throughout life.

A positive self-esteem is also a protective factor for good mental health. Cultivating confidence contributes to positive social behavior and works as a buffer when your child is impacted by negative situations.¹

This is especially important as your child navigates the pandemic. COVID-19 creates so many stresses, anxieties, and uncertainties in your child's life that having a high self-esteem is vital.

Here are some small but significant ways you can impact your child's self-esteem in a positive way each day.

Know What Healthy Self-Esteem Looks Like

Self-esteem is basically how children see themselves—including what they think of themselves and their ability to do things. It's also shaped by how much they feel loved, and how much support and encouragement (or criticism) they receive from important people in their life, like their parents and their teachers.

Meanwhile, being self-confident does not mean thinking that the world revolves around you or that your needs are more important than those of other people. Likewise, healthy self-esteem is not arrogance, narcissism, or entitlement. Balance out your child's self-esteem with other important life skills such as having empathy, being kind, having good manners, being charitable, and having a sense of gratitude.

Show Unconditional Love Every Day

Knowing how much you love them gives your children a sense of security and belonging that is crucial to their view of themselves. Your unconditional love lays the groundwork for all the healthy and strong relationships they will form later in their lives.

So hug your kids when you say goodbye, snuggle together and read a book, and express your love every single day. As your kids grow, this foundation of love will help them as they continue to build their own social circles, make friends, and form bonds with teammates.

Play Together and Have Fun

When you play with your child, it shows them that you like spending time with them and that you value their company. Just having fun with your child has numerous benefits for both of you.

Not only do kids develop confidence in their ability to be an interesting and entertaining person who can form solid social bonds, but studies have shown a child's odds of being happy increases and their risk of depression and anxiety decreases when kids engage in healthy play.²

Building confidence will also help your child better navigate the uncertainties that the 2020–2021 school year holds. Plus, playing and have fun is a great stress reliever.

Give Your Child Responsibilities and Chores

Being responsible for doing age-appropriate chores gives your child a sense of purpose and accomplishment. Even if they don't do something perfectly, let them know that you appreciate their efforts. Praise them for all the things they do well, and reassure them that over time, they'll get better and better at many things, including their chores.

Having chores and responsibilities also gives kids a sense of control over their lives. And in a time when things are unpredictable, having responsibility over small jobs around the house can go a long way in building confidence and resilience.

Encourage Independence

The elementary-school years are a time of fast-growing independence in kids. By the time they reach the middle-school years, many children are starting to spend time alone at home, walking to school by themselves, and helping younger siblings.

It's important that you allow your kids to grow increasingly more independent, letting them figure out how to talk to teachers about any problems on their own, organizing homework assignments, making sure their soccer uniforms are packed and ready, and so on. So-called helicopter parenting undermines kids' abilities to do things on their own and negatively impacts their self-esteem. It also robs them of autonomy.

Keep in mind that as kids navigate this upcoming school year, there will be many new things that they must deal with like online classes or new rules at the school. Encourage your kids to advocate for themselves and ask questions when they experience challenges before you intervene. Doing so will build their independence and ultimately their self-esteem.

Refrain From Insulting Your Child

When your child does something that drives you crazy or misbehaves, be sure to separate the behavior from your child. You're human—when your child pushes your buttons you'll probably be irritated or even an-

gry. Experiencing these feelings is completely normal, but don't engage in name-calling or shame your child.

Instead, talk to your child with respect. Don't yell. Take the emotion out of your discipline. A good way to do this is by using natural and logical consequences, and speaking to your child in a pleasant and friendly tone.

Make Setbacks Learning Experiences

Emphasize the fact that being human means making mistakes and not being perfect. Teach your child to view setbacks as opportunities for improvement and growth.

This approach will be even more important as your child navigates school this year. Regardless of whether their school does online learning, a hybrid model, or an in-person model there will be plenty of new things to learn like wearing masks and navigating online assignments.

Be patient with your child when they make mistakes. And, if you find that they tend to act out at school or experience behavior problems, do what you can to turn those situations into opportunities for growth. Doing so, will help build your child's confidence and demonstrate that making mistakes is not the end of the world as long as they address it in a healthy way.

Watch Technology Use

In today's environment, all of us, including students and parents, are consistently connected to our devices. Mobile phones, tablets, and laptops allow people to text, post to social media, conduct business, do schoolwork, and check email on a regular basis.

All this connectivity is both a good thing and a bad thing. It's positive because people can be more productive and stay connected to others from the comfort and safety of their homes. But this online activity can

come at a cost if it interferes with family relationships and communication. Likewise too much screen time can impact physical activity.

As a family, decide what type of online activity is necessary and what is purely entertainment. Then devise a plan where you all learn to balance your daily screen time with healthy activities like going for walks, riding bikes, reading, and playing games together.

Let Them Create and Show Off Work

Let your child display their work around the house. When they create artwork, write a story, or put together a project for school, invite your child to tell you about their work. Ask what they want people to think or feel and what they like best about their creations.


Giving children a chance to show off what they make or to talk about the things they create lets them know that their hard work is worthy of attention. It also communicates that their opinions and thoughts matter.

Even if your child is primarily doing all their work at home rather than in school, allow them to display their work around the house. Doing so builds confidence in their abilities and encourages them to continue working hard on their creative endeavors.


A Word From Verywell

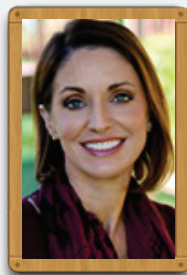
Working to build your child's self-esteem is one of the best ways you can spend your time as a parent. And although it may take a little extra effort sometimes, you will be setting your kids up for success now and in the future.

But just as you don't expect your kids to be perfect, don't expect perfection from yourself either. You may not get it right all the time, and that's OK. As long as you're consistently trying to share love and positivity, you will be building confidence in them despite a mistake here or there.



Monique





Lelsey

What is the best way to instill confidence in children at an early age?

Monique Nelson : 3B

I wish we could just give kids confidence but it is a process that starts at birth. In my newborn classes, I teach that confidence and self esteem comes from many methods. First and most important is to give your children unconditional love. Be consistent and stick to a routine. Through these actions kids develop a sense of trust. Promote independence, by not doing for kids what they can do for themselves. Finally honest recognition and praise.

Lelsey Isaak : 4B

The best way to instill confidence in young children is to let try things on their own even if it involves failure. It allows for us, as parents, to acknowledge the failure but encourage the path to success by trying repeatedly without showing frustration on our end.

Practical praise for the little things can be a great motivator, but showing praise in an enthusiastic manner for big successes allows them to see the importance of their efforts and creates confidence and self-esteem.



Summer Fun



Meet the Board



Megan Garvey *President*

Kids names (ages): Anderson (5) & Magnolia (3)

2019/2020 NCPG Class: Pre-K/Jr. Kinder

Where did you grow up? Born and raised in Mississippi, lived in Hawaii for 15 years, and moved to Arizona in 2017

What made you want to join the board? Having newly relocated to Phoenix and with two young children, my sister-in-law (a former NCPG board member) suggested I check it out. I am so grateful that she did and I quickly realized how invaluable this community would be for me and my family.

