

2-Day Class Students Painting Together

## Bringing Love into the Classroom

By Teacher Tom  
[teachertombsblog.blogspot.com](http://teachertombsblog.blogspot.com)

When we enrolled our daughter Josephine in cooperative preschool, I explained how it worked to a friend, telling her that there was one professional teacher in the room and a dozen assistant teachers in the form of parents. She freaked out saying, “How can you let amateurs teach your child? I only want professional teachers near my child.” She feared that the parents of other children would somehow damage her child’s educational prospects. So while Josephine spent her 3 years in co-op, my friend’s son attended a preschool in which parents were not allowed into the classroom, even to observe.

I could no more have made her decision than she could have, apparently, made mine. Even as a new parent who had no inkling that teaching was in my future, I knew I wanted to be there with Josephine as much as possible, and when I wasn’t I wanted her to be surrounded by the love of a community. I didn’t care about her having a teacher who could teach her how to “read” or identify Norway on map before she was 3, like some kind of circus trick, I wanted her to be in a place where she simply got to play with friends and be guided by loving neighbors.

The more I teach, the better I feel about my decision.

What parents may lack as pedagogues (and, indeed, many of them are masters) they more than make up for by bringing love into a co-op classroom. And as Mister Rogers puts it:

*Learning and loving go hand in hand. My grandfather was one of those people who loved to live and loved to teach. Every time I was with him, he’d show me something about the world or something about myself that I hadn’t even thought of yet. He’d help me find something wonderful in the smallest of things, and ever so carefully, he helped me understand the enormous worth of every human being. My grandfather was not a professional teacher, but the way he treated me (the way he loved me) and the things he did with me, served me as well as any teacher I’ve ever known.*

My friend also thought that our co-op sounded too much like “play school.” She wanted her child to go to “real school.” Again, as a new parent, my thoughts on the subject were not well-enough formed to answer her with logical argument (not that it would have done any good), but I just knew she was wrong. Today, I know that to undervalue the importance of play for young children is to make a tragic mistake. Frankly, I think that goes for older children and adults as well. The times in life when my mind has been the most shut down are those times when I felt compelled to do “work” prescribed by others. When I’ve been playing, however, even if dressed up as hard work, I’ve learned the most about myself and the world. Again, from Mister Rogers:

*Play does seem to open up another part of the mind that is always there, but that, since childhood, may have become closed off and hard to reach. When we treat children’s play as seriously as it deserves, we are helping them feel the joy that’s to be found in the creative spirit. We’re helping ourselves stay in touch with that spirit, too. It’s the things we play with and the people who help us play that make a great difference in our lives.*

It’s love and play that form the foundation of a good education. Without that, the rest is worse than useless, it’s meaningless. – Teacher Tom

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Maintenance Day:

October 15<sup>th</sup>, 9am-12pm

### Halloween Carnival:

October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2pm-4pm

### Holiday Store Crafts Due:

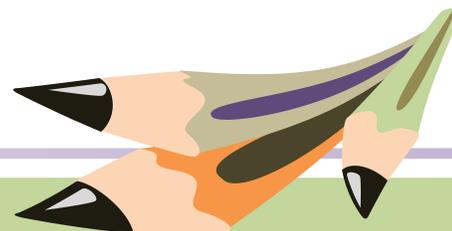
November 7<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>

## 2016 PLAY SUMMIT

### BY TEACHER BECCA

The Sacramento Play summit was a wonderful experience for educators, as well as parents or grandparents. All of the guest speaking sections were very comfortable, and gave unique approaches on how to support creative play with all children. The conference offered many breakout sessions, and I had a difficult time choosing which to attend. But since I am working with preschoolers again, I thought I should focus on the sessions that focused on or were relevant to our preschoolers.

The three guest speakers who stood out the most to me were during the breakout sessions with Katherine Gaffey Lehman, with Loose Parts Play; Barb O'Neil Ed. D., with Play and Behavior; and Julia Luckenbill, M. A., with Outdoor Play. While it is difficult to sum up the wealth of creative approaches each breakout session provided me, here it is as shortly and sweetly as possible! Katherine Gaffey Lehman provided ideas for allowing children to explore "loose parts" and come up with their own approach to the "loose parts." Barb O'Neil shared creative ways to manage problem behaviors through play; her concept of "yes-and" addresses building on what the child is communicating verbally or non-verbally. Julia Luckenbill showed us how at her co-op preschool in Davis they created an edible garden in their backyard to allow children to experience nature completely while also maintaining a safe environment for them to do so. This is taste of what I walked away with. I hope to see more of our preschool families join me next year. I'm looking forward to it! - Teacher Becca



2-Day Student Exploring with Paints

### LEARNING RESOURCES:

We were fortunate to be able to hear from one of our parents, and Board members, Amy Anderson at our October Parent Education meeting. She shared an inspiring message about how to parent our children positively, through play. For more information on positive parenting through play, as well as AWESOME month-by-month printable Play Calendars, check out Amy's blog at: [www.lets-explore.net](http://www.lets-explore.net)

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