

# Incline Village Nursery School Newsletter

March 2019



## Director's News

It's time to register for next year at IVNS! If you will be returning to our preschool in the fall (for the 2019-20 school year) you need to submit a registration form and the \$100 fee by March 29<sup>th</sup> to hold a spot for your child. On March 30<sup>th</sup> we will open registration to incoming families who are new to IVNS and we will not be able to guarantee enrollment for our current families unless you submit that form. We do expect to fill up quickly once we open the doors to the public, and we'd hate to not have a spot available for you if you need/want it. The registration form is attached to the e-mail included with this newsletter, and can also be picked up in our classroom, or downloaded off our website at [www.ivns.org](http://www.ivns.org).

Thank you for taking your time to come and meet with us for conferences. We feel like they were a great success and we have a solid base from which to build on over the coming months. If you did not meet with us for a parent-teacher conference and would still like to do so, let us know and we'll set up a time to chat.

*Nicole*

## Upcoming Events

### Register for Kindergarten!

CrossFit Kids 3/8 & 3/29

Music w/ Mr. Mark

3/4, 3/12, 3/18, and 3/26

Speech Screenings

3/12, 3/13

Dad's Day Parties

3/14 & 3/15

Yoga w/ Becca

3/5, 3/6, 3/8

First Day of Spring 3/20



Please join us for our

## Dad's Day Celebrations

Thursday - March 14<sup>th</sup> at 12:00

Friday - March 15<sup>th</sup> at 1:00

Songs, pizza, dessert, and Dad & me story time

## Local Kindergarten Registration Information

Don't wait until summer to register your child for Kindergarten! It helps schools make decisions about class sizes and numbers of teachers necessary by knowing how many children are registered.

Please visit any and all schools you are interested in - meet their teachers, ask questions, and think about what the best fit will be for YOUR CHILD. Most importantly ... have fun!

### Incline Elementary Kindergarten Registration:

Begins Monday, March 4<sup>th</sup> 11:00-2:00 in the main office.

Please go to [www.washoeschools.net](http://www.washoeschools.net) choose Parent tab, choose Infinite Campus, log-in. Look for On-line Registration. If you need help with your log-in call the school office at 832-4250. Please remember, you do all of your children at the same time, including incoming Kindergarteners. In order for your child/children to be enrolled for next year the registration must be done no later than March 30th.

Please bring the following to the school office to complete registration for your Kindergartener:

1) Birth Certificate, 2) Immunizations, 3) Proof of Residency

### Kings Beach Elementary Kindergarten:

Thursday, February 28<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 in the cafeteria.

For the 2019/20 school year, Kindergarten is open to children who are five years of age by September 1, 2019. Kings Beach also offers Transitional Kindergarten for children whose fifth birthday is between September 2 and December 2. Boys and Girls Club info is also available. Registration must be done before March 15<sup>th</sup>.

### Tahoe Expeditionary Academy Kindergarten: (TEA)

call TEA at 530-546-5253 for more information

### Lake Tahoe School Kindergarten:

Call Lake Tahoe School for more information at: (775) 831-5828

## Speech Screenings

Tahoe Speech Therapy LLC will be providing free, no obligation, speech and language screenings at IVNS on Tuesday, March 12<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday, March 13<sup>th</sup>. Screenings will be conducted during regular class time and will look at developmental progress in articulation, language, stuttering, voice, and conversational speech. Results and recommendations will be sent home in a sealed envelope the same day. Tahoe Speech Therapy LLC is a local speech clinic owned and operated by Tara Meyer and Molly Meyer, certified Speech-Language Pathologists. Please look for a consent form in your child's cubby next week and return it to IVNS if you are interested in having your child screened. If you have any questions or for more information, please visit our website at [www.TahoeSpeechTherapy.com](http://www.TahoeSpeechTherapy.com) or call us at 775-298-1441.

## Box Tops

Do you see pink Box Tops on your household items and food in your pantry?

They look like this:



While IVNS cannot benefit from them because they're only for K-8 schools, we are happy to collect them for Incline Elementary School. Lindsay is on top of Box Top collection and will gladly gather them up for IES if you want to bring them in to us. Each Box Top = .10cents for the school, which can add up quickly when hundreds of them are submitted.

## Choosing the Right Kindergarten

Published on *Parenting* (<http://www.parenting.com>)

Heather Worthley's panic over choosing a school for her oldest child, Max, hit in February, a full seven months before he was to begin kindergarten. Under Seattle's new choice plan, her son could attend any of the city's 63 grade schools. September had seemed a long way off, until the buzz from fellow parents spurred Worthley into action. Many were poring over test scores, chatting up principals and teachers, and consulting each other for the latest news. Some parents had already decided on private or nearby suburban options, but Worthley and her husband were committed to sending their children to a public school in the city. The question was which one?

