

Little Bridges News



March 2011

Calendar of Events

Spring Pictures

3/7 & 3/8

Preschool Conferences

Weeks of 3/14 – 3/25

Book Fair

3/21 – 3/25

Spring Show

4/14

Enrichment Classes

Art & Soul (3-4 yrs)

Tuesdays

Tuff Tumblers (2-4 yrs)

Thursdays

Science/Math/Magic (3-4)

Thursdays

Kinderdance (3-5 yrs)

Wednesdays

Soccer Shots (3-5 yrs)

Mondays

Art & Soul Music (K-5)

Piano Lessons Mondays

School Age Summer Camp Registration

Little Bridges offers a fun-filled summer program for school age children ages 6 to 11 years. Our camp alternates between structured activities like academic review, book time and journal writing along with summertime traditions like crafts, organized games, swimming and field trips. Campers explore a new park every Monday, swim every Tuesday and Thursday, travel by chartered bus every Wednesday for a weekly field trip and spend Fridays on site participating in specially planned activities.

We are registering now! Please turn in your registration by March 15th for priority enrollment.

Spring Pictures

Picture Day is coming. Forms will be sent home this next week. You will have a choice of two different backgrounds and a class picture will be taken as well. Sibling pictures are also an option!

Book Fair

The Book Fair will be set up in the preschool office, March 21st through March 25th. Please come and buy some books for you, your child or your classroom.

Every book you buy earns us "book credit" to purchase more books for your child's classroom. Our profit from the total sales is **50%**! So, if you purchase \$20.00 in books, Little Bridges receives \$10.00 to spend on books for the school.

New Law Changes Kindergarten Age Rules

The cut-off date to enter kindergarten is changing. By 2014, all California kindergarteners must turn five by Sept. 1st of that year. The current kindergarten enrollment cutoff date is Dec. 2nd.

The new law will be phased in by rolling back the cutoff date one month per year beginning in 2012. We will be following the state and will start using the same cutoff dates for our pre-k programs. For this school year, all children entering our pre-k program must be turning 4 by November 1st.

Thanks for a Great Open House

Our Open House was a great success! We had a fabulous turn out and it was fun to see so many of our current families here. It was a joy to see children showing parents, grandparents and siblings around their school.

We had so many families inquiring about our program and I can say that we are officially full for the 2011 – 2012 school year. Our waiting lists are very long and continue to grow daily as people hear about Little Bridges.

Canyon Creek Church

Sunday Services & Sunday School

8:30 am and 10:00 am

Brighter, Bolder, More Confident Kids

Self-confidence is one of the most important qualities we can instill in our children. Kids who feel sure of themselves are happier, more independent, and more likely to succeed. So it's no wonder that child-development experts have long offered parents a steady stream of suggestions on how to raise confident kids. But I think some of the advice about instilling self-confidence should be examined more closely. Many of us have taken self-esteem building suggestions too literally. Here, a look at the guidance given by experts and my thoughts on a more enlightened approach.

1. What experts say: Offer lots of praise.

Experts often insist that there's no such thing as too much praise. If your 3-year-old shows you a picture that she's colored, give her a high five and tell her it's great. If the coloring doesn't represent her best work, at least find something positive to say: "What a gorgeous shade of blue you picked for that. Terrific job!"

A better way: Praise less, but praise more authentically.

Constant compliments can begin to sound hollow- even to a young child. I believe it is far better to praise your little one only when you mean it. If she has put a lot of effort into something, give her kudos. If she hasn't, it's okay to withhold your approval. Praising your child for the effort - not just the end result - teaches her that hard work pays off. That message leads to far more self-confidence than empty congratulations.

2. What experts say: Criticism kills confidence.

Have you ever heard that criticizing a child could damage his developing sense of self? I remember being told, "If you can't say anything positive, it's best not to say anything at all." But there's a big difference between hurtful criticism and loving truth.

A better way: Offer realistic feedback, delivered with kindness.

