



# Parker-Chase Newsletter

## PCPO (Parker-Chase Parent Organization) News

### Spring Book Fair:

Our Spring Book Fair will be held April 15-24. **Miss Eilene** (Upper Pre-school) will be coordinating this event again this year. With summer just around the corner, this is the perfect opportunity to stock up on books for "book-niks" in the park with your children. Ms. Eilene is available every day to help you choose books that are appropriate for your child. Watch for your child's classroom's "Wish List" posted on their door. These are books that the teachers have chosen that are perfect for reading to the children in their classrooms. Please consider buying a book to be shared with all of your child's classmates.

### Teacher Appreciation:

PCPO's Teacher Appreciation Committee have been busy putting ideas

together for our upcoming Teacher Appreciation Week. There will be a different theme posted for each day of the week. We hope to provide our teachers with a spectacular week of appreciation and need your help to make the week a complete success. Watch the PCPO Bulletin Board and for emails about opportunities to participate!

### NAEYC Re-Accreditation:

The countdown has begun—the NAEYC Assessors are expected any day now. Please help us pass with flying colors by making sure that your child's immunization records are up-to-date!

### Fundraisers:

**Mixed Bag Designs**—Last year we launched a new fundraiser—Mixed Bag Designs—and the results were outstanding! The product is high-quality reusable

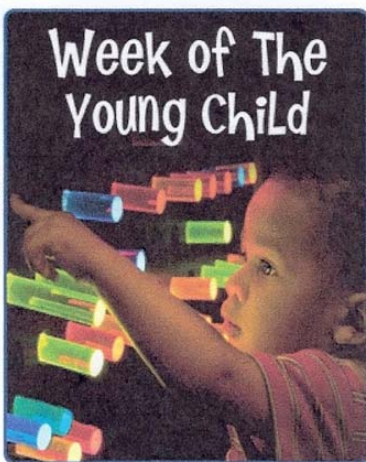
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## April, 2013

### Mark Your Calendars

- ☺ April 1 & 2—Lifetouch Picture Days
- ☺ April 8-12—Frisco ISD Kindergarten Round-Up
- ☺ April 10—Pre-K Field Trip to Kindergarten Class
- ☺ April 11—5:30-6:30 PCPO in Kiva—EVERYONE WELCOME
- ☺ April 12—Plano ISD Kindergarten Registration starts
- ☺ April 15-19—Week of the Young Child
- ☺ April 15-24—Scholastic Book Fair
- ☺ April 19—Ms. Belinda's Birthday (Toddler 1)
- ☺ April 22—Earth Day
- ☺ April 24—Ms. Gail's Birthday (Kitchen)
- ☺ April 29—Frisco ISD No School

## Celebrate Week of the Young Child April 15-19



The month of April brings a very special celebration in the field of early childhood education, the Week of the Young Child™. The Week of the Young Child™ is an annual celebration sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). The purpose of the week is to focus public attention on the needs of young children and their families and to recognize the early childhood programs and teachers who meet those needs. The 2013 Week of the Young Child™ is April 15-19 and the theme is Early Years are

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# Celebrate Week of the Young Child

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Learning Years®. Today we know more than ever that the early childhood years (birth through age 8) lay the foundation for children's success in school and later life. The Week of the Young Child™ is a time to plan how



we—as citizens of a community, of a state, and of a nation—will better meet the needs of all young children and their families. Along with local and national special events, we have planned some delightful activities to reflect the wonder of early childhood. Our scheduled events are:

## **On Monday...Prevent the Achievement Gap—Books Open Doors!**

Each classroom will choose a favorite book and have the children decorate the classroom door as a giant book cover. We'll have a family book swap for Parker-Chase. Donate new or used books that you have at home that your child may have outgrown or do not use. Everyone wear pajamas to school this day. Nothing makes you feel as relaxed as your favorite PJ's. During the week parents will read aloud to their child as many times as possible.

## **On Tuesday...Embracing Diversity—Children Around the World!**

We will celebrate each child's and each teacher's heritage. Please share food, toys, things you

learn, daily events that are different, family traditions, items and information from your culture. Teach us new words in your native language. Wear traditional clothing. It's fun to learn more about each family at Parker-Chase!

