



North Star

NORTH SEATTLE COMMUNITY COLLEGE Educating North Seattle parents, teachers and preschoolers for over 38 years

Parent Education at NSCC

Where adults learn parenting skills while their kids attend great preschools

Being a parent is one of life's most significant tasks, yet most parents receive minimal training for raising a family. In a world where work is demanding and family circumstances are often changing, parenting can be challenging. But help is available right in your own neighborhood—North Seattle Community College offers a program of long-standing success in educating parents for their important role while providing strong preschool experiences for youngsters.

NSCC's Parent Education Program provides a vibrant learning community serving more than 1000 parents and children in the North Seattle area each quarter. The program oversees approximately 50 cooperative preschools in 13 locations and an adult education format where parents develop their skills through discussion, sharing and weekly experiential learning as teachers' assistants in their child's preschool "laboratory."

Parent Education "Treasure"

Since 1970 NSCC's Parent Education Program has provided faculty for parent classes, teachers for youngsters (now from infancy to age 5) and the structure to involve parents in every aspect of their child's early schooling. Playing a pivotal role from the beginning has been Val Donato. Over the years Val has worn all the "hats"—parent, teacher, parent educator and coordinator—since she began participating in the fall of 1970 as a parent with two children.

Val is an exceptional teacher, organizer and advocate for cooperative preschools, according to Dr. Bob Fineman, dean of the Health and Human Services Division. "The Parent Education Program is well-established, serving a large number of families in the area, with an excellent faculty and strong curriculum.

The majority of credit for the program's success goes to Val. I see parent evaluations each quarter—Val's are consistently outstanding. She has contributed steadily and consistently for many years, with a tremendous number of satisfied customers."



Suzie Barrow, one of those satisfied parents and also a coop teacher, concurs. "Val is incredibly intelligent and works beautifully with kids. She has a knack for anticipating others' needs, is organized, responsive and genuine."

The Val Donato Award

Because of Val Donato's unique contributions, the NSCC Health and Human Services Division created an award in her name to recognize dedicated, hardworking and outstanding parent education faculty members who embody the ideals that Val and the NSCC Parent Education Program represent. Established in September 2007, the Val Donato Award honored Becky Callahan as its first award recipient.



Val Donato then...

Becky speaks about her award in the November 2008 edition of the Co-op Community News: "I see the Val Donato Award as a way to ensure the continuation of the important contribution that parent education adds to our campus and community. I will be using my award on materials from the Mr. Rogers Neighborhood and Family Communications Program. These will enrich parenting presentations at our preschools and child care centers, which focus on helping children manage anger and learn self-control. Mr. Rogers was a part of our families' life, and, as a professional in the early childhood community, I have often been inspired by his work." She adds, "I look forward to continuing my work with young children and their families and am honored to have the opportunity to enrich and expand my professional resources with this award."

Contributions to the Val Donato Award are tax-deductible. To support this fund and the work of the Parent Education Program, please indicate your giving preference on the enclosed envelope or contact the Education Fund for more information.

...and now.



How the Parent Education Program Works

In the NSCC program, parents are actively involved in their child's educational experience by participating once a week in the self-supporting, non-profit cooperative preschool where their child is enrolled. While serving as assistant teachers, parents are often relieved to discover that their youngster acts like a normal three year old! Crucial to the program is participation one evening per month in the adult-only instructional part of this three-credit class—a lively parent discussion group, led by a professional adult educator (Val Donato is one of these) where parents process what is learned from the laboratory experience and explore parenting options. No single child-rearing philosophy is advocated. All voices are honored, and the atmosphere is accepting and supportive.

NSCC parent education classes and coops are consistently full, with a waiting list and an excellent retention rate. Most parent-students continue on, sometimes for many years, with multiple children from a single family enrolled in the system. Adult students are largely between the ages of 30 and 40. The program reflects the ethnic and cultural diversity of the North Seattle area.



