



NEWSLETTER

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Dear Caregivers,

I can't believe it is the end of another fabulous school year. This is the first one with this newsletter and position so I just wanted to give you all a HUGE thank you for all of your support, comments, and feedback. I am so proud to be a part of a community that pours so much love into their children and into each other. It truly gives me hope for the future. If this is the end to your SYC journey, please know- you are always welcome back and you will always have a community sending loving energy your way. If it is not, I look forward to working with you next year and seeing what new things are in store for all of us. Have a joyous and safe summer!

Tips for the end of school year!

- Special Celebrations-
 - Attend the special celebrations for your classroom like family picnics! This is a great way to celebrate with your child's class and make connections with other parents for playdates over the summer, to help sustain relationships, or foster new ones.
- Any feeling for your child is ok-
 - Don't have any expectations about how your child will manage the end of school. Just like at the beginning of school, they might have no reaction, a huge reaction, and/or a delayed reaction. There's no way of telling which it will be, but be mindful of the words you say and how they influence and set expectations for how your child should feel.
- Any feeling for YOU is ok-
 - Grown-ups may also have strong attachments to SYC (that's why some of us never leave!). If you're feeling all the feels thinking about the end of school, that's okay too. Please, let yourself feel all those feels. Ends can bring a certain amount of grief for everyone. If you're excited to be done with SYC, that's okay too. Just know we will miss you and you're welcome back anytime.
- SYC is only the beginning
 - SYC plants so many seeds and they will need a lot of love, nurturing & patience to grow. We prescribe plenty of play, getting comfortable with being uncomfortable and laughter & silliness to help keep growing.

15 things I hope your child & your family leave this year knowing

1. You CAN do hard things and you are more capable than you think you are
2. There are no good or bad emotions and ALL emotions are okay (all behavior is not)
3. All behavior is communication- get curious & ask good questions to find the root of the behavior
4. Be gentle with yourself, parenting is the HARDEST THING
5. It is OK to make mistakes, mistakes lead us to great growth and change
6. Apologizing and repairing with your child teaches them crucial skills about mistakes, forgiveness and the imperfection of humans.
7. PLAY is the language of children. They need plenty of unstructured time to just be
8. Reframe "Your child is giving you a hard time", AS "My child is having a hard time"
9. Self regulation happens through an enormous amount of practice during co-regulation
10. Your connection with your child is what will help you (& them) through the hard times
11. Being uncomfortable is a part of life, "the only way out is through"
12. Two things can be true at the same time
13. Risky play is essential to understanding yourself and the world around you
14. NO ONE has it all together, asking for help and reaching out shows strength & builds community. No one was meant to parent alone, a village is key.
15. You don't have to die on every hill, as long as there is not a safety issue, you get to decide what is appropriate for your child and your family and it's okay if it changes

Everlasting SYC lessons from Alumni caregivers

- “Truly understanding that struggling is part of learning, and that it’s ok to supportively watch your child struggle and not provide the answer. And loving, consistent boundaries have the best payoff”
- “Helping my kid navigate ambiguous social ideas. It’s okay not to share, but it’s also not okay to hoard resources you’re not using/take all of something indefinitely. Taking care of yourself and your idea is important, but it doesn’t mean not considering other people.”
- “No one at SYC ever said the invalidating, guilt inducing “you’ll miss it when it’s gone.” Being offered support instead of unhelpful advice to enjoy even difficult moments...”
- “If I had to pick 3 things it would be the following: 1. Boundaries are like guardrails, 2. Two hard rules: you cannot hurt people or property & 3. Different families make different choices.”
- Something that has always stuck with me from a parent ed forever ago is that big emotional outbursts are like sneezes– even if you put them off for a bit, they’re coming out eventually, so don’t go back upstairs so you can come down the “right way” (according to your toddler) thinking that that will prevent the meltdown. It’s coming regardless, so don’t walk on eggshells and drive yourself crazy giving into their demands thinking you’ll put it off
- The biggest things for me, I think, have been the roles and importance of connection, repair, and struggle:
 - –Connect before you correct. Many behaviors stem from a child feeling disconnected. Punishment builds walls, disconnects your child from you further, and does not teach them the skills they are signaling they need help learning. Work to set (and hold!) firm boundaries with love instead. Acknowledge that the way they are feeling makes sense, that they can have their feelings, AND still do what you’re asking them to do or not do. Your child isn’t giving you a hard time, they’re having a hard time AND this is ok.
 - Like my child, I will become overwhelmed and dysregulated and my triggers will overpower me sometimes. I will make mistakes. Like my child, I am still learning. The important part is what comes after I lose control, am triggered, make the mistake. After the fact, when I am calm, repairing with my child, talking through what happened, and letting them know I love them even when I’m mad, sad, scared, etc. models how I want them to be in their relationships and establishes that all-important message of unconditional love and respect.
 - Nothing grows without struggle. One of the hardest things is allowing your child to be uncomfortable, to fail, to experience hard things. But this is so necessary for learning, building skills, and developing resilience and self esteem. This is real life. Allow them the space and time to work through discomfort, make mistakes and try again, do the hard things. Stay with them, encourage them, partner with them, but, in the end, let them be the one who finds out, “I CAN do hard things.”

Wise words for SYC teachers about transitioning to kindergarten

- “Nothing is permanent. You can always change your mind. There is so much anxiety around whether kindergarten is the right choice and which school will be a good fit. It’s okay not to be sure that your decision is the right one. You can always change the path.”
- “I feel like there’s a lot of talk about how difficult the transition is going from preschool to public kindergarten, and while there were definitely tricky moments, overall, I really think the transition provided great opportunities to grow and develop.”
- “Be cautious of hyping it up too much. Be factual: you’ll go in this door, you’ll bring a backpack and a lunch, there will be kids, there will be teachers to help you, here’s the playground you’ll use.”
- “If you know kids that will be in the same class, try to get together over the summer so there’s a familiar face.”
- “If you think your child might have a hard time separating or with the new transition, put a picture of yourself/your family/their best friend in their backpack as a way for them to have you “with” them (same idea as the family boards we have here at school)”
- “I think it can also be reassuring to parents to hear that even though their kids are leaving the safe “bubble” that is SYC, they’ll carry the things they learned here with them throughout their lives. It feels so scary to leave SYC, but the teachers/staff are always here to chat with even after you leave, and there are so many examples of kids and families that have remained close even after they graduate and move on to different school systems.”

Have any questions, comments or topic suggestions? Let’s chat! e-mail me at alicia@syccolumbus.org.
Office hours: Tuesday 9:30–10:30 am, Wednesday 1–2pm or by appointment