What made you decide to do the board another year? Are you in same role, or new one? I've absolutely loved giving back to this organization that continues to provide so much value to my family from the class content to the amazing friendships. I can only hope to help other new moms have the same great introduction and experience with NCPG. I served as the membership co-chair two years ago, and I'm honored to be serving as president for a second year (my third year on the Board).

Do you have a hidden talent? I love to sing!

People might not know: My parents are both veterinarians and I grew up on a farm - think Dr. Doolittle.

Favorite family restaurant? Luci's or Pomelo's at the Orchard are always crowd pleasers!

Favorite restaurant with NO kids? El Chorro

What made you choose your children's names? Anderson is my maiden name and Magnolia is the state flower/tree of my home state of Mississippi (I wanted them to both know their family/southern roots)

If you were to have one day all to yourself (no kids/family/husband) how would you spend it? Sleep in, work out, spa treatment, lounge by the pool or go for a walk outside, shopping and lunch at Nordstrom followed by a movie and drinks with girlfriends...oh and maybe a quick trip to Target in there somewhere too. Hopefully, Post-COVID! ;)

What has been your favorite "age" so far with your kids? I am actually loving the current ages of my children. My son just turned five and amazes me daily with his comprehension, curiosity, and general zest for learning. My daughter just turned three and it seems she changes daily. She is just the sweetest little angel. Not every day is easy, but a part of me wishes I could freeze this moment!

What is one thing you would share with someone new to NCPG? Take comfort in the fact that you are not alone in your current chapter. We're a community - all here to become better, more informed parents. This is a safe and intimate environment where we can all learn and grow through sharing our own experiences and by learning from our amazing and knowledgeable teachers. COME AS YOU ARE, have fun and enjoy this time with friends!



Megan Hedstrom *Vice-President*

Kids names (ages): Griffin (4), Declan (2)

2020/2021 NCPG Class: 4B

Where did you grow up? Scottsdale, AZ

What made you want to join the board? NCPG has given me so much I wanted to give back!

What made you decide to do the board another year? Are you in same role, or new one? This is my third year on the board because I've loved it so much. I started on fundraising, then moved to membership, now I'm Vice President.

Do you have a hidden talent? I am really good at finding things that are misplaced.

People might not know....I work with my two sisters and dad.

Favorite family restaurant? Luci's at the Orchard

Favorite restaurant with NO kids? The Mission

What made you choose your children's names? My heritage is Irish so I've always had a special place in my heart for Irish names.

Funny story/quote from one of your kids? We do peaks and pits of the day at dinner and it's one of my favorite parts of the day hearing about what they think is the best and worst of their days. It makes us laugh every day.

If you were to have one day all to yourself (no kids/family/husband) how would you spend it? Working out, a facial, and grocery shopping alone.

What has been your favorite "age" so far with your kids? I love my son's age, he just turned two and his language skills are exploding. That's really fun and exciting to watch. But not enough that he talks back yet, my daughter does enough of that.

What is one thing you would share with someone new to NCPG? Embrace it and try to do everything (classes, playdates, events). It's hard with multiple kids or a new baby but it's worth it to make the effort!



Ursula Smalley *Treasury*

Kids names (ages): Camilla (6), Randall (3.5)

2020/2021 NCPG Class: Kinder

Where did you grow up? Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

What made you want to join the board?

What made you decide to do the board another year? Are you in same role, or new one? The learning curve for treasurer is steep, I felt like I needed

to give it another year to fully take advantage of all I had learned. Plus I love working with my fellow board members in making sure NCPG offers the best it can to its members.

People might not know....I lived in Manhattan for 12 years, where I worked in finance and both my children were born.

Favorite family restaurant? AZ Wilderness in Downtown Phoenix

Favorite restaurant with NO kids? Buck and Rider

What made you choose your children's names? Camilla because I wanted something that worked well both in Portuguese and English, and Randall is named after his father and grandfather.

If you were to have one day all to yourself (no kids/family/husband) how would you spend it? Under the covers, watching TV and ordering takeout.

What has been your favorite "age" so far with your kids? Now that they are getting older I miss their baby phase. They were so easy, I had no idea! As they say, the bigger the age the bigger the problems.

What is one thing you would share with someone new to NCPG? The resources and network available to members of this group are truly unique and special...I have not seen many similar groups available elsewhere. Take advantage and enjoy the experience!



Liz Anzalone *Executive Assistant*

Kids names (ages): Liliana Grace (3, will be 4 in December), Alexander James (5 months)

2020/2021 NCPG Class: 4A

Where did you grow up? I was born and raised in southern California but have lived in Arizona for many years and I absolutely love it.

What made you want to join the board? When I first joined NCPG I was a new mom who didn't have a lot of support. I not only formed lasting friendships with some of the amazing women in my class, but I also gained a wealth of knowledge that was so crucial-especially during that first year! I thought joining the board would be such a fun experience and a great way to give back.

Do you have a hidden talent? I can play the piano.

Favorite family restaurant? We love Grassroots for family dinner.

Favorite restaurant with NO kids? There are so many great ones but El Chorro is always a go to.

What made you choose your children's names? Liliana is named after my sweet grandma Lillian. I love the classics which is why we chose Alexander and James is also a family name.

If you were to have one day all to yourself (no kids/family/husband) how would you spend it? If I had a day to myself I would definitely spend it at the spa relaxing or reading a good book at the beach.

What has been your favorite "age" so far with your kids? Probably between 18-24 months. They are just so fun and full of personality!



Colleen Luckey *Sponsorship*

Daughter: Samantha Luckey 14 (I also have two nieces, a 17 and a 7-year-old, who have been living with me for almost 2 years now).

2020/2021 NCPG Class: Middle-school

Where did you grow up? Denver, Colorado

What made you want to join the board? NCPG makes me a better mom and reminds me I'm not actually screwing up as bad as I sometimes think I am. I wanted to give back to this amazing community of mamas.

Do you have a hidden talent? I can perfectly mimic a screeching monkey

People might not know.... I'm always up for a new adventure

Favorite family restaurant? The Luckey Kitchen

Favorite restaurant with NO kids? North

What made you choose your children's names? Samantha was her great grandma's name

Funny story/quote from one of your kids? Once crossing a street I reached down to take my 2-year-olds hand. She pulled away, clasped her tiny fingers together and obstinately said, "Samantha do!!"

If you were to have one day all to yourself (no kids/family/husband) how would you spend it? Skiing somewhere super cool or reading on a beach. Though in reality....I would be super cleaning the house.

What has been your favorite "age" so far with your kids? They've all been my favorite from the beautifully close days pregnancy and then of breastfeeding to the celebrations of potty-training and her first words; the things she does that are nothing like me and surprise me and the things she does that I know exactly where she gets it from. The awe-inspiring moments of watching a teen navigate through life changes while creating and fulfilling her own individual goals. Being a mom is the most inspiring, amazing, fulfilling thing I have ever been through or will ever be blessed with and I wish I could slow time so I could enjoy the different stages longer.

What is one thing you would share with someone new to NCPG? This is where you will learn that you are good enough, you are smart enough and doggone it people like you!

(continued on next page)



Christin Salzman *Sponsorship*

Kids names (ages): Charlotte (6), Hannah (3½), Frankie (15 months) - 3 girls!