They visited seven schools in a month's time, and after whirlwind tours and countless conversations with teachers, friends, and family, they settled on a new kindergarten-to-eighth-grade school. Now, four years later, Max is thriving. "We're really pleased," Worthley says. "Thank goodness we don't have to choose another school for years!"

*Betty Holcomb is the author of Not Guilty! The Good News for Working Mothers (Touchstone, May 2000).*

### Increasing Options

Not so long ago, Worthley would simply have enrolled Max in his assigned neighborhood school. But more and more parents are finding themselves in her situation, as politicians and educators strive to provide more choices. Last year, one-fourth of all kindergarten to 12th-grade students in the country attended a school other than the one in their neighborhood. While few districts offer as many choices as Seattle does, most offer at least one or two alternatives to the traditional school that have special curricula or programs for the gifted and talented. Even if there's no formal school-choice program, some districts allow parents to petition for their children to enroll in a school for which they're not zoned. And every year many parents still make their selection the old-fashioned way: by moving.

But how do you go about picking a school? "It's scary when you start," says Cathy Gilberg, a mother of two in Dallas. "You're trying to make an important decision based on little knowledge. But we found that picking the right one isn't that hard -- once you know what to look for." Parents and experts agree that the best way to determine a school's overall quality is to explore a variety of factors.

### Test Scores

Most everyone starts by looking at a school's test scores, and with good reason, since they're a barometer of how well children are reading, writing, and learning arithmetic. Some exams, such as the nationally administered Metropolitan Achievement Test, are long established and offer a quick overview of how students in one district compare with those around the country. Others are more recent, created by state legislators to compare a school's performance with others in the same state. You can request scores from administrative offices, but they're also widely publicized in local newspapers and can be found on school websites.

Though test scores are a good starting point, you need to look at them closely. In some instances, tests are so new that the results are unreliable. "In Florida scores dropped after the state introduced a new test a few years ago, but now they're rising because students and teachers are better prepared," says Betty Noe, chair of the Citizen's Coalition for Public Schools in Miami-Dade County. "I'd be careful not to give too much weight to test scores."

"I wouldn't tell a parent to ignore test scores, but they don't always tell the whole story," agrees Lynn Coffin, director of Teaching and Learning at the National Education Association. "There are some schools with low scores that are doing an extraordinary job. And there are some with higher scores where there's less time spent providing a rich curriculum."

## **How Big, How Crowded**

With enrollments up across the country, school size, capacity, and class size are particularly important. Many districts haven't built a new school in ages, and the growing number of students every year is taxing their resources. In a crowded elementary school, children may not fit in the lunchroom, in the gym, or on the buses at the same time, leading to staggered lunchtimes, shortened recess, earlier starts, or later dismissals.

"Size is the first thing I'd look at," says Pat Millican, a mother of three who serves on the board of the Texas State PTA. "At schools with small classes, students get to know the teachers and staff. In big ones, the principal may only know the children who are having problems." Research supports the importance of school size: The STAR report (Student Teacher Achievement Ratio), a ten-year project following more than 10,000 students, found it to be a critical measure of success, starting at the elementary grades. Children who attended schools with smaller classes were the highest achievers and were more likely to graduate from high school and to get high scores on college entrance exams.

Experts agree that the ideal enrollment at a grade school is no more than 300 students and that the best student-teacher ratio is 18-1. That ratio is rarely achieved, but some schools narrow the gap by hiring full-time aides or student teachers.

## **Parents' Involvement**

"At the best schools, parents are treated as full participants in their child's education," says Ginny Markell, president of the national PTA, based in Chicago. "They're sought out to be part of the decision-making process, and they have a voice in the curriculum and the school budget." Study after study shows that whether it's asking kids about homework or drafting grant proposals, parent involvement boosts student achievement.

How can you tell whether a school will encourage your involvement? "As you walk through the halls, look for other parents," says Noe. "They might be there to attend a PTA event or to volunteer at the library." Ask them if they're satisfied with the level of communication from the school and if they're invited to take part in their children's education.

## **The Principal's Philosophy**

Besides making you feel welcome, a principal should share your philosophy on education. Try to speak directly with her, and ask the following questions: Are teachers expected to follow a strict curriculum or is there an emphasis on individualized lesson plans, tailored to the progress of each child? How does the school treat remedial or gifted students? What's the policy on discipline problems? Then, if you have an opportunity to watch the principal interact with the students, observe how they act toward her and how she treats them.

