



Welcome to our Transitional Kindergarten (T-K) program at Blanche Sprentz Elementary School! We look forward to providing an environment in which your child can learn and grow. We invite you to support and participate in your child's education.

Blanche Sprentz T-K program seeks to balance child-initiated learning with teacher-directed activities. This is a place to develop inclinations to read, write, and solve problems and to enhance creativity and imaginative play. We can't wait to get started!

We are excited to be a partner with you in your child's education. To make this year successful, we strongly believe in communicating, supporting and working with you as a team. This will have a positive impact on your child's achievement. Please feel free to communicate with us during the year either by phone, notes, scheduled conferences or email.

Blanche Sprentz Elementary School  
249 Flower Drive Folsom, Ca 95630  
Office (916) 294-9110  
Office Hours 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Mrs. Alley A.M. TK, room 1, email: [kalley@fcusd.org](mailto:kalley@fcusd.org)  
Ms. Hooker P.M. TK, room 1, email: [shooker@fcusd.org](mailto:shooker@fcusd.org)  
Mrs. Peterson A.M. TK, room 3, email: [apeterso@fcusd.org](mailto:apeterso@fcusd.org)  
Mrs. Napton P.M. TK, room 3, email: [bnapton@fcusd.org](mailto:bnapton@fcusd.org)

## Helpful reminders to get this exciting year in your child's life started off right...

ATTENDANCE: Consistent attendance is essential for your child to benefit fully from T-K. Please have your child at school and on time each day. If your child is going to be late, please stop by the office first and get a late slip. Class times are as follows:

AM T-K= 8:00 am - 11:21 am                      PM T-K = 11:17 am - 2:38 pm

On ALL EARLY days the PM T-K'ers will come from 8:00 am-11:21 am

Please notify your child's teacher (in writing) if your child will be going home with someone else for the day. If you need to take your child out of school early for the day, please stop by the office and sign him/her out at the office before coming to the classroom.

ABSENCES: If your child is absent, please call the office (916) 294-9110 to notify them. If you know you'll be out of town for 5 or more school days, we can arrange for Independent Study work to be sent home with your child. The minimum days missed must be 5 for Independent Study. Please notify the office and your child's teacher **AT LEAST 10 DAYS** in advance. Your child's teacher will prepare an Independent Study so your child will get credit for days absent. The principal will sign off on an Independent Study once your request is received and the teacher has prepared the work.

DROP-OFF/PICK UP: Please park your car on the street or in the upper parking lot by the multipurpose room and walk your child to and from their classroom. Please direct them to line up on the line in front of his/her classroom and wait for the teacher to welcome them. We kindly ask for parents to wait behind the black wrought iron fence while waiting for teachers to welcome and/or dismiss students from class. For safety and in consideration of others, please make sure children are not running up and down the dirt hills or the stairs before and after class. Thank you!

DRESS: Please label all coats, jackets, backpacks, and sweaters. It's fun to get crafty in T-K, so remember that we paint, glue, and play **ACTIVELY** each day in whatever we're wearing to school. Tennis shoes are preferable footwear each day, for safety reasons. All shoes and sandals must be worn with socks, and sandals **MUST** have a strap around the heel. We never wear shoes with heels to school. Every Friday is **SCHOOL SPIRIT DAY**, so your child is encouraged to wear red, our school color, or a Blanche Sprentz t-shirt. Look for order forms to come home.

**MASKS:** Currently masks are required for students and staff while indoors. Students will be allowed to be mask free outdoors for snack, recess, and PE. Please make sure your child's mask fits appropriately and doesn't fall below their nose. It would also be helpful to keep an extra mask in their backpack for backup.

**BACKPACKS:** Backpacks are useful for T-K! If you plan to purchase a new one, please make sure it can hold a 9x12 Wednesday Folder. For safety reasons, please do not send in a backpack with wheels.

**PHYSICAL EDUCATION:** Your child will participate in P.E. for two half-hour sessions each week (days to be determined). If health reasons require your child to be excused for a session, please send a note to the teacher that day. If your child will need extended time off from P.E., please send a doctor's note indicating the request. Please be sure your child wears clothing and shoes that are appropriate for P.E. on those days. **Water bottles and sunscreen are good ideas too, especially while it is still hot at the beginning of the year.**

**SNACK:** Students will need to have a nutritious and easy-to-eat snack sent to school each day. Snack ideas include fruits/veggies, applesauce, yogurts, cheese and crackers, trail mix, etc. Please send any utensils needed for your child to eat his/her snack (disposable spoons, etc.) Please be sure to send and label a water bottle with your child's name. **NO GUM OR CANDY AT ANYTIME - PLEASE.** If your child has ANY allergies, please see your child's teacher ASAP. For the safety of all students, please do not send any nut products for snack until further notice.

