

Los Niños News©

September 2014

LNNS Staff Welcome

Miren and I would like to welcome all of the new and returning children to your school. We have some great new ideas and all of the traditional favorites too. Welcome also to all of our parents. We hope you will enjoy our newsletters. We publish once a month and solicit your news items. We'll be keeping you up to date on the latest research in Early Childhood Education and Parenting. Most important is keeping you posted about events at Los Niños. (Apologies to our returning parents: there may be some recurring stories for our new parents.)

Happy Birthday!

This is a big month at Los Niños Nursery School. We begin our 40th year, the building begins it's 70th year and Tom begins his 70th year!

Is ADHD Overdiagnosed?

UC Berkeley professors Scheffler and Hinshaw believe that it is. And because of the growing popularity of school-based performance measures even at the pre-school level... "Unless we're careful, today's preschool bandwagon could lead straight to an epidemic of 4- and 5-year-olds wrongfully being told that they have attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

Introducing millions of 3- to 5-year-olds to classrooms and pre-academic demands means that many more distracted kids will undoubtedly catch the attention of teachers." Make no mistake... our young children are being put in settings that are not right for them and consequently they are given negative labels like ADHD and medicated for the profit of Big Pharma. (BTW 14,000 American 2&3 year old children are now medicated for ADHD! Shire Pharmaceuticals is marketing directly to mothers at: www.keepmommomg.com Gag me.) The goals of Early Childhood Education today are not consistent with the needs of young children. I am seriously sounding the alarm and asking that you parents stand up with your local teachers to fight the test based takeover of our public schools!

How Did Einstein Play?

"What's it like to be a baby? It's like being in love in Paris for the first time after you've had three double espressos."

(Alison Gopnik) When children play and pretend, they are engaged in counterfactual thinking... like Einstein wondering what would happen if a train went at the speed of light. Read more: <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/Let-the-Children-Play-Its-Good-for-Them.html#ixzz22d2J3vMq>. And you can watch Dr. Gopnik, of UC Berkeley, speaking at a TED conference: http://www.ted.com/talks/alison_gopnik_what_do_babies_think.html

Tom Makes A Difference!

From John Friedman at Harvard: "a surprising new bottom-line look at early learning suggests how much you learn in Early Childhood — and whether you had a *seasoned teacher* — can help determine how rich and educated you will be as a grown-up, and even whether you will be married before age 30." Hey, they don't get any more *seasoned* than Tom!

Oh, Tom, Why All This Talk About Social Skills?

Well, because of Watson and Crick of course!

James Watson and Francis Crick, as you know, discovered the structure of DNA...a rather important event in Science and Medicine. In his book, *A Passion for DNA*, Watson admonishes: "It's very hard to succeed in science if you don't want to be with other scientists". He went on to say that it was only because of his collaboration with Crick that they were able to make their discovery and that competent social interaction between scientists is essential to all scientific discovery. Our children

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may not make discoveries like the secret of Life, but we want them to be positioned, cognitively and socially, to do wonderful things with their lives...and who knows?

Videos: Not So Smart!

Researchers at the University of Washington have found that the videos marketed by Baby Einstein, Brainy Baby and other producers of videos for infants may not make babies smarter and could even have the opposite effect. Such videos could actually slow language development, the study revealed. The report, released in August 2007, concluded that for every hour children spent watching those programs, they understood an average of six to eight fewer words than infants who didn't watch them. The babies exposed to the videos also got scores on language skills tests that were 17 percent lower than those of the babies who weren't.

"We don't think there is any evidence that it is good for development at all", declared the Authors... and we at Los Niños heartily agree! Beware, Disney, just like the phonics scams of the early 2000s will be back. There is a lot of money to be made from naïve, but well meaning parents.

Why We Talk Good At LNNS

New research from Vanderbilt University's Peabody College finds: "Preschool teachers' use of sophisticated vocabulary and analytic discussions about books combined with early support for literacy in the home can predict stronger fourth-grade reading comprehension and word recognition."

Stay In HMB!

From the S.J. Mercury about the new Harker's Pre-School in San Jose where they stress: "***Kids Come First***"...At Harker, Our philosophy is 'Play is Learning' ...preschoolers will choose from an array of activities based on their interest at the moment. As kids explore, teachers facilitate social skills and encourage curiosity, discovery and problem-solving. The idea is that children learn best when concepts are meaningful and relevant to them." Sound familiar? At Harker's that philosophy comes in at \$25/hr... at LNNS \$9/hr. And we have a much better view!

Lego and Shell!!

We all like Lego Toys... but you have enough around your house for a while. Using toys to advertise any kind of product to young children is wrong. But it's particularly harmful to sell children on Shell, a company whose environmental record sucks. Lego and Shell have partnered to market Shell to children...don't help them!

Tee Vee vs. Parent Communication...Who Wins?

Scientists at Ohio State Univ. have compared parent-child communication while watching TV to reading books or playing with toys to reveal the impact on children's development. The results, published in *Human Communication Research*, show that watching TV can lead to less interaction between parents and children, with a detrimental impact on literacy and language skills. ***Golly, Tom, could that be true?***

The study, conducted by Amy Nathanson and Eric Rasmussen from Ohio State University, focused on 'parental responsiveness' to parents who are responsive to their child's communication promote a positive self-perception for the child as well as fostering trust in the parent. Positive responses help the child learn that they can affect their environment," said Nathanson. "However, if parental responsiveness is absent, children learn that their environment is unpredictable and may become anxious, knowing that their bids for attention or help may be ignored."

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The results demonstrated that who parents co-read books communicated significantly more with their children than those watching TV. The amount of communication involved in reading was not significantly higher than playing with toys. However, the quality of parental responsiveness was higher in books than toys.

The team found that when reading a book with their children parents used a more active communication style, bringing the child into contact with words they may not hear in every day speech, thereby improving their vocabulary and grammatical knowledge. In contrast watching to TV.

Golly, says Tom, "I'm glad they don't put tee vees in cars!"

Why Talk When You Can Scream? Speaking of Communicating in Cars...

From the AP in July: **"Toyota wants to help you scream at your unruly kids..."**

The latest version of the company's Sienna minivan has a feature called "Driver Easy Speak." It uses a built-in microphone to amplify a parent's voice through speakers in the back seats.

Toyota says it added Easy Speak 'so parents don't have to shout to "passengers" in the back.' But chances are many parents will yell into the microphone anyway. And the feature only works one way, so the kids can't talk back. At least not with amplified voices."

Hardy har, har. I love the last lines! Those gosh darn little chatty tykes!

**Let's get started!
This is the beginning of our 40th year!
Remember... we are all the stewards of innocence.**