2020/2021 NCPG Class: 4A

Where did you grow up? Phoenix

What made you want to join the board? I really wanted to give back to an organization that has provided me with so much over the past few years.

I want to continue to better this organization for current and future members and get the most out of my time in NCPG.

Do you have a hidden talent? I don't think so. If I do, it is hidden from me too.

People might not know.... I am bilingual.

Favorite family restaurant? Oreganos.

Favorite restaurant with NO kids? ANY restaurant, but we usually go to the Rokerji.

What made you choose your children's names? I am a sucker for classic names.

Funny story/quote from one of your kids? "Daddy, I'm sorry I hit you in the vagina."

If you were to have one day all to yourself (no kids/family/husband) how would you spend it? Probably sleep all day.

What has been your favorite "age" so far with your kids? I love preschool age.

What is one thing you would share with someone new to NCPG? Come to class with an open mind and don't be afraid to talk about the hard stuff.



Ashley Wisdom *Sponsorship*

Kids names (ages): Everett (5), Ellory (3), Emerson (1)

2020/2021 NCPG Class: Kindergarten

Where did you grow up? Mesa, AZ

What made you want to join the board? I wanted to give back to the organization

that been such a huge help in navigating life as a mom. I also wanted to meet other members outside of my class and get to know the sponsors who help keep our organization running.

Do you have a hidden talent? I can touch my tongue to my nose, does that count? LOL!

People might not know... I have been a Vegetarian since I was 12.

Favorite family restaurant? Flower Child or LGO.

Favorite restaurant with NO kids? Hillstone.

What made you choose your children's names? We chose Everett from the Family Stone (our favorite movie) and Ellory because it was a little more unique and loved the nickname Elle. Once we were pregnant with our third, we decided to go the all E route and picked Emerson. All of our kids have the initials EJW which makes sharing with 3 way easier.

Funny story/quote from one of your kids? My daughter is super into Halloween and has decided what everyone in our family is going to be for the holiday this year. When she gets mad or upset she always says "fine I'm not doing Halloween anymore."

If you were to have one day all to yourself how would you spend it? I would have a spa day with my girlfriends followed by drinks and lunch at the resort pool.

What has been your favorite "age" so far with your kids? Gosh that is a hard one. I think it probably depends on the kid. The first year was always harder for me but I am really loving it with my last baby and soaking in all the baby snuggles. I can say that age 3 is the hardest age. So maybe all the ages except 3?

What is one thing you would share with someone new to NCPG? First, Welcome! We are so happy you are here AND get involved, the more classes and extra activities you go to the more you will get out of it.



Hayley McInrue *Transitional Director*

Kids names (ages): Connor (5.5), Darby (3)

2020/2021 NCPG Class: Kindergarten

Where did you grow up? Newport Beach, CA

What made you want to join the board? As a new member to NCPG last year I knew that I eventually wanted to take on more of a role within the group. Seeing the commitment, bond and dedication amongst the board has sealed the deal on why I wanted to join.

Do you have a hidden talent? 90's dance moves... I can throw down a wicked Roger Rabbit on the dance floor

People might not know.... Our family relocated to Phoenix last July from Fishers, IN. After 13 years in the Midwest, it was time to head back West to be closer to family.

Favorite family restaurant? Spinatos Pizza

Favorite restaurant with NO kids? Sitting at the bar at The Windsor

What made you choose your children's names? Connor James was named after my late father in law and we named Darby Kruse after my maternal Grand-mother who I was incredibly close with.

Funny story/quote from one of your kids? "When I grow up I want a girlfriend like Darby"- Connor.

If you were to have one day all to yourself (no kids/family/husband) how would you spend it? Joya Spa at the Montelucia

What has been your favorite "age" so far with your kids? 5

What is one thing you would share with someone new to NCPG? Don't hesitate to put yourself out there and meet other moms. Though new groups can be intimidating, NCPG has been the most welcoming community of women and I have built many true friendships.



Ashley McFate *Communications*

Kids names (ages): Emery (2)

2020/2021 NCPG Class: 2B

Where did you grow up? Phoenix

What made you want to join the board? I loved my first year at NCPG and wanted to become more involved in the group

Do you have a hidden talent? Thanks to a lot of yoga I can touch my elbows behind my back

Favorite family restaurant? Isabella's or Luci's at the Orchard

Favorite restaurant with NO kids? Rokerji or Ladera

What made you choose your children's names? My husband and I had the name Lilly in mind for a long time. When I was pregnant, my in-laws unknowingly picked that name for their puppy, and refused to change it once we told them... so my husband and I had to go through baby girl names. We both found Emery and loved it.

Funny story/quote from one of your kids? Not a singular story, but our daughter has growled since she was a baby because of our dog. We didn't want her to lose the growl as she got older so now she loves roaring like a lion.

If you were to have one day all to yourself (no kids/family/husband) how would you spend it? Take a yoga class, go to lunch with my girlfriends and not even think about doing laundry

What has been your favorite "age" so far with your kids? 18 months – now. Emery is constantly moving and wanting to explore new things. It's so fun to see the world through her eyes.



Amanda Shaw *Communications*

Kids names (ages): Milly Frances (4), Franklin Paul (2), Gwendolyn Ann (10 Months)

2020/2021 NCPG Class: PreK

Where did you grow up? Seattle, WA

What made you want to join the board? Last year was my first year as a member and

I just loved getting to know the organization and the girls in my class. I was eager to get more involved and give back.

Do you have a hidden talent? I can touch my tongue to my nose? Not sure how special that is! :)

People might not know... I love cooking and I love sports.

Favorite family restaurant? Lou's at Papago.

Favorite restaurant with NO kids? Tratto.

What made you choose your children's names? Milly was a name I always loved and had it on my name list since I started one :) My husband came up with Franklin and we both just fell in love with it. Gwendolyn was a family name on my husband's side. All of our kids' middle names are family names (Frances is my mom's name, Paul is my husband's middle name and Ann is my middle name).

If you were to have one day all to yourself (no kids/family/husband) how would you spend it? I would probably start off with a long workout, hike or tennis. Then head to a hotel pool for hours! Then grab drinks and dinner at a very adult place!

What has been your favorite age so far with your kids? OOO that's hard to say. It's really cliché but I've loved all the stages. There are definitely hard times, especially during covid but they are so fun right now in their own way.

What is one thing you would share with someone new to NCPG? Dive in! You're surrounded by mamas that are going through the same things as you and your teacher is an incredible resource.



Ilyssa Reading *Membership*

Kids names (ages): Kate (2 1/2), Oliver (9)

2020/2021 NCPG Class: 3A

Where did you grow up? I was born in New Jersey, but moved to Scottsdale in Kindergarten and have been in the Phoenix area ever since!

What made you decide to do the board another year? Joining the Board last year was an amazing

experience, so the decision to stay on for another year as one of the Membership Co-Chairs was an easy choice to make! I loved the opportunity to meet so many wonderful women and work alongside them to make NCPG the best it can be, and look forward to doing the same for the 2020-2021 year!

People might not know... that I have been to 48 out of 50 states! I'm missing South Carolina and North Dakota.

Favorite family restaurant? Sushiholic.

Favorite restaurant with NO kids? City Hall.