My 10-year-old brought me a thank you card he had written for his grandmother the other day, and I noticed that it was just a bunch of hastily written words - not his best work. Of course, I didn't say, "That's awful! Go do it again." But I did tell him, "This isn't your best effort; I've seen you write and draw better cards. Why don't you try to improve on this?" By giving Liam an honest assessment, I am showing him that my appraisals can be trusted. Honest feedback, delivered gently and with love, will encourage your child to try harder and to do his best.

3. What experts say: Greater self-expression leads to higher self-esteem.

The ancient adage - "Children should be seen but not heard" - has been turned on its head. Parents have been told that kids should be encouraged to say what's on their minds. Some even allow their children to say things like "Not now, stupid" and "You're a butthead," thinking that it's okay for kids to express their feelings. But being allowed to say anything (without regard to its impact) makes kids feel too much in control - and that can feed their insecurity.

A better way: Some self-expression is hurtful to others - and to your child.

If you hear your child saying something unkind and nasty, insist that he stop - even if he is reacting from his own anger and pain. Don't make excuses for him ("He's behaving like that because his feelings were hurt" or "He's just hungry and tired and can't control himself"). Instead, label the behavior for your child: For example, I quite often say, "You're being rude." I then tell kids that I don't want to hear them talking in that tone anymore, and then I end the discussion. This isn't going to cause a child's self-esteem to head south. In fact, it's going to make him feel less out of control and, consequently, more secure.

4. What experts say: Giving kids choices enhances their sense of self.

Here's the rationale behind this way of thinking: When you let your child have a say about what goes on in her life, she gains confidence in her ability to make decisions. That may be partially true, but it's easy to get carried away. Many parents now feel compelled to listen to their kids' input on almost all matters.

A better way: Limited choices prepare kids to make it in the real world.

Life doesn't offer endless possibilities. You're not always able to choose what happens to you, and dealing with the demands that come your way, even if they're frustrating, helps a child develop resilience. If you allow your child to have a say in everything - what time to leave for school, whether to have a snack before a meal, what to watch on television - you're helping her develop a sense of entitlement, not self-esteem.

5. What experts say: Explain everything.

Many parents have been taught to explain to their child why they are demanding certain things from him. It's better for a child's sense of self, the theory goes, if you don't simply boss him around. And so, even the best moms and dads get caught up in explaining why something is important. But explanations and justifications leave kids confused about who's in charge. In an increasingly frightening world, this is a recipe for greater anxiety rather than greater confidence.

A better way: Sometimes, it's okay to simply take charge.

Every once in awhile, when you're getting a barrage of "Why do I have to?" it's fine to say, "Because I'm the parent and I said so. We'll discuss it later." Such an announcement tells your child that sometimes he has to do things without understanding the reasons. Ultimately, your child will see that the things you demand from him make sense: If he goes to his room for quiet time as you've asked him to, he'll discover that he's less tired and cranky later on. Such lessons will show him that he can depend on the adult he loves most - you - to know what's best for him.

6. What experts say: The more your child can do, the more confident she'll be.

This advice can be interpreted to say that the sooner children are exposed to different activities, the better off they'll be. As a result, frenzied parents have their kids listening to Mozart in utero, watching educational videos from the crib, and participating in a variety of enrichment programs as soon as they start preschool. This has created a generation of kids who are so ferociously busy they need their own PDAs to keep track of their schedules.

A better way: Do less, connect more.

When your child has too many activities on her agenda, not only does she tend to skate through them, but you inevitably end up trying to *manage* her life - not share it with her. Logistics like drop-offs, pickups, and equipment checks rule your day. The fact is, being relentlessly managed does not build a child's self-esteem. It robs her of a real connection to you. So it's best to cut back on your child's busy schedule and give her more downtime with the family. Chances are she, as well as you, will feel more relaxed. Then the connection between you and your child will grow, strengthening the loving bonds that are the true foundation for brighter, bolder, more confident kids.