**RESTROOMS:** Students need to be independent while using the bathroom. Please ensure that your child is able to undress, wipe, flush, dress, and wash their hands independently. Pull-ups are not allowed in TK. Restrooms are located at the end of our building. Students will be monitored in groups or individually to and from the restroom by a teacher or a certified volunteer. You may hear of boys or girls using the private stalls in the girls' restroom located by rooms 3 & 4. Don't be alarmed as this is common procedure in TK. **PLEASE HELP US BY MAKING SURE YOUR CHILD USES THE RESTROOM BEFORE CLASS STARTS!**

Thank you!

**BIRTHDAYS:** We love celebrating your children. If you would like to send something special in to honor your child's birthday with his/her class, please consider a non-food treat (a sticker, eraser or a cool pencil) or a whole-class treat that is individually prepackaged and NUT-FREE snack like fruit snacks, goldfish, rice crispy treats, etc. When sending in individual treats, please plan for 24 children. Birthday invitations for

private parties are **never distributed at school** unless you plan on inviting the whole class. Thank you!

WEDNESDAY FOLDERS: All school news and paperwork will come home in a red Blanche Sprentz Folder on Wednesdays. Please read through all the papers and have your child return the EMPTY folder to their classroom teacher the following day.

CONTRIBUTIONS: We are ever so grateful for items you can contribute to our classrooms. If you'd like to donate something to our classroom, please see Wish List items posted outside the classroom. We will occasionally post the WISH LIST near the front door with post-it notes indicating what we need in the classroom. Thank you in advance for your generosity and contribution.

VOLUNTEERS: Due to our current situation, we are not allowed to have volunteers in our classrooms. If there becomes a time when volunteers can come into the classroom, we will notify you in advance so you can begin the required volunteer paperwork. If you are interested in being a Room Parent, please email your teacher. Thank you!

BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS: Demonstrating good manners is expected in all grades at Blanche Sprentz. The first few weeks of school we focus on teaching, modeling, and working on good manners, listening skills, classroom routines and school rules. We know that Transitional Kindergarteners, as well as all children, can be expected to be polite, respectful, and kind to others. Every child has the right to learn in a comfortable and safe environment, and our expectations for all children reflect this belief. We look forward to partnering with you to help your child enjoy a positive and successful school year.

BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT: In class and out on the playground we strive for good manners and good behavior. We utilize the GREEN/YELLOW/RED management system to help your child keep himself/herself on track during the school day. When your child arrives at school each day, he/she will place a green face next to his/her name. A yellow face is given if your child has needed a gentle reminder. A red face is given if behavior continues after the reminder and is intended to help your child stop the behavior and think about his/her actions. A red face may be followed up with a call, email or note home **if** the behavior is not corrected. We always strive to give opportunities to change behavior and earn a green face back.

## CURRENT COVID INFO:

The latest update from Sacramento County Public Health (SCPH), effective July 30<sup>TH</sup>, is that all individuals in Sacramento County must wear face coverings while indoors, regardless of vaccination status. This includes all FCUSD schools, sites, and offices.

While some guidance are similar to last year, there are some changes as well:

### Continues from last school year:

- Masks are required indoors for all students and employees regardless of vaccination status
- Staff and students must stay home when sick
- Unvaccinated individuals with symptoms, who test positive, or who have close contact exposure must quarantine for the required period
- Testing recommendations are in place for individuals with symptoms or close contact exposures
- Positive case reporting and contact tracing will take place by FCUSD
- Hand hygiene practices

### No longer required:

- Masks outdoors, regardless of vaccination status
- Masks may be removed for eating and drinking
- Hybrid schedules
- Physical distancing
- Quarantine for vaccinated - unless symptomatic

## Our Daily Schedule Will Include:

**Opening** - attendance, flag, calendar, weather, movement

**Reading Instruction** - whole and small group instruction including literature, introduction of themes, poetry, rhyming, letters, sounds, phonemic awareness

**Math** - whole and small group instruction

**Active Learning** - "Choice Time" - child-initiated and teacher-directed projects/activities at learning centers; art, math, reading, writing, science, imaginative play, building, etc.