What made you choose your children's names? Kate is named after my great-grandmother, Catherine, and my husband's grandmother, Olive (her middle name). Oliver's middle names are Aaron Ross, which are after my two grandfathers. His first name was actually chosen after I went to a psychic while I was pregnant and she told me that he preferred that name over the other one we were considering (true story haha).

If you were to have one day all to yourself (no kids/family/husband) how would you spend it? I would have a spa day with my girlfriends followed by dinner on an outdoor patio somewhere.

What has been your favorite "age" so far with your kids? 2 1/2 is pretty great! The tantrums are rough, but I love the silliness and sassiness that comes with my daughter becoming more verbal and independent!

What is one thing you would share with someone new to NCPG? Take full advantage of the knowledge of your teacher, as well as the other moms in your class. Reach out often and make plans to spend time together outside of class.

I love knowing that I have a group of moms who I can reach out to at any time who are right there in the trenches with me.



Michelle Van Der Werf

Membership

Kids names (ages): Finn (8), Ascher (2), Landon (5 mos)

2020/2021 NCPG Class: 3A

Where did you grow up? Seattle, WA

What made you want to join the board? I

have been a member for the past three years and have been so thankful for all of the support, knowledge and resources from NCPG so I decided I wanted to give back to the organization by volunteering my time to continue the mission of a supportive community for mothers.

People might not know....I went to college in Boulder, CO and then lived in Atlanta before heading back west to Arizona.

Favorite family restaurant? La Grande Orange for the vegan pizza.

Favorite restaurant with NO kids? Century Grand

What made you choose your children's names? We selected middle names all from close family members.

Funny story/quote from one of your kids? If you were to have one day all to yourself (no kids/family/husband) how would you spend it? I always love a day at Joya spa followed by reading a book and enjoying a glass of wine at the pool overlooking Camelback.

What has been your favorite "age" so far with your kids? I actually love the toddler years because they are still so cuddly, full of excitement for the little things and every day they seem to develop more and more in to such capable little humans. It is just so fun to watch!

What is one thing you would share with someone new to NCPG? This is such an amazing network of moms and you receive content that you can apply daily to motherhood. You can text them at any hour and someone will be there to support you and offer advice. NCPG made the early days of motherhood so much easier and made everything that was so foreign feel normal.



Jen Dupuy *Education*

Kids names (ages): Beau (2yr 3mo), Blake (4mo)

2020/2021 NCPG Class: 3A

Where did you grow up? Leawood, KS

What made you want to join the board? I have loved being a member of NCPG for the past three years and wanted to contribute to the organization's continued success and support for its members.

Favorite family restaurant? Anywhere outdoors when the weather permits but also finding that our toddler does better at Casa Dupuy :)

Favorite restaurant with NO kids? Hillstone

What made you choose your children's names? My husband, Mike, has always loved the name Beau so he won that discussion (I love it, too) and then we just like how Blake sounded with Beau.

If you were to have one day all to yourself (no kids/family/husband) how would you spend it? A morning hike followed by as many hours as possible at a spa.

What has been your favorite age so far with your kids? Too tough to choose — we haven't been in it long and each stage 0-27months has been so fun as they start to learn the world and develop quite the personalities

What is one thing you would share with someone new to NCPG? Go all in — work to get to know your classmates and use the support system that these women provide as you navigate parenthood and life.

(continued on next page)



Emma Pegues *Education*

Kids names (ages): Reed (2), Calhoun (9 months)
2020/2021 NCPG Class: 3B
Where did you grow up? New Orleans, LA
What made you want to join the board? I just moved to town and could

immediately see how special NCPG was! I wanted to be a part of something so great for the local community.

Do you have a hidden talent? Um, I know all the words to every Ludacris song? Don't print that.

Favorite family restaurant? We moved here 6 days before COVID shut everything down, so we've never been out to eat in Phoenix. Looking for recommendations!

What made you choose your children's names? Reed and Calhoun are both family names. Reed is named for my father, who is named for one of the founding families of Tupelo, Mississippi. Calhoun is a family name on my mother's side, as well as the name of the street in New Orleans my mother grew up on.

Funny story/quote from one of your kids? Too many to count - the boys keep us in stitches.

If you were to have one day all to yourself how would you spend it? A day on the lake with girlfriends, cocktails, and a private chef!

What has been your favorite age so far with your kids? I love where we are now! I'm excited for our littlest to be 18 months old — that is such a sweet age.

What is one thing you would share with someone new to NCPG? Don't be afraid to just jump in, everyone's experiences are different, valid, and so valuable!



Whitney Emmerson *Childcare*

Kids names (ages): Harper (3)
2019/2020 NCPG Class: 3A
Where did you grow up? I grew up in Denver Colorado, but have lived in Phoenix, New Jersey, Santa Monica, New York City, and now back in Phoenix.

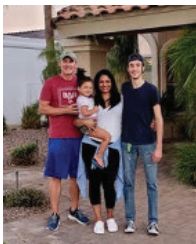
What made you decide to do the board another year? This is my second year on the board and second year doing Childcare. I have loved being a part of the organization and am grateful for the connections I have made on the board. I also enjoy giving back to an organization I strongly believe in.

Favorite family restaurant? Chelsea's Kitchen or Ingo's
Favorite restaurant with NO kids? Hillstone or Buck & Rider

What made you choose your children's names? I have always loved the name Harper. We wanted to incorporate a family name as well, so her middle name is Rose after my husband's grandmother.

If you were to have one day all to yourself (no kids/family/husband) how would you spend it? A spa day and/or lounging by the pool or on a beach, reading a good book.

What has been your favorite "age" so far with your kids? I have really loved each stage for different reasons. If I had to pick a favorite, I would probably say 1 to 2 years old. They learn so much during this time and really come into their unique personalities. It's so amazing to see their growth day-by-day at this stage!



Dilini Malsom *Childcare*

Kids names (ages): Stepson Chase (19), Daughter Nilani (3 in Sept)
2020/2021 NCPG Class: 3B
Where did you grow up? Los Angeles, CA — I'm an original "Valley Girl"
What made you decide to do the board another year? Last year I was a Fundraising Co-Chair and

helped plan the Gala, and this year I'm a Childcare Co-Chair.
Do you have a hidden talent? Not that I know of... It's hidden... I haven't figured it out yet!
People might not know.... Prior to moving to AZ 3 years ago, I lived the first 41 years of my life in LA.
Favorite family restaurant? Grassroots
Favorite restaurant with NO kids? Café Monarch

What made you choose your children's names? People think my husband, Neal, and I combined our names to make Nilani's name... but we didn't! It's a Sri Lankan name meaning 'enchanted moon' (to go with our German last name).

If you were to have one day all to yourself (no kids/family/husband) how would you spend it? I'd probably spend it in bed watching reality tv and Lifetime movies... unjudged

What has been your favorite "age" so far with your kids? So far, I've loved every age as it has come... I love the discovery that is happening at these young stages!

What is one thing you would share with someone new to NCPG? Go to the group get dinners and get to know the girls in your group... even tho they are 'new' friends, they are going through the same developmental stages and challenges with their kids as you are and will become your new 'mom tribe'!



Jenn Barham *Special Events*

Kids names (ages): Preston (2), Ainsley (1)
2020/2021 NCPG Class: 2 A
Where did you grow up? Raleigh, NC
What made you want to join the board? I love planning fun activities for groups of people!
Do you have a hidden talent? I can listen to Baby Shark on repeat for three hours.

