

### Director's Corner

October 2017

Dear Fraser Families,

Thank you all for understanding when I changed the date of the September Family Fun Night to make it more inclusive of all of our staff and families. Once again, I apologize for my oversight.

I also want to thank all of the families that joined us for the fun-filled event. I am always amazed at the creativity of the staff members that plan Family Fun Nights. This time, the committee consisted of Haley Bagley, Elizabeth Eng, Chelsea Fellman, Abby Holm, Jessie Noid, Stephanie Schauer, Sam Aon Theth, Madelyn Todd, Anna Weaver, and Mackenzie Willits. Great job, Team!

The 2017-2018 Fraser School Parent Handbooks were distributed in mid-September. We distributed one for each child so if you have any extras, please feel free to give them back to Colleen Polson or me. I strongly encourage you to read through the handbook because there were some changes this year. I highlighted some of the changes in last month's newsletter, also. If you have any questions, please let me know at your earliest convenience.

This is the time of the year that we are really gearing up for the 2018 calendar year. Each division of Fraser sets its own budget and MBO (Management by Objective) goals for the year. We generally set about 15-20 school-wide goals for the year. Some goals are carried forward each year. For example, we want the responses in the client/consumer survey to be high and our staff turnover to be low. Each year, we also add some new ones. For example, in 2018, we hope to fix the Wi-Fi issues in Fraser School so that we can start

utilizing PreciouStatus again. If you have any input for the MBO goal process, please let me know.

Fraser School budgeting is a little more complicated. It is the only primarily private pay division of Fraser – most others' divisions services are paid through insurance or governmental assistance. Because we want to keep Fraser School competitive in the early childhood market and our expenses are fairly fixed, we budget for a fairly significant deficit in our budget each year. In 2017, our budgeted loss is \$164,924.00. Fraser School is able to stay operational through the money generated by other Fraser divisions and through fundraising. We expect to have a similar budgeted loss in 2018. One of the keys to maintaining our annual budget is to keep our classrooms full with enrolled children. If you have the opportunity, please recommend us to other families with young children.

Thanks for sharing your children with us,

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## Parent/Teacher Conferences

During the week of October 16-20, classroom staff will offer a variety of times for parents to connect with their child's teachers. This will give an opportunity for parents to see a "snapshot" of their child through the eyes of the teaching staff. Our teachers have been busy observing and documenting where your child is developmentally. They have also been recording this on our web-based assessment tool. Children often act differently when put in a group situation so the behaviors or skills that we see may be a bit different from what you see at home. Again, remember that this is a "snapshot" of your child's developmental progress. When we re-assess in the spring, we will be able to more accurately show the progress that has been made.

Please also remember that each child develops at his/her own rate. Development is not a race, but a journey that may have potholes and/or detours. The tool shows a "typical" range of development in each category but this is only a guide and not an evaluation tool. If your child is demonstrating skills that are deemed as younger or older than the typical range, it is only a reflection of his/her present development and does not necessarily indicate any developmental issues.

It is important for parents to attend these early conferences. It shows your children that school is important. It also shows your children that parents and teachers are partners in education and that communication in that relationship is essential. Often during pick-up or drop-off, the communication is hurried and focused on daily events. This is an opportunity for you to sit down with your child's teachers and have a more relaxed and deliberate conversation. We really hope that you can attend!

## Halloween at Fraser School

Some children can be very frightened by people in masks or dressed up in scary costumes. We want to be sensitive to the needs of all of our little learners here at Fraser School. Some of our classrooms may have dress-up days near the end of October but we stress the concepts of imagination and reality instead of celebrating the more scary traditions of Halloween. Even if your child's classroom has a dress-up time, it will only be a small part of your child's day. We will still paint, play outside, and have a typical day at Fraser School.

As this time of year approaches, these are some things to keep in mind:

- Bring your child to school in regular clothes **or** bring regular clothes for your child to change in to.
- Costumes should be easy to change in to and out of.
- Costumes should not require the teacher to put on face paint.
- Costumes should not have masks due to poor visibility.
- Children should not bring any weapons to Fraser School, even if it goes with their costume. Examples are swords, guns, light sabers, or ninja weapons.
- Children must wear shoes with their costumes.
- Prior to bringing in treats for the class, please talk with your child's teacher. All treats must be store-bought and in the original, unopened packaging. We must be able to review the ingredient list to ensure that it is safe for all of our children who have food allergies or alternate diets.