**Snack and Recess** - on Kindergarten playground

**Story Time** - Read aloud stories

**P.E.** - twice each week (with P.E. teacher)

**Center Time** - (Monday - Thursday) small group learning

**Science and Social Studies** - whole and small group instruction

**Closing** - remembering our learning for the day, passing out papers, good-byes

## Our Developmental Practice and Philosophy

Since play is a child's work we try to enhance that play, but never replace it! Flexibility is built into our day so that we can capitalize on "teachable" moments. Learning how to learn and how to question are important during the preschool years. Transitional Kindergarteners learn by doing, playing, talking, listening, and modeling others. In our class we expose our young learners to all of these and more.

We know this is a lot to take in! Please take some time to read through this again. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask/contact us.

Lastly, know that we will take excellent care of your child as we will have a wonderful year full of learning and fun together! Thank you for all you do to support our efforts to ensure a comfortable and safe environment for all Transitional Kindergarteners at Blanche Sprentz.

Fondly,

Aimee Peterson, Kristina Alley, Bonnie Napton & Suzy Hooker

# Just Playing

by Anita Wadley

When I'm building in the block room, please don't say I'm "Just Playing".  
For you see, I'm learning as I play, about balance and shapes.  
Who knows, I may be an architect someday.

When I'm getting all dressed up, setting the table, caring for the babies,  
Don't get the idea I'm "Just Playing". For, you see, I'm learning as I play;  
I may be a mother or a father someday.

When you see me up to my elbows in paint or standing at an easel, or molding  
and shaping clay, Please don't let me hear you say, "He is Just Playing".  
For, you see, I'm learning as I play. I'm expressing myself and being creative.  
I may be an artist or an inventor someday.

When you see me sitting in a chair "reading" to an imaginary audience,  
Please don't laugh and think I'm "Just Playing".  
For, you see, I'm learning as I play.  
I may be a teacher someday.

When you see me combing the bushes for bugs, or packing my pockets with choice things I find, Don't pass  
it off as "Just Play".  
For you see, I'm learning as I play.  
I may be a scientist someday.

When you see me engrossed in a puzzle or some "plaything" at my school,  
Please don't feel the time is wasted in "Play".  
For, you see, I'm learning as I play.  
I'm learning to solve problems and concentrate.  
I may be in business someday.

When you see me cooking or tasting foods,  
Please don't think that because I enjoy it, it is "Just Play".  
I'm learning to follow direction and see differences.  
I may be a cook someday.

When you see me learning to skip, hop, run and move my body,  
please don't say I'm "Just Playing".  
For, you see, I'm learning as I play.  
I'm learning how my body works.  
I may be a doctor, nurse or athlete someday.

When you ask me what I've done at school today, and I say, "I Just Played",  
Please don't misunderstand me. For you see, I'm learning as I play.  
I'm learning to enjoy and be successful in my work. I'm preparing for tomorrow.  
Today, I am a child and my work is play

## More About Our TK Program

### Learning Centers

**Dramatic Play Centers:** Why the House Corner Is Important: The work children do in the house corner is called dramatic play, pretend play, or make-believe. Whatever it is called, it involves taking on a role and engaging in imitative behavior. Although this area of the room may be called the house corner, it is really a stage that can be transformed by you and the children into a supermarket, restaurant, space station, post office, shoe store, gas station, or whatever you wish.

Pretend play is very important for children's development and learning. In the house corner children take on roles from familiar family scenes, local community experiences, and fantastic imaginings. The ability to collect and draw upon previous experiences, to ask and answer questions, and plan with others requires a level of abstract thinking essential to learning in other areas.

As children act out roles, they develop many skills. They play cooperatively, negotiate turns, exchange ideas, and work together to solve problems. As they relive life experiences, they take on roles they fear and learn to control their anxieties. (Think about the child who fears an operation and pretends to be the doctor and "in charge.") In dramatic play, children draw upon their previous experiences. This requires that they judge and select relevant information so they can enact play episodes. Finally, dramatic play provides practice in using small motor skills as children put on and take off dress-up clothes, "write" notes or take orders, or use play dough to make hamburgers.