People might not know.... I was on Let's Make A Deal and won!
Favorite family restaurant? Rainforest Cafe - Preston and Ainsley love the animals!
Favorite restaurant with NO kids? White Chocolate Grill
What made you choose your children's names? They are rather unique with a twist of traditional.

Funny story/quote from one of your kids? Preston loves to watch Super Wings. In one episode, a cat gets trapped in the recycling and then rescued. Preston watched that episode multiple times a day. Even though he is allergic, my husband bought Preston a kitten. Preston and Ainsley affectionately named him "Meow."

If you were to have one day all to yourself (no kids/family/husband) how would you spend it? A spa to get a massage and a fun cocktail.

What has been your favorite "age" so far with your kids? Age 2 because it is so fun watching them learn to speak and try new things.

What is one thing you would share with someone new to NCPG? We are all trying to figure out this mom thing, so don't hesitate to ask a question. This group has a ton of knowledge and recommendations.



Sara Gullickson *Special Events*

Kids names (ages): River (15 months), Savanna (Due October 4th, 2020)
2020/2021 NCPG Class: 1a or 2a
Where did you grow up? Minnetonka, MN
What made you want to join the board? As a new mom, I wanted to get involved in the

organization to surround myself with likeminded, smart, sophisticated women that want to make a difference in the world we raise our children in.

Do you have a hidden talent? Humm, I guess I'd say business is my hidden talent. When I was younger I don't think anyone would have guessed I'd

become a business woman, at that point it was hard to make me pay attention to anything longer than a few minutes.

Favorite family restaurant? I love taking my son to LGO for breakfast in the morning! We have been going since he was just a few months old.

Favorite restaurant with NO kids? Steak 44 or SushiHolic for a quick casual bite.

What made you choose your children's names? We struggled so much with figuring out a name for my son. I had all the lists going, was using all the apps, and had "decided" on a few that we agreed on and I heard the name River and it just stuck. Everyone says "you will just know" and we did.

Funny story/quote from one of your kids? We aren't there yet. But a few "first" words are Mary (our dog), shoes, and cheese, in addition to the moms, dads, wow, uhoh and ball.

If you were to have one day all to yourself (no kids/family/husband) how would you spend it? At the spa with wine.

What has been your favorite "age" so far with your kids? I felt like things really started to click at ONE. Rivers personality has come out so much, he walks and has become so much more independent and all around happier to be able to explore on his own.

What is one thing you would share with someone new to NCPG? That it's been amazing. The women in my group are smart, supportive and compassionate. Id recommend everyone finding their tribe of women to raise their kids with. I cant imagine doing it without them.



Channa Abramson *Social*

Kids names (ages): Max (4), Grant (2)
2020/2021 NCPG Class: 4B
Where did you grow up? I was born & raised in North Dakota, lived a short time in Minneapolis and have been in the Phoenix area since 2008.

What made you want to join the board? NCPG has been such a great network of wonderful people and

I wanted the opportunity to get involved, give back and meet even more awesome mamas.

Favorite family restaurant? Isabella's Kitchen
Favorite restaurant with NO kids? Postino, City Hall, and there are so many others I want to try.

What made you choose your children's names? Max is named after his great grandfather, and it was a must that their names are easily spelled & pronounced.

Funny story/quote from one of your kids? If you were to have one day all to yourself (no kids/family/husband) how would you spend it? Doing something active outside, brunch with friends, a pool/spa day & a good book

What has been your favorite "age" so far with your kids? I'm enjoying this time right now: they are cracking me up daily with their personalities and comprehension. Not to mention packing for travel is getting lighter and easier.

What is one thing you would share with someone new to NCPG? NCPG has been a great source of education and support. Each member is here to learn and meet other parents. Participate when you can... you truly get what you put in!



Katrina Makhni *Social*

Kids names (ages): Amara (3)
2020/2021 NCPG Class: 4B
Where did you grow up? Indiana
What made you want to join the board? This is my fourth year in NCPG and I was Class Rep last year. I really enjoyed it and wanted to get more involved this year.

People might not know.... My husband is British and we lived in a tiny

mountain/border town for 3 years with a population of 5000 people.
Favorite family restaurant? Isabella's Kitchen
Favorite restaurant with NO kids? Sushi Roku or Eddie V's
What made you choose your children's names? We wanted an A name and fell in love with Amara when we heard it
Funny quote from one of your kids? "it's not lost, it's just gone missing."

If you were to have one day all to yourself (no kids/family/husband) how would you spend it? At the beach with a good book and my own music!

What has been your favorite "age" so far with your kids? 1-2 years old
What is one thing you would share with someone new to NCPG? Don't be intimidated or afraid to get involved and ask questions. This is an amazing group of ladies that are truly supportive!



Aarika Gaona *Public Relations*

Kids names (ages): Leo (2.5)
2020/2021 NCPG Class: 3A
Where did you grow up? Phoenix! People are always surprised when I say I'm a native.

What made you want to join the board? I am friends with a few of the board members from last years and I was just ready to get more involved with NCPG!

Do you have a hidden talent? I am weirdly crafty, and can bake a pretty great cake, if I do say so myself.

People might not know.... I can't think of anything too surprising, but I do have my masters in social work, which people might not know.

Favorite family restaurant? Mi Patio, our favorite local Mexican food restaurant
Favorite restaurant with NO kids? Anywhere with margaritas and a great patio.

What made you choose your children's names? Leo was the one and only boy name my husband and I agreed on.

Funny story/quote from one of your kids? Not necessarily a quote, but when Leo wants to tell us to "enjoy" something he says "BEjoy that, mama (or dada)." One of those toddler-isms that we think is pretty cute.

If you were to have one day all to yourself (no kids/family/husband) how would you spend it? I would go to brunch, get a massage, and probably just enjoy being by myself.

What has been your favorite "age" so far with your kids? I would have to say the stage were are in now. While it can definitely have its challenges, this 2-2.5 stage is so fun. Leo is so talkative and we love it.

What is one thing you would share with someone new to NCPG? Just jump in! Introduce yourself! I wish I would have joined sooner, but so glad I did last year.



Arlee Maracigan *Fundraising*

Kids names (ages): Cooper (18 months) and stepson Cash (6).
2020/2021 NCPG Class: 2A
Where did you grow up? Tucson, Arizona... Go Wildcats!
What made you want to join the board? I

wanted to be more involved in something and when I got the opportunity to work with Melissa Collins last year, I knew joining the board would be perfect for me.

Do you have a hidden talent? Nope
People might not know.... I am a Newborn Care Specialist!
Favorite family restaurant? Arizona Country Club
Favorite restaurant with NO kids? Mastro's City Hall
What made you choose your children's names? Cooper, his brother and dad all have the same initials! We thought Cooper was a pretty cool name just like his brother Cash.

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Funny story/quote from one of your kids? My stepson Cash is so smart. Actually if you tell Cash that he is smart he will correct you and tell you he is a GENIUS.. not smart.. a GENIUS.

