

August 9, 2011

Quarter 1, Week 4

## CPSC Weekly Update

...words of wisdom from John and important dates to remember

### *From the Director....*

Dear CPSC Families,

Every year as school starts up, one thing is for certain: social groups form in the classroom and on the playground. An issue that emerges in every class at every grade level is exclusive versus inclusive play. Additionally, some students act as bosses, controlling who can play and by what terms. While it is true that experimentation with exclusionary play during the ages of 5 to 12 is developmentally appropriate, it is imperative that we as educators address this behavior. As one of our country's most esteemed elementary school teachers, Vivian Gussey Paley, warns in her book You Can't Say You Can't Play, "... play will soon be the game of life."

When we notice exclusionary play or behavior, it is the opposite of welcoming others and may make the excluded children feel as if they don't belong. Exclusionary behavior is described by some researchers as social aggression. Studies show that children as young as four and five may start to exhibit socially savvy behavior that manipulates others in a hurtful way. Research also demonstrates that while boys may be more physically aggressive, girls display these types of social aggression more commonly. I am aware that school doesn't have the market on exclusionary play, as siblings or neighborhood friends may exhibit exclusionary tactics, but there is a particular intensity in the elementary classroom. It is a time in your life where you share a classroom for 180 days and often attend the same school for six years. If you are not getting along with your classmates and you feel left out, it hurts. As one teacher told me recently, adults may swear at others but the worst curse words a first grader can hear is, "You're not my friend".

We understand that social dynamics at school are complicated. With that being said, a child's personal reasons for excluding should be heard and understood to help him/her more effectively avoid the exclusionary behavior. Ultimately, our standard needs to be maintained: exclusive play is not allowed.

Don't hesitate to check in with your child's classroom teacher throughout the year should any issues arise.

Yours,

*John*

### *IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER:*

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| Tue., Aug. 16  | School Council Meeting, 4:30pm in Art Room (all are welcome!)     |
| Mon, Sept. 5   | <b>Labor Day Holiday – No School</b>                              |
| Wed, Sept. 7   | <b>Early Dismissal</b> for all students (ASP begins at 1:30PM)    |
| Thur., Sept. 8 | Website Committee meeting at 4:30pm in Aaron's room               |
| Fri., Sept. 9  | <b>Grandparent Muffin Morning</b> for grades K- 2, 8:30 – 9:30 AM |
| Sun., Sept. 11 | <b>ALL SCHOOL PICNIC</b> (*new date) at Forest Hills Park, 4-7PM  |
| Mon, Sept. 12  | <b>Grandparent Muffin Morning</b> for grades 3-5, 8:30 – 9:30 AM  |
| Sat, Sept. 17  | <b>All School Workday</b> , 9:00AM – 12:00PM                      |
| Tue., Sept. 20 | <b>Teacher Appreciation Luncheon</b>                              |