**Art:** The Art Center gives me the opportunity to develop my creativity and express myself. As I experiment and have fun, I'm also developing social skills and small muscles. Maybe I'll be an artist or designer when I grow up!

**Blocks:** In the block center I'm developing math concepts and motor skills. I'm also learning how to share and work with my friends. I may use these skills as an architect or builder when I grow up.

**Science Focus:** Provide items that will allow children to investigate and experiment. We learn that plants and animals are living things that grow and change. Hatching chicks and butterflies and watching frogs and ant farms give the children firsthand experiences in learning about living things in their environment.

**Nature:** Children are innately interested in the natural world. Actively interacting with the natural world develops visual/spatial skills and provides a

solid foundation for learning. All domains of child development are fostered and engaged-brains and attitudes are affected. Research shows that nature experiences contribute to a child's problem solving skills, creativity, and observation skills. Nature is healing, calming. Nature develops curiosity, wonder, self expression, discovery, and hands-on experience.

**Music:** According to brain research, the brain loves rhythm, rhyme and music. Research in early literacy shows how valuable songs and chants are in helping children develop language and reading skills. Music just makes children feel good. We can sing, rhyme and chant as we move to reinforce the learning.

**Movement:** Problem solving, self-expression, novelty and imagination in physical development activities and music activities add creativity, feelings of mastery and body space awareness. The earliest learning is based on motor development and subsequent learning is no different. Brain research shows new neural pathways are created with music and movement. Until the brain is organized physically, brain organization doesn't take place.

**Writing Centers:** Salt box/texture boxes. We practice writing letters in the salt. Wikki sticks: Make letters out of wikki sticks to trace with fingers. Play dough: Make long snakes from play dough, and then make letters.

**Math Focus:** Anything having to do with numbers and pre-math skills. The math center develops my problem-solving skills and gives me hands-on experiences in counting, comparing, patterning and measuring. I may use these skills as an accountant or computer specialist when I grow up.

**Sensory Table:** An extension of the Math, Science, and Fine Motor Centers.

**Language:** Typewriter, magnetic letters (children can post them on metal trays), lots of children's books, letter games, large round black pencils as well as skinny ones, paper, letter puzzles, chalk and chalkboard, Beginning Readers, tactile letters,.....

**Cooking:** Everybody loves to eat, and cooking is a natural way to develop reading, math, science, and small motor skills. Many of our cooking projects are integrated with a theme or a season ("Dirt Pie" in the spring), or literature Lady Bug Cookie" for THE GROUCHY LADYBUG).

**Library:** In the library I'm practicing my reading skills. I'm also learning to love books.

## What can parents do at home?

Children benefit most from T-Kindergarten when their teachers and parents work together. Each has something valuable to contribute. Teachers are trained in child development and early childhood education. They see how your child acts with other children and adults, and can assess what your child is learning and how he or she is progressing.

But only you have in-depth knowledge of your child. You know best your child's interests, fears, joys, patterns, and past. You are most familiar with the world your child is trying to understand. You know about the relationships among the members of your family, and have shared many of your child's experiences, from family events to trips to the doctor's office or the zoo.

This in-depth knowledge makes you a valuable resource for teachers. If you share with teachers what is happening to your child at home-the arrival of a new baby, the death of a pet, nightmares, temper tantrums, trips, separation or divorce-teachers can understand your child better. They can deal with both positive and difficult events through reassuring stories, soothing art activities, imaginative dramatic play, and extra attention.

You are your child's first and most important teacher.

Your home is a child's first and continual learning environment. As parents, you decide the family's daily routines-when to get up, eat, play, do chores, visit friends, and go to bed. The way you talk with your children makes a tremendous difference in how they think, how they feel about themselves, and the kind of people they will become.

If teachers and parents can work together, children will be much better off. The more consistent teachers and parents are, the more secure each child is likely to feel. And when children feel secure, they are more likely to explore, to experiment, and to learn.

Many parents ask what they can do to help their children succeed in school. Teachers in high-quality programs will usually reply, "Just try to encourage your child to explore and learn in your home environment the way we help children at school. Help your child become an independent, enthusiastic, curious learner." You don't need to buy a lot of special toys or equipment to turn a child into a creative thinker. The best thing you can do is to be a good listener and to talk with your child as you and he or she go about your normal, everyday household chores. But you will find that this kind of attention has a wonderful effect on children and makes your job as parent more fun and interesting-and sometimes easier.