If you were to have one day all to yourself (no kids/family/husband) how would you spend it? Oh that would be so amazing ha ha. I would go to radi8 hot yoga, then grab a juice from Kaleidoscope, a Stetson Chopped from Super Chunk and head to a LONG massage at Joya Spa.

What has been your favorite “age” so far with your kids? Definitely 18 months! Cooper is saying so many words and being so silly!

What is one thing you would share with someone new to NCPG? I would share with them the time the ladies in my class helped me through Postpartum. They were so supportive and kind. I needed that so much during that time. NCPG is a place where you can share your thoughts, feelings and struggles with other moms and know these women are here to support you with whatever they can.



Rachel Patel *Fundraising*

Kids names (ages): Priya (3.5)

2020/2021 NCPG Class: 4A

Where did you grow up? I grew up in Kansas City. I moved to Phoenix in 2004 after visiting a friend who had moved here. It was snowing back home and 70 degrees here!

What made you join the board? NCPG has meant so much to me as a new mom. I made friends I know I will have for a lifetime. I really wanted to have a way to give back to an organization that has given me so much.

Hidden Talent: I don't know if it's really a talent, but I love taking classes to learn new things, such as bread making, sewing, making jam, crème anglaise, growing citrus and berries, art...you name it! I actually just made some jam and bread this weekend! I've sewn clothes for my daughter (don't look too close, though!), too.

People might not know: I'm an only child.

What made you choose your child's name? It was the first one we could agree on AND when I wrote it down on a piece of paper for people at work, everyone pronounced it correctly!

Funny Quote/Story about my kids? One day my daughter saw the “poo” emoji during FaceTime and yelled “Look Daddy! It's chocolate ice cream! I want to be chocolate ice-cream!!!”



Ashley Stewart *Fundraising*

Kids names (ages): Stone (1)

2020/2021 NCPG Class: ???

Where did you grow up? 2nd generation Arizona native! Phoenix, AZ

What made you want to join the board? I joined the NCPG board because I have loved

being a member this past year and want to share NCPG with other moms in the years to come. I think there is nothing better than having mom friends who are navigating life just the same.

Do you have a hidden talent? I can gut and clean a fish.

People might not know.... I was a wedding planner for 15 years.

Favorite family restaurant? Postmates!

Favorite restaurant with NO kids? We love steakhouses and go everywhere but our staple date night is AZ88.

What made you choose your children's names? Stone is my maiden name.

Funny story/quote from one of your kids? He's too young to quote! But everyday we have belly laughs doing pillow fights, peek a boo and tickles.

If you were to have one day all to yourself (no kids/family/husband) how would you spend it? Spa all day followed up with a sushi dinner.

What has been your favorite “age” so far with your kids? Every day gets better and better.

What is one thing you would share with someone new to NCPG? Communicate regularly with the girls in your class. Whether it is doing brunch or just Group texts. Having a group of moms to ask questions, share advice with is priceless.



Krystal Grogan *Community Outreach*

Kids names (ages): Graham (2) and Jett (8 months)

2020/2021 NCPG Class: 2B

Where did you grow up? Both North and South Carolina.

What made you decide to do the board another year? I really appreciate the opportunity to serve alongside such a strong, creative and dedicated

group of mamas. Being on the board last year showed me the difference each role could truly have for the entire NCPG organization.

Do you have a hidden talent? Hmm, I'm really good at crossword puzzles, ha.

People might not know....I was a state swimmer in high school.

Favorite family restaurant? Wally's in Gainey Ranch!

Favorite restaurant with NO kids? Date night on the patio at PVCC

What made you choose your children's names? Graham is named after the southern evangelist, Billy Graham, who we admire as a faithful leader. Jett is named after the idea of traveling as we desire our boys to see the world.

Funny story/quote from one of your kids? Graham is obsessed with sleeping in his baseball caps.

If you were to have one day all to yourself (no kids/family/husband) how would you spend it? I'd fly to a baseball game in a ballpark I've never been.

What has been your favorite “age” so far with your kids? I absolutely love 6 months for the new chatters and giggles then again around a year old when they start wobbling their way to walking. Darling!

What is one thing you would share with someone new to NCPG? The more you pour into it, the more you get out; take advantage of being around such a wonderful group of mamas going through the same stages as your family.



Jen Malone *Community Outreach*

Kids names (ages): Madison (4)

2020/2021 NCPG Class: Pre K

Where did you grow up? Phoenix

What made you decide to do the board another year? This is my second year on the board. I joined because NCPG has given me so much though education and friendships formed. I wanted to give

back...plus last year was so fun!

People might not know... That I work part time for a non-profit called Balsz Community Education Foundation. I help the school district raise money. It's a great little school district. Consider donating your tax credits to them!

Favorite family restaurant? Lou's at Papago

Favorite restaurant with NO kids? Hillstone, Tarbell's Tavern

What made you choose your children's names? We loved the alliteration of Maddie Malone. Her middle name is her Grandmother's name which is Grace.

If you were to have one day all to yourself how would you spend it? At a spa with drinks and girlfriends. I hope this can happen again one day.

What has been your favorite “age” so far with your kids? I would say this year at age 4. She is so funny and her full personality is coming through. Plus we are finally getting over some of the tantrums!

What is one thing you would share with someone new to NCPG? Dive in! You will make some of the most important and lasting friendships if you do.



Cristina Kiernan *Alternate Director*

Kids names (ages): Quinn (5) and Cece (3)

2020/2021 NCPG Class: Kindergarten

Where did you grow up? I grew up in Phoenix, but moved to Dallas for college and then SF. My husband and our daughters just moved back to AZ two years ago to be close to family.

What made you want to join the board? It's a great way to get involved and meet other moms.

Favorite family restaurant? Ingo's, LGO, Rita's Kitchen

Favorite restaurant with NO kids? Tratto, Virtu

What made you choose your children's names? Quinn and Elliott are two of our grandmother's maiden names from each side. Celia Grace is after my mom's middle name,

Funny story/quote from one of your kids? This morning my 3-year-old came into the family room during my kindergartener's zoom call with one of my bras on and announced that she has boobies now! Luckily, we were still on mute!

If you were to have one day all to yourself (no kids/family/husband) how would you spend it? No COVID at a spa with a good book and an afternoon glass of wine.

What has been your favorite “age” so far with your kids? They've all had their ups and downs but honestly watching their friendship grow during all of this craziness has been pretty magical.

What is one thing you would share with someone new to NCPG? Get involved as much as you can – I was worried about making it to all classes as a working mom but it's been a great way to meet new people.

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WEATHERING THE STORM TOGETHER:

THE PANDEMIC TIGHTENS FAMILY TIES

By: Ken Dychtwald and Bob Morison Contributor, Aug 25, 2020, [forbes.com](#)

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated many trends, very noticeably in how we use information and communications technology to work, learn, socialize, and receive products and services including health care remotely. As we discussed in an earlier post, it is strengthening the trends to retire later and plan to be working part-time in retirement. The pandemic is also accelerating the trend toward greater family, community, and intergenerational connection. We are collectively pausing to consider what matters most in life, and family, friends, and relationships are most often atop the list. Two-thirds of Americans say the pandemic has brought them closer to their family.

