

# Preschool Newsletter

April 2018

**Conscious Discipline and the skill of Self-Composure** The healthier our ability to handle our emotions, the more we can help children develop their self-regulation skills and emotional health.

First, we must learn to manage our emotional upset; we must learn to discipline ourselves. Sometimes that means sitting with uncomfortable feelings. It is in sitting with our feelings, while calming ourselves, that we can begin to identify them. Once we have identified our feelings, then we can begin to discipline (teach, guide) our children. In introducing the Skill of Composure, I suggest the practice of pressing the pause button during conflict moments and using the de-stressing strategy of being a S.T.A.R. (Smile, Take a deep breath And Relax). This is an important step in handling our emotions and resolving conflict.

Children watch how we handle conflict. When we act a like a nut, they learn to act like a nut. Instead, teach them how to regulate their emotions by regulating yours. Teach the Skill of Composure by modeling it. Consciously calming ourselves—so we can choose how to respond instead of reacting—is one of the most influential teaching opportunities we will have, time and time again. As children watch you, talk through your process: “I am going to take a few deep breaths and calm myself down. Then I will speak with you.” After calming, when you are able to identify your emotion, share it: “I am feeling frustrated.” As we deepen our ability to identify our emotions, we become more attuned with children’s emotions and model

how to handle conflict in emotionally healthy ways.

Second, we must give children specific strategies for calming down. Teach them how to S.T.A.R. during playful moments and gently S.T.A.R. with them during upset moments. Children are more likely to transfer strategies to real life situations if we introduce and practice them in a playful manner. As real life situations arise (and we know they will!), start by managing your upset first. Then, breathe for your child if he/she is too upset to breathe for him/herself. Add the language of safety by saying, “Breathe with me. You can handle this. I am going to keep you safe.” Continue breathing with your child as he/she begins to calm. A calm adult and deep breathing are the first steps to teaching children self-regulation. I highly suggest visiting [ConsciousDiscipline.com](http://ConsciousDiscipline.com) for additional resources on the subject, including free webinars with Dr. Becky Bailey.

Composure is a state that often requires conscious effort. Be gentle with yourself when you find it difficult. Parenting is not an easy job, but it can be a very joyful one if we encourage each other and ourselves.

*By Karen Hickman, Conscious Discipline Master Instructor*

## **Dates to Remember:**

**Wednesday morning Coffee & Donuts (or muffins):** Every Wednesday morning in our family office from 8:30-9 am.

**April 2-6:** Spring Break for the Eagles classroom and those enrolled in the Pathfinders' full-day ECEAP.

**April 11:** Food, Feeding & Your Family research study begins. 8:45 a.m. Please contact Collette if you wish to participate but haven't yet signed up.

**April 21:** Paint-a-helmet event at the fairgrounds. Free bike helmet for every child along with activities and family friendly booths.

**April 24:** ECEAP Parent Policy Council 5:15 pm at NECC.

**May 4:** No school today for all ECEAP enrolled children and the Eagles classroom. Our teachers will be at an All-Staff training with Community Colleges of Spokane. Childcare is only available for children with pre-approved childcare. See Vick if you have questions regarding your child.

**May 28:** Memorial Day, SCDC closed.

After spring break, we will begin our building study. We will be learning all about how buildings are made. From creating blueprints, learning about foundations and where to start building, to exploring what materials are used, we will discover it all!

If you or a family member is in the construction business, we would love for you to come in and share with us what happens on a construction site and share with us about your tools.

We will be constructing lots of houses, buildings and even skyscrapers over the next month or so. Be on the lookout for all our awesome art projects.

We also encourage you to ask your child to tell you what we are learning about so they can expand on their knowledge. Maybe they can even help repair something around the house.

Finally, although days are warming up, mornings are still especially chilly. Please continue to send your child to school with a jacket each day.

**Dear Math,  
grow up and  
solve your own  
PROBLEMS.**