What Children Gain

- Developmentally appropriate activities under the guidance of a trained early childhood educator
 - Growth in all developmental areas
 - Shared learning experiences with parents and other caring adults

Advisory Council & More Resources

The program's Technical Advisory Committee, called the Parent Advisory Council, provides scholarships and a variety of specialized programs serving families in the North Seattle area. A recent lecture and discussion featured naturalist Julie Tubbs Luthy.

Because of the requirement to participate in the mostly daytime preschool laboratories, most parents are stay-at-home or part-time-

What Parents Gain in Parent Education

- Become more effective and confident in the parenting role
- Hone leadership skills for greater roles in children's school lives
- Recognize developmentally appropriate behavior and activities
- Participate in a network of parents with same-aged children
- Acquire valuable information in areas of health and safety
- Access community resources and receive individual help
 - Help manage a self-supporting cooperative "business"

A few words from parents . . .

I have found the last five years in coop have opened my eyes to all the different possibilities there are with children and parenting. I have developed a wonderful community of friends for myself and my children.

The program helps build confidence as a parent and provides a support network for when you are less than confident. I have enjoyed participating.

I use the tools I've learned daily. I know I am a better mom because of what I've learned through coop.

working moms, or parents with a flexible schedule. Dads represent about 10 percent of the enrolled parents. Online classes and childcare classes at other local preschools help serve parents who cannot participate in the coops.

The Online Special Topics class (where Val also teaches) is five credits, with a focus that changes each quarter—TV, computers, discipline, violence, values, brain development, attachment, etc. Another online class, the annual STAR Parenting course, also five credits and taught by Elizabeth Cray, offers a process to deal with challenging behavior and tools for healthy child guidance. A current class for local preschools, also taught by Elizabeth for 2.5 credits, is focused on dealing with feelings in children of all ages.

A Teacher/Parent Testimonial

A new way of looking at early childhood education

Suzie Barrow is a preschool teacher who was initially hesitant about cooperative preschools. She decided to try one out as a parent in the NSCC Parent Education Program and discovered that the benefits greatly outweighed the sacrifices. Enrolled with her youngest son, she found she deeply appreciated the opportunity to grow and bond with him. She received new tools and skills and learned from watching others. After participating for a year, she valued the coop model and wanted to be part of it as a professional. As a coop teacher, she has received scholarship support to continue her education through the Early Childhood Education Program, with the goal of earning her AAS degree.

Teaching in the morning at a private preschool and in the afternoon at the coop, Suzie puts in lots of extra time in coop parent meetings and board meetings, in addition to taking care of her four children. The time investment is worth it: "The private preschool is fulfilling work. But when I come to the coop, I'm entering a community. There's a feeling of home—everyone supportive of each other. The children can be who they want to be while the parents and teachers facilitate and guide."

Find out more...

About the NSCC Parent Education Program -

Visit www.northseattle.edu/parented or call Val Donato at (206) 529-6029.

Early Childhood Education at NSCC

Where teachers come to understand children

NSCC also enhances the lives of young children through its highly respected Early Childhood Education Program. Preschool teacher training is offered through an integrated series of learning experiences that challenge and transform every student.

As Tom Drummond, one of the program instructors, explains, "Students learn how to lead a learning community and coordinate all facets of a preschool program. In other programs students study about teaching and then practice doing what others are doing. In our program, students study interacting with children and come to their own understandings of what works in direct relationship with young people."

The program offers an early childhood certificate, an assistant certificate and an Associate of Applied Sciences (AAS) degree. Most AAS students, already working full time, take three to four years to complete their degree. The AAS degree is a significant accomplishment, recognizing that the graduate is effective with children and able to lead others in creating great schools. Local employers actively seek out these graduates because of the program's strong reputation. Evergreen State College honors NSCC's professional/technical credits toward a BA in early childhood education.

