SITES PROGRAM





SITES Team

Early Start Special Education Teacher: Sarah Sanchez

Early Start Special Education Teacher: Jennifer El-Banna

Speech-Language Pathologist: Naomi Murphy

Occupational Therapist: Julie Ann Tallman

Physical Therapist: Julie Bursey

Special Education Paraprofessional: Heather Meyer

School Psychologist: Sylvia Leick

Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing: Blenda Won

Teacher of the Visually Impaired: Diana Jeong

Orientation and Mobility Specialist: Katie Young

Behavior Specialist: Cristin Johnston

Program Supervisor: Michelle Guidi

SITES Phone Number: 925-479-3848

Reminders

- August 13th- First Day of the School Year
- August 25th- Regular SITES Classes Begin
- September 1st- No School (Labor Day Holiday)

We hope you all had a fun and restful break and are ready for the new school year! We are so excited to be back and for all of the learning, growth, community, and fun that we will have this year. As we come back to school, our theme will be “Things that Go!”, with some of our play involving cars, buses, planes, and more. We will be focusing on strategies such as: giving reasons to communicate, building routines, following directions, and imitating others.

While many of you are very familiar with the SITES program, we wanted to ensure that everyone has all of the information they need as we begin again this year. Please note that our class sessions are held at Hidden Hills Elementary School in one of our SITES classrooms. We will meet at the Early Start gate at the start of each class and walk in together as a group. If you arrive late, after the class has walked in, please check in at the Hidden Hills office and walk back to your classroom.

The SITES program is a very unique parent/caregiver participatory program which involves parents, family members, and caregivers and multiple service providers partnering together. We all work together as a team to facilitate family involvement, provide caregiver coaching, offer new and exciting experiences, and encourage development in a play-based environment. All of our work is play based! A holistic-developmental approach is the anchor of our curriculum. As your child is learning about their world, they will engage with you in developmentally appropriate activities which are language rich, encourage classroom readiness, promote curiosity and exploration, develop fine and gross motor skills, facilitate social/emotional development, and allow for opportunities to develop self-help skills. Please do not hesitate to

contact us whenever you have questions or need support. Here's to an amazing year together!

Parents/Caregivers in SITES Classes: What to Expect

If you're new to our program or new to our SITES classes, first of all, we're so glad you're here! You might be wondering what to expect when you begin here with us. Our program is unique, in that each child comes to every class or each home visit with a parent, family member, or caregiver- and this is the biggest part of our program. We are here to support you in all of your interactions with your child! Parents/caregivers are a child's first and most important teachers-your child learns best from you! So at SITES, we are here to support, teach, coach, and empower our families.

What you can expect from us at SITES:

- Active listening
- Coaching
- Help with finding resources
- Providing real time strategies and suggestions
- Goal development and planning

What you can expect to do in the SITES program:

- Actively participate in all activities with your child
- Be present with technology and other distractions put away

What you can expect a SITES class to look like:

- Start of Class: We meet at the gate before each class session and then walk back together to class. We start the class by taking off our shoes and cleaning our hands before we go play. This is a great time to practice independence and self-help skills.
- Directed Play Time: This is a time to check in with you on how things are going, as well as provide strategies to implement during routines and play. This child-led time allows children to explore their interests, observe peers, and practice social skills.
- Circle Time: During circle time, we use pictures to see who is here, sing songs, read stories, and move our bodies. We focus on children developing their sense of self, social-emotional skills, learning readiness, language development, and motor planning.
- Motor Time: This is a time to continue to develop motor skills, as well as direction following, following a routine, and building language.
- Table Time: During table time, we focus on fine motor skills and sensory processing skills. This may include art, messy sensory play, and language rich activities. Table time also includes washing our hands, oral motor activities, and snack time- both of which provide many opportunities to develop fine motor skills and communication.
- Closing: We end each class by putting our shoes back on and singing our goodbye song with

puppets.

Phones

Parents of Young Children: Put Down Your Smartphones

Too much tech and too little talk could delay communication development.



Parents today are more pressed for time than any other generation of parents—and constantly connected. Largely thanks to the smartphone, parents often find it difficult to separate from their hand-held devices. Checking your phone has become both habit and necessity to manage work and family life (/English/family-life/family-dynamics/Pages/The-Importance-of-Family-Routines.aspx). But, all this multitasking could also hurt your young child's ability to learn.