## **On Wednesday...Healthy Bodies and Healthy Minds!**

Commit time this week to take a walk to the park with your child. At school, take a few minutes in the morning to share a healthy nibble (muffin and fruit) with your child before heading off to work. Make Tuesday a "no television day"—share a book instead (you can pick one up at the Book Fair). Show interest in the story by asking questions about the characters and the plot. Reading to children remains the most effective method to enhance their literacy development! Play board games, cook together or garden with your child!

## **On Thursday...Strengthening Families—Tag, You're It!!**

On this day, help us celebrate your child by spending a few minutes at home together decorat-

ing a gingerbread shape that will be provided by your child's teachers. Our goal is to help you celebrate the magic of childhood and the uniqueness of each and every child that makes up our community here at Parker-Chase. There is

nothing as intriguing as the pure, innocent creations of a young child—so enjoy the process and discovery as your child and you decorate the gingerbread to symbolize him/her. Use this time to talk about what makes your child special. This event is to remind us that although we need to provide children with the foundation—the tools to use in life—we must also allow them the freedom to use these tools to create their own path through which they will travel through life.

## **On Friday...Play—Where Learning Begins: Outside School and Picnic!**

We'll have Outside School that day—take all activities outside and enjoy the day outdoors. We will have art, group time, snacks, blocks, table toys and play dress-up—all outdoors! We'll have "book-nics" outside—sit on blankets and read. We'll enjoy the beautiful spring weather with a day of outside learning.

Let's all have fun in promoting the joys of childhood! Be sure and get involved—PARTICIPATE! ♥



**Be sure and "friend" Parker-Chase/Plano on Facebook. We post events, reminders and information on our page.**

# Take it Outside!!

Tony sits focused on his computer screen. Keisha's watching her favorite television program. And Kim is enthusiastically playing video games. What do these three scenarios have in common? They're all taking place indoors - a situation becoming more and more typical in the lives of American children.

There are a number of reasons for this disturbing trend. Among them is lack of time, as preschoolers in our society lead adult-like, highly-scheduled lives and parents themselves have less time to supervise outdoor play or to take their children to the playground.



Safety is another issue in today's world, with many parents reluctant to allow their children the freedom they themselves may have had as children. And, of course, the competition with television, computers, and video games is tremendous. What could the outdoors possibly have to offer that these three sources don't? The answer is a lot!

## The Importance of Outdoor Play

The outdoors is the very best place for preschoolers to practice and master emerging physical skills. It is in the outdoors that children can fully and freely experience motor skills like running, leaping, and jumping. It is also the most appropriate area for the practice of ball-handling skills, like throwing, catching, and striking. And children can perform other such manipulative skills as pushing a swing, pulling a wagon, and lifting and carrying movable objects.

Additionally, it is in the outdoors that children are likely to burn the most calories, which helps prevent obesity, a heart disease risk factor that has doubled in the past decade. With studies showing that as many as half of American children are not getting enough exercise-- and that risk factors like hypertension and arteriosclerosis are showing up at age 5-- parents and teachers need to give serious consideration to ways in which to prevent such health problems. The outside is also important because the outdoor light stimulates the pineal gland, the part of the brain that regulates the "biological clock," is vital to the immune system, and makes us feel happier.

## Outdoor Play Contributes to Learning

The outdoors has something more to offer than just physical benefits. Cognitive and social/emotional development are impacted, too. Outside, children are more likely to invent games. As they do, they're able to express themselves and learn about the world in their own way. They feel safe and in control, which promotes autonomy, decision-making, and organizational skills. Inventing rules for games (as preschoolers like to do) promotes an understanding of why rules are necessary. Although the children are only playing to have fun, they're learning communication skills and vocabulary (as they invent, modify, and enforce rules), number relationships (as they keep score and count), social customs (as they learn to play together and cooperate).

## Learning to Appreciate the Outdoors

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# News

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bags that are eco-friendly. The rave reviews about these products led to a unanimous decision at the last PCPO meeting that it's time to offer this fundraiser again. Watch for a display of high-quality, reusable grocery bags, cotton backpacks and totes, iPhone and laptop covers, pet products, lunch totes, garment bags—the list goes on and on! Proceeds from this fundraiser go to the Teacher Appreciation Fund.