## Fraser School Program Committee

After some deliberation, we have decided to change the focus and the composition of the Fraser School Program Committee. The Program Committee is a program-specific sub-committee of the Fraser Board of Directors. In the past several years, it has been comprised of parents of children currently enrolled in the program, staff members, and one member of the greater Board. However, we have had difficulties with people's schedules and the topics that we discuss.

Starting in November, the committee will be comprised of various community members, such as a representative from the Richfield Public Schools, from the health community, and from other outside organizations. We will also have two Fraser School staff members and two Fraser School parents. The Board representative will chair the committee and I will give input for agenda items.

The committee will generally meet four times during the school year but not quarterly. We will typically have a meeting in September, November, February, and April. Since the change was proposed in August, we decided to forego the September meeting to give us more time to make this change. The meeting dates are tentatively planned for the third Wednesday of those months and the time will be from 4:00-5:00 PM.

If you are interested in being one of the two parent representatives to serve on the newly structured Fraser School Program Committee meeting, please contact me. This will be a one-year commitment and then we will seek others to serve on the committee. This is a great way to get involved in Fraser School without a large time commitment. Thanks so much for considering.

## Social Group Opportunity

Fraser Pediatric Therapy has immediate openings in the Learn Talk Play social program. So much of communication has little to do with words and more to do with an understanding of subtle social cues.

Learn Talk Play can help your child

- Play with other children
- Think about others
- Follow a group plan and fully participate
- Cope with the unexpected
- Play appropriately with toys
- Express emotions in a healthy way

Children must qualify to receive speech and/or occupational therapy to participate in the program. Immediate openings are available in either the Monday/Wednesday/Friday or Tuesday/Thursday groups. Times are 12:45 PM - 3:45 PM. Learn Talk Play can be paired with Fraser preschool programming. Please contact Andrea Nelson at [andrea.nelson@fraser.org](mailto:andrea.nelson@fraser.org) or at (612) 798-8330 to find out if this program would be an appropriate fit for your child's needs.

## Staff Training

The Minnesota State Legislature has increased the amount and type of staff training that child care center employees need to have each year through both the DHS licensing regulations and through the Parent Aware Quality Rating System. One of the changes is that each employee will need two hours of child development annually unless they have graduated with an early childhood degree within the past five years. All employees will also need to have an annual training of our health and safety policies, including how to handle emergencies and accidents. Finally, we all need to be certified in pediatric first aid and CPR, instead of adult and child first aid and CPR.

## This month's events

### > No School

October 19 & 20, 2017  
Parent/Teacher Conferences

## Upcoming events

### > No School

November 23 & 24, 2017  
Thanksgiving Break

## Fire Prevention Week

October 8-14, 2017 is fire prevention week. These tips are from the National Fire Protection Association's website (NFPA.org).

**In a fire, seconds count. Seconds can mean the difference between residents of our community escaping safely from a fire or having their lives end in tragedy.**

That's why this year's Fire Prevention Week theme: "Every Second Counts: Plan 2 Ways Out!" is so important. It reinforces why everyone needs to have an escape plan.

- Make sure your home has smoke alarms. Push the test button to make sure each alarm is working.
- Draw a map of your home. Show all doors and windows. Mark two exits from each room and a path to the outside from each exit. Visit each room with all members of your family and practice the escape plan.
- All windows and doors should open easily. You should be able to use them to get outside.
- Pick a meeting place outside. It should be in front of your home. Everyone should meet at the meeting place.
- Teach children how to escape on their own in case you can't help them.

- Practice your home fire drill twice a year. Conduct one at night and one during the day with everyone in your home, and practice using different ways out.
- Make sure the number of your home is clearly marked and easy for the fire department to find.
- Teach all members of your family that are old enough to learn the phone number for your fire department.
- Close doors behind you as you leave – this may slow the spread of smoke, heat, and fire.
- Once you get outside, stay outside. Never go back inside a burning building.