Ways to Enhance Your Child's Communication Skills

You spend so much time making sure your child eats right, has all of their recommended vaccines (/English/safety-prevention/immunizations/Pages/Recommended-Immunization-Schedules.aspx), and gets enough rest. Yet, his or her communication and social development is just as important. Children gain communication and social skills through listening, talking, reading, singing, and playing with their parents—interactions lost while you are on a smartphone.

Here are three ways parents can enhance their child's communication skills.

1. **Play Non-Electronic Games:** Nursery rhymes (/English/ages-stages/preschool/nutrition-fitness/Pages/Motor-Activity-and-Self-Play.aspx) such as peekaboo, pat-a-cake, and Itsy Bitsy Spider actually serve an important purpose: they promote face-to-face interaction, teach turn-taking, and reinforce essential parts of bonding and conversation. Activities like blowing kisses, waving bye-bye, and clapping all help a child build social interaction and conversation skills. These games all require free hands—for both children and parents!

2. **Share a Common Focus:** Read a book together (/English/ages-stages/baby/Pages/Developmental-Milestones-of-Early-Literacy.aspx), share a toy, look at the same dog in a park. When two people focus on the same thing at the same time, they are engaging in what is called "joint attention." Joint attention is a vital part of communication and language development (/English/ages-stages/toddler/Pages/Language-Development-2-Year-Olds.aspx). It is also an important social skill, allowing a child to share an experience with another person and see someone else's point of view. Sharing focus lets a child know you are interested in

what they say or do. When parents are on their cell phones, they are not fully focused on the same points of attention as their child and miss key opportunities to build this skill.

3. **Send and Receive Nonverbal Messages:** Speaking and understanding words are just part of the communication puzzle. Non-verbal signals such as eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, and body language provide additional information. A child is able to recognize emotions and understand the intent of a message. When a parent is using a smartphone, these nonverbal cues are often reduced or eliminated completely. As a result, children miss out on receiving important nonverbal signals from their parents (part of learning to communicate). Parents may also miss information their kids are trying to send them through pointing, gesturing, staring, etc. These are subtle, but vital signals young children send—especially when they don't speak many words yet (/English/ages-stages/baby/Pages/Language-Development-8-to-12-Months.aspx).

Tips for Parents Who Feel Tech-Overloaded

Smartphones can be a way to connect with others and make our lives easier, but their overuse can interfere with parent-child interactions. While it may be difficult to keep your phone out of sight completely (especially since most parents also use their phones to take photos and videos of their kids), carving out some boundaries to promote technology use in a healthy way can help.

Here are some suggestions:

- **Create regular tech-free times:** As part of the daily routine, make devices (e.g., televisions, phones, computers, games or other electronics) off limits at specific times. Dinnertime and before bedtime are important ones, but more extended breaks from technology each day are desirable, especially for families with very young children. You can also limit digital distractions by creating tech-free rooms/zones in the house, such as the kitchen table (/English/family-life/family-dynamics/Pages/Mealtime-as-Family-Time.aspx). If you're sitting around the table texting while eating, you are not connecting. Teach your child to connect by connecting.
- **Designate tech-free outings:** A trip to the farm or the zoo, a playdate in the park, a day at the pool. Most parents love taking pictures of their kids and sharing moments on Facebook, but an activity can go undocumented every once in a while. Putting the phone away allows everyone to enjoy a fun, uninterrupted moments to focus on talking and communicating with each other.
- **Use technology in an interactive way:** If you are using a phone or other device, use it with your kids—together. Talk about what you see, ask them questions, and otherwise engage them face-to-face.
- *See Kids & Tech: 10 Tips for Parents in the Digital Age* (/English/family-life/Media/Pages/Tips-for-Parents-Digital-Age.aspx) *for more ideas.*

Why YOU Can't Be Replaced by Technology

The development of speech and language skills (http://www.asha.org/public/speech/development/) is strongly linked to thinking ability, social relationships, reading and writing, and school success. In the first three years of life, 80% of a child's brain development occurs. This development is fed through consistent verbal and nonverbal interactions between parents and children, so it is important to keep the focus on quality time and not on technology whenever you can.