## Annual Spring Picnic: Don't Miss the Spring Picnic!

Come out and enjoy a Spring evening with other Parker-Chase families at the annual Spring Picnic. The Pavilion at Russell Creek Park has been reserved for Thursday, May 9<sup>th</sup> (with a rain date of Friday, May 10<sup>th</sup>.) Again this year, one of the grandfathers of our alumni, **Phil Mondello** (Nico and Cruz Cabutto's pa-pa) volunteered to cook hotdogs for us.



We'll send out pre-order forms for dinner—so watch for them. Dust off those tricycles, bicycles and rollerblades and polish up those kite-flying skills and be ready for a fun evening with other Parker-Chase families and teachers!

## Mark Your Calendar:

The Next PCPO Meeting will be Thursday, April 11<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 pm in the Kiva. Everyone is invited! We hope to see you there!! ♥

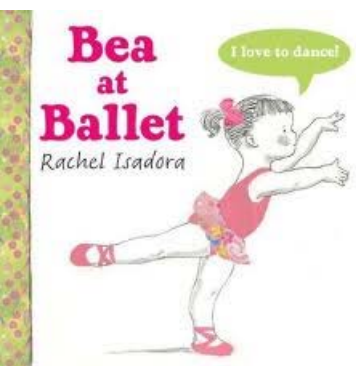
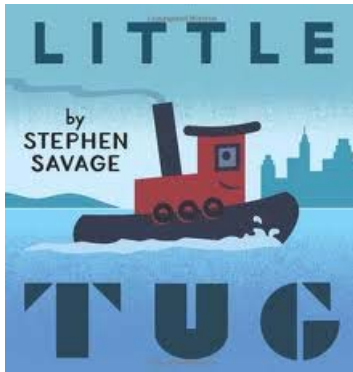


# The Reading Chair

***Little Tug*, by Stephen Savage. Ages 1 to 4.**

Stories about the triumph of an underdog appeal to readers of any age. This story, about the value a small tugboat brings to a harbor full of big and powerful ships, distills the message using simple, rhythmic language that is perfect for the very young. Little Tug is neither big, nor tall, nor strong. But when each of the big boats has a problem navigating the tiny harbor, Little Tug is just the right size to help them all. Savage's illustrations use bold blocks of color in many hues to capture the sky and water as they change throughout the day.

Children will see themselves in Little Tug, who ends his busy day with a yawn. The tall ship tucks him in under its sail, the speedboat hums a lullaby using its motor, and the ocean liner gives him a hug. The story is reminiscent of *Little Toot*, by Hardie Gramatky, a classic written in 1939.



***Bea at Ballet*, by Rachel Isadora. Ages 2 to 6.**

Rachel Isadora surprises once again with a new style of illustration, well-suited as usual to her subject. Following her series of classic tales set in Africa and il-

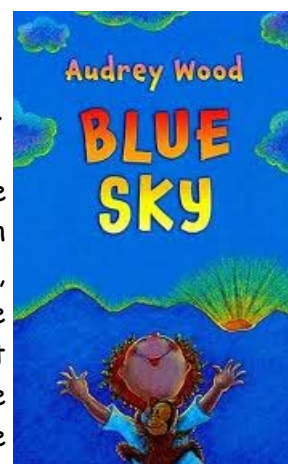
lustrated in vibrant collage, this book brings her back to her roots as a dancer, something she has explored in previous children's books. For a younger audience this time, she writes about a group of boys and girls who attend ballet class together. There are still elements of her signature collage style, but they are limited, layered on simple, uncrowded sketches of students and ballet objects and set against a white background. The ballet

class comes to life with plenty of clarity as Isadora shows typical boys' and girls' dance outfits (tights, slippers, leotards, and more), elements of the studio (mirror, barre, piano), and the five positions.

The children featured in the book are not particularly lean or toned, like dedicated dancers, but are regular preschoolers. There's a page featuring four ways to hold one's feet (flat, relevé, point, and flex), and others featuring a split, an arabesque, and an attitude. Readers will enjoy imitating these burgeoning ballet dancers.