EMOTIONAL AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT

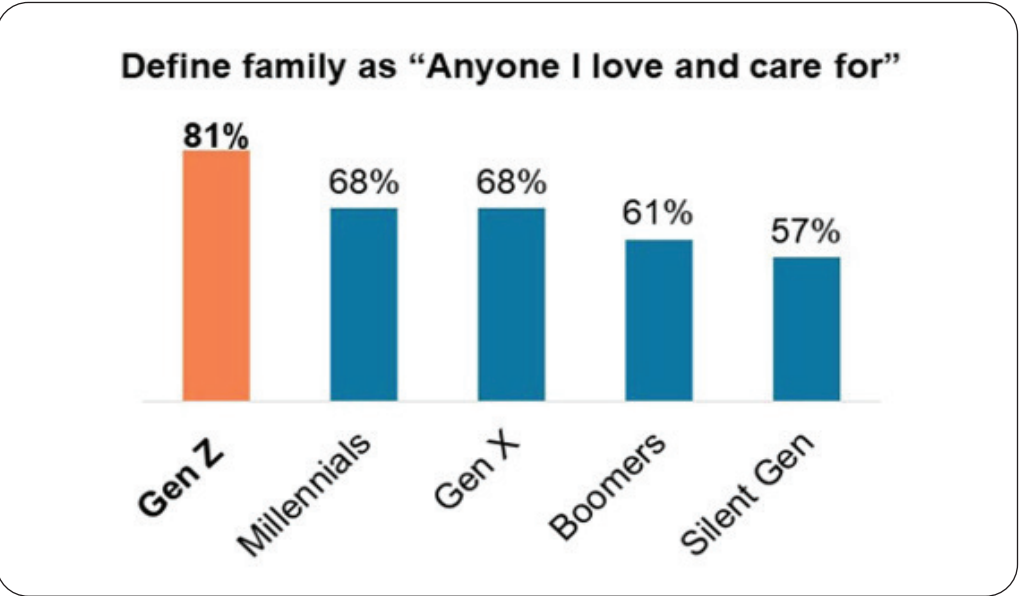
Recently released research from Edward Jones, Age Wave (our research organization), and The Harris Poll finds that the pandemic has led older Americans to worry about their children more and talk to them more. And it goes both ways – American adults with living parents are worrying about them more and communicating with them more often. This mutual support is pragmatic as well as emotional. Some 24 million Americans, or one-fourth of all parents with adult children, have provided them financial support due to the COVID-19 pandemic. That’s on top of the regular financial support that parents commonly provide to adult children in their twenties and early thirties. Seven in ten of these early adults had already received financial support from their parents in the last year. Families are also moving in together as more early adults, sometimes with young families in tow, “boomerang” home to live with their parents, and as older parents move in to receive needed care. Multigenerational households (those with more than one generation of adults) have been on a steady rise for the past 40 years, and one on five American households is now multigenerational. Lost employment and health concerns in the pandemic are motivating families to combine, temporarily if not permanently. The youngest generation of adults (Gen Z, 18-23 years old) are most likely to have received financial support from their parents (37%), moved in with their parents (26%), and relied more on their parents in general (35%) amid the pandemic. But again it’s not a one-way street. Nearly one in five retirees say they are relying more on their adult children because of COVID-19, and among Americans age 75 and older it’s one in four. There’s a kind of intergenerational exchange going on. Gen Z is receiving the most support, and 43% of them say they have helped their parents with technology during the pandemic – setting up videoconferencing and getting more adept at ordering products and consuming services online.

THE NEW FAMILY LANDSCAPE

This growing interdependence is happening against a backdrop of changing family structure. Greater longevity and evolving social norms are redefining the meaning of “family.” One American in three is part of a four-generation family – parents, children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren – and five- and even six-generation families are becoming more common. So are blended families. Two-thirds of remarriages

involve children from previous marriages, and 40% of Americans have at least one step-relative. One-parent households are on the rise, as are single-person households, including among older adults who are divorced, widowed, or always single. The “nuclear family” of married couples with 2.5 children turns out to have been a rather short-lived American phenomenon.

Over 70 million Americans are grandparents, and they are a growing force in family life. Nearby or live-in grandparents are the primary childcare providers for one in four children of preschool age. Some 4.6 million children live in the same household as their grandparents, almost half of them with no parents on hand. Generosity is most grandparents’ calling card. They spend an estimated \$18 billion annually on clothes for grandchildren, \$15 billion on toys, \$10 billion on vacations, and over \$30 billion toward college costs. That leads to an interesting question that consumer products and services providers can’t ignore: Who’s the buyer? Today’s new retirees may be buying and spending on behalf of four generations – their children, grandchildren, parents, and themselves.



We said the meaning of “family” is changing. That’s literally true, especially among younger generations. Gen Z overwhelmingly defines family as “anyone they love and care for, regardless of whether they are related by blood, marriage or adoption.” Two-thirds of Millennials and Gen X agree. They believe in “families of affinity,” or “families of choice.” Although many older Americans think more traditionally about family, the majority agree with the younger generations.

Edward Jones/Age Wave Study, “The Four Pillars of the New Retirement,” 2020 (Base: U.S. adults by ... [+] EDWARD JONES

KEEPING THE FAMILY BANK SOLVENT

Most people do whatever it takes, personally and financially, to support family members in need. Seven in ten retirees say they are willing to offer financial support to family, even if it could jeopardize their own financial futures. Those who are parents and grandparents are even more willing to do so.

In our new book, What Retirees Want: A Holistic View of Life’s Third Age, we detail the financial – and often emotional – pitfalls of playing what we call the “family bank” by lending, or more often simply giving, money to family members. The bank was open 24/7, in person and remotely, long before the pandemic.

The family bank may help meet a one-time need such as an extraordinary medical expense, or it could provide ongoing everyday assistance over the course of many years. The most common recipients are adult children, but others include parents or in-laws, grandchildren, and other relatives. HSBC reports that globally 50% of parents provide regular financial support to their children over 18, and 54% provide support to their parents. The aggregate annual amount spent by all parents on early adult children is enormous – over \$500 billion, or twice what they put into their retirement accounts. Educational expenses account for only one-fourth of the total.

Why do people, even on fixed incomes and tight budgets in retirement, play the family banker? Half say they felt an obligation to family members, but eight in ten simply say, “It’s the right thing to do.” However, few retirees or pre-retirees anticipate and plan for providing financial support to family members. Nine in ten have never budgeted for such support, including the easily envisioned need to assist aging parents. And most have never really discussed expectations and terms between giver and recipient. In retrospect, family bankers often wish they’d established clearer expectations and limits, especially with adult children.

This generosity can backfire when people sacrifice their own retirement savings and financial security to support family members. And being generous today can mean being strapped tomorrow, perhaps to the point of becoming a burden on those family members, something that retirees from all walks of life tell us they dread.

Family and intergenerational generosity is the rule, perhaps never more so than in this pandemic. But it’s still worth anticipating what extraordinary financial support may cost the whole family – not just the generous individual or couple – down the road.

This is the seventh in a 10-part series on “The Future of Retirement” that we are posting over the course of several months. If you are interested in better understanding what’s ahead, we invite you to check out our new book What Retirees Want: A Holistic View of Life’s Third Age.

