



Orchard Elementary
Ridgewood Public Schools

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Good Morning Orchard School Families,

Here we are - in our final month of school. It seems hard to believe that 10 short months ago your child began their new grade level. Now, they are truly ready to move up, full of confidence and new skills. We look forward to the final 15 days and the hustle and bustle that June brings!

As a quick reminder - after dismissal, our school building is closed to students. This includes requests for drinks or use of the bathroom facilities. We apologize for the inconvenience.

Please read below to learn more about exciting events in and around Orchard School.

Media Usage & Families: An Orchard Conversation

At our last meeting, we created a draft of our “Orchard School Media Agreement”. This agreement will take the place of our acceptable use policy. Our [current policy](#) essentially has students promise to physically take care of their Chromebooks and to responsibly use them for only the purpose their teacher has intended. Our modifications for next year include aspects beyond this purpose, allowing students an opportunity to consider a healthy balance and appropriate communication. We ask that any interested families please review [this document](#) and provide any thoughts you have. We will look to use this new AUP in the fall.

Save the dates for our Orchard 2019-20 media nights:

- 10/24/19 @ 7:30 PM
 - 1/16/20 @ 7:30 PM (K-2 Themed)
 - 1/30/20 @ 7:30 PM (3-5 Themed)
 - 4/23/20 @ 7:30 PM
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Kristi Mraz ~ Purposeful Play Presentation

On Wednesday, May 29, our final Well Being Series Speaker hosted a parent night at Ridge School. [Kristine Mraz](#), a former Kindergarten teacher, and educational expert spoke about the concept of play. Kristi's work was used in formulating our full day Kindergarten experience and her input, as always, was spot on. Here are my top ten takeaways from the night!

10. What is play and why is it important? Play helps build strong social/emotional skills for future work. It encourages imagination, flexible thinking, negotiation, and an ability to increase independence and self-directed selection of pleasurable activities.

9. Based on the work of Stuart Brown, all of us have play personalities - kids and adults alike. Are you/is your child...

- Explorer
- Artist/Creator
- Joker
- Story Teller
- Kinesthete
- Director
- Collector
- Competitor

When something is “boring” or mundane, engage your play personality. The same goes for your child. Hook them in using their play personality. Does your child groan about brushing their teeth? Perhaps it needs to be a beat the clock opportunity for your little competitor!

8. Be mindful of how we discuss play vs. work. They are not opposites. How do adults speak? “I want to play around with that idea”. Try hard not to say “finish your work, then play”.

7. There are varying types of play, including:

- Fantasy (will often clue parents into emotional well being/fears)
- Construction (this is the STEM version of play)
- Games/Rules (great to model for your child)
- Rough and tumble/big body play
 - This play is healthy and important. While it can look aggressive, it is often not. Kids typically engage in this way with people they *want* to be friends with. Studies have shown that rough play with a trusted caregiver at age 3 correlates to better social skills by age 6. Why? Boundaries are learned! If your child engages in this type of play *too roughly*, try playing “rough and tumble” with them to help model boundaries.

6. Provide plenty of unstructured time at home. Boredom is merely a “false plateau”. This means unscheduled time - not even a play date is considered unstructured.
5. Provide plenty of materials for children. Children by age 5 do not require the actual tool (e.g., food for a restaurant) - they can *make it* with recyclable, everyday material. Toys that set up exactly what to do for a young toddler are helpful, but by age 5 they become “fill in the blank play”.
4. Watch your language at the playground. No, not that language! Consider how you talk with your child as they take a risk. Saying “Do you feel safe?” encourages agency, while “Be careful” hinders their independence. Allow your child to be the best assessor for their skill and risk.
3. Support play dates, and ensure your child prefers playing with peers instead of you. Be wary of the “adult preferential” child.
2. Help your child learn how to play independently. If this is difficult for them, openly discuss it, set them up for playing alone, and set a timer. Provide positive praise and gradually increase their time. Even starting at 5 minutes is a success!
1. Break the habit of “interviewing for pain”. Stop connecting with your child over their struggles. This creates a victim mentality for your child and creates a learned behavior for how they gain your attention. Instead of reacting (“Oh! I can’t believe that happened, I am going to call their parent”); consider asking your child what they did, and then supporting that decision (“Oh wow, that was great! Good job doing/saying...”). This will have a positive effect on your child, wherein they see themselves as someone who can solve problems and who can make choices about how to handle themselves when things go “wrong”.

Ultimately, it is important that parents and educators recognize that every child has a role to learn in the area of play. For example, does your child need to learn how to say stop? Does your child need to learn how to hear stop? As we look ahead into the collaborative workforce our children are bound to enter, we hope they will do so with strong social/emotional skills - and play can help them do just that! Take a moment this summer to increase opportunities for purposeful play.

Choose to Be Nice - Family “No Homework” Nights!

Each month at Orchard School, we celebrate our Choose to Be Nice theme at a Community Building Assembly. This month, our theme is courage, and we are reading Scaredy Squirrel. We will share out on this topic at our June 13th CBA.

Our “Choose to Be Nice Family Night” will be held on **Thursday, June 13**. That night, our teachers will not assign any homework. Instead, we are encouraging families to get together and enjoy some quality time with one another. Perhaps a walk to VanDyk’s?

Save the Dates...

First Day of School:	Tuesday, September 3, 2019 (minimum day)
Orchard Back to School Night:	Wednesday, September 11, 2019
Back to School Picnic:	Thursday, September 26, 2019

More dates to follow...our calendar will be updated this summer for the entire 2019-20 school year. Stay tuned!

As with every monthly update, we need reminders about our procedures and policies here at Orchard. Please take note of the following:

- Link and follow our Google Calendar for HSA events! [Go to this link](#) and click on the +Google Calendar in the right bottom corner.
- Lunch Ordering: Just some reminders for ordering lunch through [Village Fresh](#). All orders are placed online. Orders must be in **by 8:00 AM**, otherwise, they will not be delivered on that day. Get your orders in! Thank you!

Please review the list of dates below for upcoming events at our school.

Warmly,



Mrs. Ferreri

Upcoming events:

6/6-7: Fifth Grade Finale

6/6: CBA (Fifth Grade Themed); Parent Dinner/Campfire - 6 PM

6/7: 5th grade "clap in" 8:50 AM; Fifth Grade Breakfast 9 AM
6/13: Spirit Day; CBA (Student Recognition Assembly); HSA 9:30 AM
6/20: Fifth Grade Moving Up, 8:50 AM; Step Up Day 10:45 AM