



Sunflower grown at Building Blocks!



Early Learning Makes a Difference

The first six years of your child's life are the foundation for later success.

Building Blocks is proud of the curriculum we have developed over the years. We know that children are eager to learn. Research shows that children learn best in a hands on, nurturing, supportive environment. We take pride in our classroom management. This is done through our small teacher to child ratios in all the classes we teach.

Children thrive in our preschool and then in our kindergarten classes because each child is noticed and worked with on an individual level. Natalie Neal spoke

at one of our parent information nights. Her talk was so powerful we would like to share with you some of the points she spoke on. Natalie said the child's brain is like a sponge and during those first 6 years it stores all information that it has learned. This information is then the basis of how we process everything we come across for the rest of our lives.

She went on to say it is so important for children to be in and with calm, loving and stimulating people and environments as that is how they will relate all future issues with. In other words if your child is not hurried, meets with success and is in a calm environment that is how they will tackle their future. It's all about the habits your child will learn in school in

their very formative early years. If your child meets with success, he will think success is always possible. If he is in a busy, hurried classroom with not enough direction or adults that will be his reality. He will always expect that no one will take time with him. Building Blocks would not recommend all day kindergarten for any child. There are simply too many children in a classroom with too few adults. Under the Day Nurseries Act we would be shut down if followed the same ratios. All day kindergarten may appear to be convenient for parents, but as for meeting a child's need it will fall very short.

2012

Open House Saturday March 31
for September Registration

10:00 - 1:00

Registration has been ongoing for our Kindergarten classes since our kindergarten information nights in February. Families currently in SK and JK were also able to sign up younger children for preschool classes. During the week of March 26 we will have a table set up in the hall for registration. In school registration will take place then. You must reregister if you want a spot for your child for September. We will open up registration to the public on Friday March 30th. Please pass this information on to friends and family. Word of mouth is how many families find out about Building Blocks.

Preschool News

The children in our preschool classes continue to enjoy the varied themes and activities at school. We are now seeing the children who have been with us since September following directions more easily. They are enjoying all aspects of school both large play room time and small circle times. In the large playroom the children are exploring more areas now, staying on task for longer periods now and thoroughly enjoying their art times with Mrs. Geddes and Mrs. VanderBurgt. As in all our classes art activities are age appropriate. We are working on skills that strengthen their fine motor skills and following directions. Children love art time and much teaching is done at this time. With our small ratios children sit with a teacher in small groups and teachers are able to give help and encouragement. Children really look forward to their art

time at school. One of the comments we sometimes hear from preschool parents in later years is that their child learned and did more in a 2 or 3 day Building Blocks preschool class than they did going to a 5 day kindergarten class in the public/separate school. Enjoy your child's masterpieces!

Equally important is the small circle time. Each class is divided up into 3 groups. Circle time includes calendar time, days of the week, counting and a month song, games, songs and always a story. Children love this small group time. We also work on fine motor skills and play skills during this half of the day. Mrs. Freer, Mrs. Sanger and Mrs. Quibell are with the preschoolers at this time. Mrs. Quibell is with the preschool class the whole day. Our afternoon classes are now almost full and the new students are settling in well.

JK Highlights

40 Phonics Sounds

This week the JK class will have finished learning 40 plus sounds in English. All full time students are reading!

Word Families

During the spring term the JK students will start exploring word families during their class time. Children will build up to 15 words each day, learn correct letter formations on primary lined paper and spell 3 or more words from dictation. We start at a K level and finish at a Gr. 2 level in June.

Comprehension

After March Break the JK students will each make a book that they will take home and read. We have 2 different levels of books. These books each contain tricky words that the children have on their tricky word rings and words the children will sound out. We do a page a day. This is quite an accomplishment.



**WE KEEP THE CHILD IN
CHILDHOOD**

905-846-3305

| Registration Dates March 2012 | In school families | Previous families | New Families |
|----------------------------------|--|---|--------------|
| 26 SK registration | 29 Families who have had children in our school before can register on this date. | 30 This date is for families new to the school | |
| 27 JK registration | | 31 Open House | |
| 28 Preschool registration | | | |

JK News

The JK class is a busy happy classroom. Both morning and afternoon classes were capped at 16 children as we have found this is the ratio that allows us to work with each child and ensure that all their needs can be met. As in SK the JK class starts their day first with academics. The children are eager everyday to come into class and find out what their new sound will be for that day. By this time of the year they are easily reading words that are in the classroom, on billboards and in books. A parent recently shared how thrilled she was when her recently turned 4 year old read half the book of "Llama, llama in the red pajamas". Mrs. Freer plans the lessons while Ms. Kuehni plans all the art. The children spend half their day with Mrs. Freer, while Ms. Kuehni follows the class for the entire session and is able to follow through for consistency for this class. We are pleased that the majority of JK children have signed up for our SK class.