Does this mean that we need to put down our smartphones completely? Of course not; but nothing takes the place of face-to-face interaction when it comes to our children's learning and speech and language development—not even technology.

Additional Information & Resources:

- How to Raise Concerns about a Child's Speech and Language Development: Do's and Don'ts (/English/ages-stages/toddler/Pages/How-to-Raise-Concerns-about-Childs-Speech-Language-Development.aspx)
- 10 No-Cost, Screen-Free Activities to Play with Your Preschooler (/English/ages-stages/preschool/nutrition-fitness/Pages/Motor-Activity-and-Self-Play.aspx)
- How to Make a Family Media Use Plan (/English/family-life/Media/Pages/How-to-Make-a-Family-Media-Use-Plan.aspx)
- Learn the Signs. Act Early (http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/index.html) (CDC.gov) - Aims to improve early identification of children with autism and other developmental disabilities so children and families can get the services and support they need.
- IdentifyTheSigns.org (http://identifythesigns.org/) (ASHA) – The early stages of speech and language disorders are easier to spot when you know the signs.

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The information contained on this Web site should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.

We ask the parents and caregivers keep their phones on silent and put away during class times in order to devote the entire class period to their children and activities. We understand that extenuating circumstances do happen, so when at all possible, please let the teacher/service providers know ahead of time that you will need to take a phone call. Thank you!



Diaper Changing Policy

For health reasons, please change your child's diapers in the SITES restroom in the C-Building. The restroom has a changing table and water for hand washing. We appreciate your cooperation in order to ensure the health and safety of all students.

Snacks and Wish List

We here at the SITES program want to express our heartfelt gratitude for the generous donations of snacks and classroom supplies that have helped our program thrive. To continue providing our students with the best possible learning environment, we kindly suggest a donation of $40 in the form of a gift card (such as Target, Safeway, Trader Joe's, Whole Foods, Visa, etc.) or cash to help cover the cost of these essential items. If you prefer to donate items directly, please reach out to your service provider for suggestions on what is needed. Your support truly makes a difference in our classroom!

Thank you for your continued generosity!

Sick Policy

As the seasons change, children tend to experience symptoms of illness. In our Early Start Program, we have children and members of our staff that have medically fragile conditions. As such, please refrain from coming to school if you or your child is experiencing any symptoms of illness, whether a fever is present or not. Symptoms include: runny nose, coughs, fever, rash, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea, or no obvious symptoms but the child is obviously not themselves. Little ones who are sick rarely benefit from school. Their energy should be directed toward resting and getting better. If brought to school they may spread germs over and over again resulting in a repeated cycle of illness.

District policy regarding illness is very firm, especially since the onset of COVID-19. District teachers are *required* to send home children who have any symptoms of illness. To return to the Early Start Program, children must be symptom free for 48 hours. Please reach out if you have any questions. On behalf of the Early Start Team, we thank you.



For more information you can visit the school district website searching the link below:
San Ramon Valley Unified School District - Illness Guidelines (srvusd.net)



SITES Families Survey

We want to hear from you! When you have a moment, please take our short survey regarding how we can best support you and your family during this school year using the link or QR code:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeIxaaSEzZz3Fxbzuh3KX64FFy2Qs5TIvHOyuclDV-u3IATGQ/viewform?usp=sf_link

Cognitive Skills Focus: With small group classes resuming soon, this may be the perfect time to begin talking to your child about coming back to school and frontloading that this change is coming. They may be excited, anxious, or neutral about coming back to school- and any feelings are ok! You might consider showing them pictures of their school/classroom (if you have them), looking at past artwork, talking about their favorite things to do in their classroom, and discussing their friends, teachers, and service providers. Your family may find it helpful to have a place where your child can see their schedule for the day using picture icons or tangible objects to represent activities. This can help children anticipate what is going to happen and get to be more of an active participant in their daily routine. This can be as simple as showing a picture of your child's SITES classroom, followed by a picture of home (or wherever you go next) or can be more specific, listing more of the activities that you will do each day. If you would like to learn more about using visual or object schedules, your child's teachers/service providers would be more than happy to talk

with you further and work together with you on this. Even if your child is receiving home visit services and not yet coming into classes, using visual schedules may be helpful in your daily routines at home. Please feel free to look at the following resources for more information regarding picture/object schedules for little ones:

