



Does My Child Need Nursery School?

by Sally Minich,

Teacher, *Ellenville Cooperative Nursery School*

“Does my child need nursery school?” It is a question many of us have pondered. Being both a teacher and a parent, I have approached the question from more than one perspective, and I have found, however I look at it, the answer is an unequivocal – “Yes.” A broad spectrum of studies supports the value of early childhood education. The data shows that not only does quality early childhood education strengthen a child’s elementary learning foundation, but also, further down the road, in high school and in college, these children are stronger students.

What constitutes a good nursery school? I think so much of the traditional nursery school concept is supportive of the developing child. The half-day sessions take into consideration the fully engaged, active learning style of the very young, but do not over tax them. The warm, nurturing classroom provides a comfortable and comforting first school experience. The core curriculum lessons in math and reading readiness always take into consideration the young child’s active learning style. The social development opportunities initiate a healthy, happy connection with friends and the larger community.

During my years in college I had learned about the traditional nursery school, but the cooperative angle was unfamiliar to me until I came to work at the *Ellenville Cooperative Nursery School* years ago. Cooperatives enhance the traditional concept with a lot of family involvement. Through my years of teaching at the school, I have become a big fan of the cooperative concept. The oft-repeated phrase – “Parents are the primary educators of children” – has come to ring very true. As a certified teacher, working hand-in-hand with parents has felt very right. It has helped me see each child as an individual and to remain alert to varying developmental levels. I taught at the *Cooperative* for 19 years and am excited to be returning again, following a “full-time mom” hiatus.

As always, as the *Cooperative* teacher, I consider it my job to: establish a safe, caring, enriching, stimulating school atmosphere; encourage cooperation in all facets of the school day; be a supportive link between home and public school; encourage rather than push; inspire rather than demand; keep creativity alive; establish a positive first concept of “school”; and keep learning and living a synonymous joy. ✨



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