Movement is very important for all children. This year the JK and SK class have practiced EFT a technique that helps the child gain self control. JK children practice yoga while SK children practice Tai Chi.

Reminders:

We are closed over
March Break, March
12-16

Scholastic Books

Book orders are sent home monthly. We get credits for books and supplies based on a percentage of the orders. So far this year we have earned over a \$1000.00. Thank You!

Student Teachers

We welcome student teachers from Sheridan College. These students have a 7 week placement with us. We also welcome Komal a co op high school student who will be with the preschool class from February until we finish in June.

Parking

Please remember when dropping off your child to use a parking spot. The first 2 spots are reserved at all times for the church. Please do not block the lane way.

Sharing Other Countries

If you have anything from the countries we are talking about please share it with us so we can show the children. In the past parents have brought in amazing things for the children to see. You'd be surprised what interests the children. We've had costumes from countries, books and foods.

Pancake Week

We can no longer find a local maple syrup bush to go to so during our pancake week we will make pancakes at school and use real maple syrup. It is a fun and tasty week.



SK News

Mrs. Sanger is the primary teacher for the SK children. The SK year at Building Blocks is very full for the students. The children in this level continue to grow and expand in the knowledges they have gained in reading, writing and math. The children start SK already having a firm foundation in reading. Some students are already reading chapter books while some students are still sounding out words. Spelling is expanded from 3 words in JK to 10 words in SK. Journal writing continues to expand the children's knowledge on sentence structure and grammar. In SK we continue to work on social skills. During this part of your child's development we encourage children to take ownership of their feelings. Mrs. Sanger tells her class, "You have the power, use it wisely."

The art time of the SK class is multi leveled. The children are following many step directions and using a broad variety of materials. Mrs. Quibell does the planning, however the art is usually done under the supervision of Mrs. Geddes and Mrs. VanderBurgh.

Many of the children leaving SK go on to French Immersion successfully because they have such a strong level of the English language in this enhanced class. Our students who go on to private schools tell us that they are at the top of the class in academics and social skills. We hear back from many of our SK graduates on how well they made the transition from our school to the "big school".



Why Building Blocks

My husband and I are super satisfied parents of Building Blocks. Our four year old will be returning for his Senior Kindergarten year, and our two year old will be starting his Pre-School this September. I'm very thankful to have this opportunity to share my experience with you.

Professionally, I am a Child, Youth & Family Counsellor and have worked for the three large school boards in Ontario, The Children's Aid Society, Ontario Justice System (Y.O.A), for the last twelve years, and in Private Practice supporting Academics, Emotional Competence, Mental Health and Trauma Crisis. Typically the majority of my service is with 'At Risk' children & youth for mental health, rehabilitation and re-integration back into the regular school system.

It is from these experiences I hope bring value to what I have to share with you and why we have chosen Building Blocks for our children's introduction to learning.

We have all heard of how priceless the 0-7 ages are. Also known as the Formative Years or the BLUE PRINT YEARS. It is presumed that these are *the years* where this new person (child) is downloading, learning from every experience and emotion that is stored in the sub-conscious mind as a kind of reference point for every other experience later on in life.

Most of us have experienced some form of failure or disappointment in some aspect of our lives, in some cases trauma. Often the details of the situation

may blur with time but what remains is the emotional aftermath of what the event meant to you. The experience stays stored in your 'psyche' of what you learned about yourself, your ability, your likeability or your worth.

The approach to learning at Building Blocks is very unique in the sense that aside from delivering academic excellence, children flourish with the love and attention from the small class sizes. As well, the emphasis on building positive social interactions and self-esteem is vital to later success.

As a mom, I see this value from being at home with our two children and how much they need and demand of you and what your time and attention means to them and how they can flourish when they get it.

Our son is a sensitive perfectionist who typically refuses to attempt anything he anticipates he would not be 'perfect' at. He would also withdraw if he felt pressure or frustration. It broke my heart because I knew his refusal was his fear of failure not an unwilling child.

In a short time in JK, we now see him take risk with his writing. We see his spirit grow as he practices his 'Tricky Words' and we see the awe in his face when he can read some of the words in stories he typically would only be able to listen to.

is so proud to be spelling his name even if his printing is not perfect or getting his sounds right away – *he wants to learn*– where he would in the past withdraw if he thinks he might fail – **this is the kind of individualized attention that I value most.** To know that someone/ a school cares to teach him NOT shame him.

Learning is a skill that is developed. The ability to learn is not equal but developing successful attitude, skills and habits are essential tools to being prepared for ones education. I do believe that smaller class sizes at this crucial stage of development have great advantages. In terms of ratio of attending to needs and supporting individualized programs to bring out each child's strength.

I am not here to put down the regular school system. I believe that there are tremendous good intentions that go into their goals and I can say that because I have been part of that team and they are doing their best. Large class sizes are a tremendous stress on both the school/teachers and students.

Thank you.
Natalie