NSCC courses are offered in the evening or late afternoon, accommodating those already employed who want to improve their guidance of children and their opportunities in the field. Teachers in the coop

program frequently take classes to enhance their skills. There is no prescribed course sequence, so students choose the courses that fit their schedule. Coursework is exploratory, experiential and student-centered, modeling how education builds from the learner.

Find out more...

About the Early Childhood Education Program -

Visit www.northseattle.edu/ecse or contact Noris Daniel at (206) 528-4624, ndaniel@sccd.ctc.edu.

Parenting Education Day Honors 70th Anniversary of State's Cooperative Preschool Programs

Parent education and cooperative preschools have a proud history in Washington. This year Governor Chris Gregoire declared October 23 "Parenting Education Day," commemorating the seventieth anniversary of parent education in the state. A birthday celebration, held at Clover Park Technical College in Tacoma, was hosted by the Organization of Parent Education Programs (OPEP), a professional organization of program coordinators from state community and technical colleges.

Cooperative preschools in Washington started back in 1938 with a group of Seattle women who formed a playgroup for their children and study groups to discuss child-rearing topics. As the groups evolved, parents recognized the need for the leadership of professionally trained educators and requested support from the Seattle School District. In 1940 Katharine Whiteside Taylor, a national figure in the parent education cooperative movement, was hired to develop parent pre-school playgroups in Washington. Her model became the basis for the state's parent education cooperatives.

Now, 70 years later, parent education in Washington has grown to include more than 170 cooperative preschools and parent programs coordinated by 26 of the state's community and technical colleges. More than 14,000 families are touched by these programs each year. North Seattle's program is one of the largest.





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OUR MISSION:

North Seattle Community College is committed to changing lives through education.

We achieve our mission by:

Offering comprehensive educational opportunities

Creating a highly supportive learning environment

Engaging in effective and enduring partnerships

NSCC: Changing lives through education, strategically

North Seattle Community College's mission is "to change lives through education." In support of this mission and to better serve the students who come to North to pursue their educational goals, the college has specified seven institution-wide goals for 2007-2011. Here are some of the things we'll be working on over the next year:

1 Enhancing student learning and educational goal attainment

Academic leaders and faculty members are working together to improve the classroom experience. Using new student feedback and performance assessment tools, they're making changes to curriculum and teaching techniques in order to increase student success.

2 Developing highly responsive programs and services

Major initiatives include enhancing support services provided to evening students and improving access to information and services through better use of online tools.

3 Attracting, supporting, and retaining a quality workforce

The college will put additional emphasis on increasing diversity among NSCC's employees to reflect the community we serve and supporting employees through new in-house professional development programs.

4 Fostering a positive campus climate

Through new surveys and focus groups of employees and students, the college will identify ways to enhance campus life.

5 Creating and sustaining a quality infrastructure

Targeting specific improvements in facilities, grounds and information technology such as making improvements to campus wayfinding, improvements to the wetlands trail system, and a new online content management system, the college will improve the fundamental facilities and systems serving the campus and community.

6 Building and maintaining a strong enrollment base

To attract new students, as NSCC will continue to develop new high-demand programs such the Anesthesiology Technician program which will start in 2010, improve the convenience of class scheduling, and enhance recruitment strategies through the use of online tools and personalized communications. To support the retention and success of current students in completing their education goals, North will adapt proven strategies from other community colleges such as an "early alert" system which identifies and directs resources to students who may be struggling in their classes early in the quarter. A pilot project for such a system was initiated spring quarter 2009.

7 Increasing and diversifying financial resources

The focus of this goal is to grow financial support for the college from sources other than the state's general fund, i.e., from private and corporate contributions, grants, contracts, continuing education and international student enrollments, facilities rentals, etc.

Even as the college—along with the entire region and country—anticipates challenging economic times ahead, a focus on these institution-wide priorities will help keep service to our students and community at the center of NSCC's efforts during the next two years.