

Preschool Bulletin Article for 6/28/20

It is hard to believe that we are already almost through the month of June and Independence Day is upon us! During this time, in particular, when the days often seem to run into each other, July 4th has really snuck up on me!

When I think about all that this national holiday means, I am struck by the similarities that there are between this day and preschool. One of the first things that comes to mind is the name itself, Independence Day. Several years ago, I heard a school administrator say, "Kids don't rise to low expectations." I find great truth to this statement. It's amazing what a child can do when given the opportunity! In preschool, no matter how young, the teachers work hard to help a child achieve independence in all that they do, from the smallest to the biggest tasks. These can include everything from opening lunch containers to hanging up a coat, identifying shapes, and writing one's name. Pushing in a chair, cleaning up toys, and completing a puzzle are some other areas that we encourage children to reach independence. A critical part of preschool is constantly learning how to do new things and being supported on the journey to becoming independent in completing them. Learning independence promotes not only confidence, but perseverance and patience. In trying to achieve independence, we also work with our children to understand that they can ask for assistance and make mistakes, but that practice will allow them to improve. Teachers constantly share with parents many ways to continue this practice and build more independence at home.

Accomplishing a new skill also then naturally allows one to assist others who may be struggling with the same thing. Offering help, showing compassion, and being a kind friend are things that even our littlest members can do! I remember watching an example of this when we'd take a 'brain break' during the day. The child with the 'yoga teacher' job was supposed to roll a die and demonstrate for the class which pose to practice. Particularly in the beginning of the year, some children would frequently struggle to remember how to do the pose. There was always a friend who knew all of the poses by heart and could assist his/her friend! This is just one of many examples of one child's independence in an area being used to help another succeed.

While July 4th represents freedom for our nation, it also reminds us that when we come together, no matter our age, background, or skin color, we can accomplish great things and achieve common goals. Historically speaking and even today as we fight the COVID-19 virus, we have seen countless examples of how joining forces allows us to overcome seemingly insurmountable odds. At the preschool level, while we plant the seeds of independent growth, we equally try to develop a child's ability to work together and achieve goals as part of a team. This past school year, I remember visiting a class and watching two teams of 4 year olds each work together to build "snow" forts that the other team could not knock down with "snowballs". It was inspiring to see the creative

partnership that was formed on both sides as a result of working towards one goal! Although in this modern day we are not trying to gain freedom from another nation as during the Revolutionary War, some of the skills needed for that victory are as applicable. Learning to listen, respecting others' ideas, and problem solving together are skills that we can begin and nurture with our preschoolers in order to enable them to become understanding and thoughtful adults.

To learn more about becoming part of our incredible preschool family and the opportunities we provide, please visit our website at www.preschoolatstfrancis.com or contact Shelley Freeman at: shelley.freeman@stfrancisraleigh.org.

With Joy,

Heidi Hobler, Director

St. Francis of Assisi Preschool