***Blue Sky*, by Audrey Wood. 2012. Ages 2 to 5.**

We often hear that the sky is blue, but rather than adopt such a simplistic view, Audrey Wood captures the magnificence of a sky that changes depending on the season, the weather, and the day. Sparse on text but big on



feeling, each double-page spread features a striking rendition of a different type of sky, with on-lookers at the bottom craning their necks to look up and appreciate it, giving readers the feeling they can do the same. There is a rain sky with a boy reaching his hands out to catch a drop, a storm sky that he witnesses tentatively, a sunset sky that he enjoys with his family, a dark sky that excites them all, and a starry sky under which he is carried off to sleep. Many more skies grace the pages of the book before a new sky is born in the morning, with the sun rising on the horizon and a smile on the boy's face as he energetically greets the new day.

Wood's bold and colorful illustrations capture the drama of nature. The book offers numerous extension possibilities, as every change in the weather can become reason to head outdoors and gaze upward. ♥

# Take it Outside!!

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We can't underestimate the value of the aesthetic development promoted by being outside. Aesthetic awareness refers to a heightened sensitivity to the beauty around us. Because the natural world is filled with beautiful sights, sounds, and textures, it's the perfect resource for the development of aesthetics in young children.

Preschoolers learn much through their senses. Outside there are many different and wonderful things for them to see (animals, birds, and green leafy plants), to hear (the wind rustling through the leaves, a robin's song), to smell fragrant flowers and the rain-soaked ground, to touch (a fuzzy caterpillar or the bark of a tree), and even to taste (newly fallen snow or a raindrop on the tongue). Children who spend a lot of time acquiring their experiences through television and computers are using only two senses (hearing and sight), which can seriously affect their perceptual abilities.

Finally, what better place than the outdoors for children to be loud and messy and boisterous? Outside they can run and jump and yell, and expend some of the energy that is usually inappropriate - and even annoying - indoors.

## Conclusion

When parents and teachers think back to their own childhoods, chances are some of their fondest memories are of outdoor places and activities. Such memories might include a favorite climbing tree or a secret hiding place, learning to turn cartwheels with a friend, or playing tag with the family dog. Maybe there was the smell of lilacs, the feel of the sun on the first day warm enough to go without a jacket, or the taste of a peanut butter and jelly sandwich on a blanket spread on the grass. Children usually share the values of the important adults in their lives. When we show an appreciation for the great outdoors, the children in our lives will follow our lead.

## Activities for the Great Outdoors

A nature walk is a great way to enhance children's appreciation of the natural environment. Ask them to tell you what they're seeing, hearing, and smelling. Encourage them to touch - to discover the smoothness of a rock, the roughness of bark, and the fragility of a

dried leaf. For young children, these are science experiences.

Set up an obstacle course with old tires, large appliance boxes, and tree stumps. Moving through it will teach important concepts like over, under, through, and around.

A "listening" walk makes for a wonderful sound discrimination activity. As you walk with the children, point out the sounds of birds, passing cars, whistling wind, even your footsteps on the sidewalk. What sounds can the children identify on their own? Which are loud and which are soft? Which are high and which are low? What are their favorite sounds? Bring along a tape recorder so the children can try to identify the sounds at a later time!



Bring the parachute or an old sheet outside and play parachute games (shaking it, circling with it, making waves with it, or bouncing foam balls on it). Bring a portable boom box outdoors and let the children experience the joy of dancing in a natural environment!

Try "water painting," in which children paint the side of a building with a brush and a bucket of water. It exercises arms and upper torso while also teaching about wet and dry, light and dark, and evaporation.

Chasing bubbles gives children a chance to run!

## Resources:

*Hug a Tree and Other Things to Do Outdoors with Young Children* by Robert Rockwell, Robert Williams, and Elizabeth Sherwood. Gryphon House, 1983.

*Sharing Nature with Children* by Joseph Bharat Cornell. Ananda Press, 1982.

*The Great Outdoors: Restoring Children's Right to Play Outside* by M.S. Rivkin. NAEYC, 1995.

*The Outrageous Outdoor Games Book* by Bob Gregson, Fearon, 1984.

*The Outside Play and Learning Book* by Karen Miller. Gryphon House, 1989.

Article By Rae Pica

<http://www.earlychildhoodnews.com> ♥