Recipe: Turkey-Spinach Meatballs

By: bonappetit.com



Ingredients

MARINARA SAUCE

- ¼ cup olive oil
- ½ small onion, chopped
- 1 garlic finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- ¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 1 28-oz. can whole peeled tomatoes

MEATBALLS

- Nonstick vegetable oil spray
- 1 large egg, beaten to blend
- ¼ small onion, finely chopped
- 1 clove garlic finely chopped
- 1½ pound ground turkey, preferably 93% lean or less
- 1 10-oz. package frozen chopped spinach, thawed, squeezed in paper towels to remove excess moisture
- ½ cup finely grated Parmesan or Pecorino
- ½ cup plain dried breadcrumbs
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley
- 1 teaspoon fennel seeds
- 1 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 2 tablespoons olive oil

Preparation

MARINARA SAUCE

- Heat oil in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Cook onion, stirring often, until soft but not brown, about 5 minutes. Add garlic, oregano, and red pepper flakes; season with salt and pepper and cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add tomato paste and 1 Tbsp. water and cook, stirring, until tomato paste coats onion and begins to darken, about 3 minutes.
- Add tomatoes to saucepan, crushing with your hands as you add them. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, and gently simmer until slightly thickened, 20–25 minutes; season with salt and pepper.

MEATBALLS

- Preheat broiler. Cover a rimmed baking sheet with foil and coat with nonstick spray.
- Using your hands or a fork, gently mix egg, onion, garlic, turkey, spinach, Parmesan, breadcrumbs, parsley, fennel seeds, lemon zest, and salt in a large bowl just until combined. Scoop out turkey mixture by the ¼-cupful and form into balls (you should have about 20). Place on prepared baking sheet, spacing 2" apart; brush with oil.
- Broil meatballs, turning often, until browned all over and cooked through, 15–18 minutes. Add to marinara sauce.
- **DO AHEAD:** Meatballs with marinara sauce can be made 2 weeks ahead. Let cool completely and freeze individual portions in resealable plastic bags. Run under tepid water to loosen from bag and gently reheat, covered, until meatballs are warmed through and sauce is bubbling, 15–20 minutes.



These are just a few of the ways that parents describe their experiences of Music Together. Music Together helps young children discover their inner music-maker by playing with the grownups they love. Not only is Music Together teaching families the value & joys of making music with their children, but they are also giving children a chance to grow into confident, creative movers and shakers while empowering the grownups to nurture this musical growth.

Music Together in Phoenix just celebrated 20 years of bringing music classes to families in the Valley, and even amidst a pandemic, they are providing programming to enrich childhood learning. They have classes curated for families which nurture children musically from infants all the way to eight-year-olds. As they discover the joy of singing, moving and jamming on rhythm instruments, children learn that music making is fun and that it is something to be shared by the whole family and community! The music learning also supports all their other learning: imagination and creativity, language and cognitive growth, social and emotional development, just to name a few. Kathy Rowe, the Music Together in Phoenix center director, founder and teacher, shares joyfully, "It is so inspiring to see children's musical growth that happens over our years together, but I truly value seeing & hearing how families connect & bond through their music time . . . together. They are creating music memories that can last a lifetime!"

More than just learning and growing for the child, Music Together takes pride in creating a warm, supportive environment for parents and caregivers to connect and have fun with their little ones. "We are empowering families to provide a musical childhood for their children by giving them all the tools to play & make music every day with their children at home!" Each season of Music Together classes uses a carefully selected collection of tunes for families to play and sing to at home, bringing the music and joy everywhere they go.

While the current COVID-19 pandemic has brought in-person classes to a halt, Music Together in Phoenix is still making music with interactive online classes. "After 23 years of leading classes at Music Together, I can honestly say that I still get excited to be able to continue

to make music with families each and every week, even if it happens virtually!" Kathy says. "We are sharing the love while making beautiful music together through Zoom & Facebook Live classes."

"More than just a music class, Music Together is about connecting – with your child, with music and with other families in your community. Playful & enriching, its quality time & fun (for everyone!) with benefits that extend far beyond our online classes!" Visit <https://www.musictogetherinphx.com/index.aspx> for more information on classes and schedule a FREE visit!

Written by Helena Häber, a Music Together graduate and filmmaker, musician, and tea enthusiast from Phoenix, Arizona. You can find her at your local library or dancing while making eggs. She is perpetually seeking joy.

Music Together
in Phoenix

Contact us to visit a ZOOM class!



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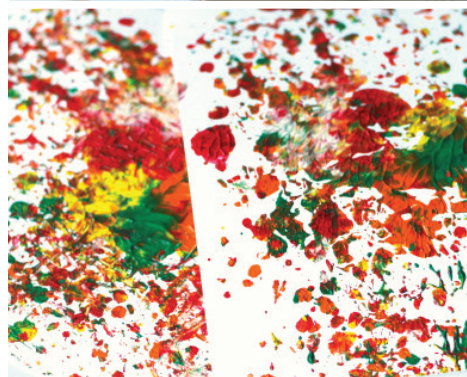
Materials Needed:

- Paint: Yellow, Green, Red, Orange
- Disposable Box
- White paper
- Pinecones

Directions:

Painting with novel objects is one of my favorite ways of exploring process art with preschoolers. Using tools other than paintbrushes sparks creativity and the ability to think outside of the box. The process is the point, seeing how the tools work with the paint colors, and it's fun to ask children how they think this object will work in place of a paintbrush. Pinecone painting is a wonderful way of bringing some nature into your classroom during the fall.

1. Pop the paper in the box and squirt a little paint in the middle of the paper.
2. Add in the pinecones.
3. Gently roll the pinecones in all directions, careful not to let them fall out of the box.
4. Keep rolling until the artist is sure it's all done.
5. Let dry and display.



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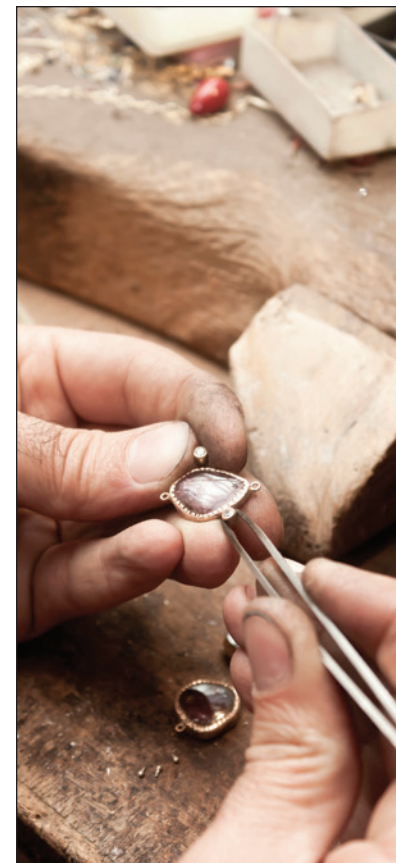


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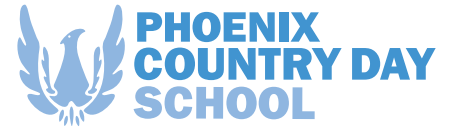
Save the Date

Our Preschool & Kindergarten Open House will be held on Wednesday, October 28th. Please visit our admissions page on the school website at school.sfxphx.org for the details.

Preschool & Kindergarten
Open House
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