"At some of the elementary schools I visited, the principals gave vague responses to my questions or couldn't answer them at all," says Lilli Thene, a mother of two in Minneapolis. "But the principal at the school I finally picked gave us very direct answers to our questions."

## The Teachers

The biggest influence on your child's education will be the teachers in the classroom, so you'll want to see some of them in action. While your child may not end up with the ones you observe, you'll have a sense of the general quality of instruction. (If a school doesn't allow this, ask why; if you're not satisfied with the answer, take it out of consideration.) Lisa Bond, a mother of two in Seattle, took careful notice of teachers' techniques. "I wanted one who could inspire creative thinking, so I noticed if the kids were all doing the same task at the same time or if they were encouraged to explore on their own."

Also consider your child's personality and behavior. Some kindergartners are still rambunctious and highly active and find it difficult to sit at a desk for long periods of time. Others need structure. The trick is to find a good match for your child. "I liked the classrooms where there was a lot going on at once," says Gilberg. "I chose a school where the teacher had many learning stations and the kids could move around. I knew that would be good for my children."

Another thing to look for is teachers' qualifications. Kindergarten and first-grade teachers should have ongoing early-childhood education training. Ask if the school provides them with opportunities for continuing professional development -- a good sign that it's committed to quality teaching.

## What's Taught -- and How

What is the school teaching its students? The recent push toward a more demanding curriculum means that kindergartners are learning more than just their letters and numbers: At forward-thinking schools, 5- and 6-year-olds are keeping journals and using picture graphs to record data. And to make sure teachers have enough time to cover the language, math, and science lessons that are becoming standard fare, many districts offer full-day kindergarten classes rather than the traditional half-day classes. But how much is too much?

"If there's an overemphasis on testing, and the teaching revolves around drills or using flash cards, you run the risk of undermining kids' enthusiasm for learning," says Marilou Hyson, Ph.D., associate executive director of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, in Washington, DC. "But when they're allowed to investigate challenging ideas through pretend play, engaging conversations, and interesting activities, not only do kids learn, but they enjoy the experience." In other words, children at this age learn best by doing -- touching, observing, and experimenting -- so there should be plenty of art materials, objects to count, and hands-on science projects in the kindergarten classroom.

Beyond what and how children are taught, it's important to know what happens when one of them doesn't acquire the skills he is expected to. While expectations and curricula vary from school to school, there should be a clear, coherent plan to help kids progress from grade to grade.

In the end, experts and parents agree that what you see with your own eyes when you visit a school is most crucial. "Do the kids look happy? I can't think of anything more important than that," says Tony Vaught, a teacher with 30 years' experience in Oregon City, OR. "The students should be smiling and at ease. Your child needs to feel the joy of learning. Everything else flows from that."



March Stars of the Week

Week of 3/11: Kenzie (T.Th) and Spencer (MWF)

Week of 3/18: Valeska (T.Th) and Finn (MWF)

Week of 3/25: Mairén (T.Th) and Hawken (MWF)

Week of 4/1: Sage (T.Th) and Jacob (MWF Class)

We would love it if parents came in during their child's star week to read a special story or two. You can schedule this on any day that works in your schedule. Just let us know what day you would like to come read!

**March Birthdays**

**Ms. Julia.....Mar. 2**

**Jackson.....Mar. 4**

**Cora ..... Mar. 10**

**Ms. Lindsay.....Mar. 13**

**Ms. Lauren.....Mar. 18**



**March 2019 Classroom Calendar**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Letter: S Theme: Community Helpers				KB Elem. Kindergarten Registration & Info Night 6:00pm	1	2 Julia's Birthday & Dr. Seuss' Birthday
3 Letter: T Theme: Dr. Seuss	4 Jackson's Birthday Incline Elem. Kindergarten Registration 11:00-2:00	5 Yoga with Becca 11:00	6 Yoga with Becca 11:00	7	8 Yoga with Becca 11:00 (snow day make-up) CrossFit Kids 12:15	9
10 Cora's Birthday Letter: U Theme: Pirates & Princesses	11	12	13 Lindsay's Birthday	14 Dad's Day Party 12:00-12:45	15 Dad's Day Party 1:00-1:45	16
17 St. Patrick's Day Letter: V Theme: St. Patrick's Day & Leprechauns	18 Lauren's Birthday	19	20 Spring Begins Board Meeting @ 5:30	21	22	23
24/31 Letter: W Theme: Volcanoes & Islands	25	26	27	28	29 CrossFit Kids 12:15	30 IVNS Registration Day & Open House (for the public) 9:00-11:00