- Speak, Play Love: Toddler Visual Schedules
- Teaching Mama: Visual Schedules for Toddlers
- Wonder Baby: Planning the Day with Object Calendars

Speech and Language Focus: Vehicle play is a great opportunity to practice the strategy, GIVE A REASON and WAIT. One example of this is having a car race and saying "Ready? Set?..." and then pausing expectantly to see if your child will fill in "GO!" If she/he does fill in this word, great, and if not, this is a lovely opportunity to model the word or sign for "GO" while you have your child's attention. Other ways we give reasons to communicate include doing things like offering choices of 2 vehicles (e.g., "Do you want the TRUCK or the RACE CAR?") and then waiting or doing something unexpected like driving a toy car up your child's sleeve or on their back and pausing for their reaction. These quiet pauses, especially when paired with an expectant look, can encourage our children to fill in a word, offer a gesture or make an attempt at communication. Often, we adults fill in pauses or silences with language and while this provides language modeling, doesn't always encourage our students to try communicating on their own. As always, as you implement a GIVE A REASON and WAIT strategy, keep things fun and playful!

Motor Skills Focus: Ride on toys are an amazing source of motor play and can include push cars, mini cars, scooters, bikes, and other fun-sized vehicles. These rides are available in various styles, sizes and shapes depending upon your child's size,age and need. These toys can work on motor skills by several means: *CLIMBING*. Children climb on and off the ride on toys – watch how easily they are able to swing a leg over the top. Do they struggle to raise their leg up and over to dismount? Help them practice climbing skills by making up a game where they have to travel to several locations and climb on and off the toy to

retrieve items. *WALKING*. Instead of riding the toy, have them give their stuffed animals a ride and push the ride around a track. Use painter's tape on the floor to mark out a large and winding track for them to follow. *BALANCING*. Improve their core and balance by asking them to ride while carrying another toy like a large stuffed animal (nothing heavy, but something that makes them ride with one hand). This will force their bodies to use their core to balance while riding, steering, and holding the other toy. Kids love to give their stuffed animals rides, or perhaps tote a cloth bag of play food "home from the store." *PUSHING:* As your child crawls on the floor pushing a smaller car, they are building shoulder stability which is needed for good fine motor skills. Increase the challenge by encouraging them to "drive" cars over large pillows or couch cushions placed on the floor. *BUILDING MIND-BODY CONNECTION*: Spatial awareness (or spatial perception) refers to the cognitive ability children develop as they learn the relationship between their position and their environment. One can call it the mind-body connection because spatial awareness allows the brain to signal the body to move according to changes around them. With ride-on toys, the kids learn how to move from one place to another without bumping into things during the ride.

Fine Motor/Sensory Processing Focus: Using a tool such as a car, is a great way to encourage a child who may be reluctant to engage in sensory play. Model driving the car through child safe paint, shaving cream, rice. If your child likes to put things in their mouth try whipped coconut cream, whipped cream, yogurt or pudding. When they are done, have them wash their hands and the cars in a shallow container of warm water. Kids usually LOVE this activity.

Social Emotional Skills Focus: Playing with vehicles is an excellent way to promote social emotional skills in young children. You might try driving a car back and forth between you and your child to practice turn taking and reciprocal play. You can also model language during these games like: "vroom-vroom", "beep-beep", uh-oh", "my turn", "your turn", "thank you", "I did it!". Teaching young children back and forth play helps to build joint

attention, play skills, and provides a foundation for peer play as they get older. These are big skills to learn, so don't be discouraged if it doesn't come right away-keep modeling, encouraging, and praising them when you see them taking turns and participating in back and forth play.

At Home Resources: If you're looking for some ideas on how to play together with cars from home, feel free to give any of these a try:

- Roll cars down a ramp: Prop up a baking tray on a stack of books for endless fun! Kids will love experimenting with height and how fast each car can go.
- Drive Them Through a Sensory Tray: You can fill a baking tray with any number of things: Some of our dried beans, rice, or oats all work great!
- Bubble Bath Car Wash: Fill a pan with warm water, add a little bubble bath/dish soap, and put in as many cars as you like. You might also add sponges, brushes, or small cups/scoops too.
- Make a Giant Road: Make a road out of painters tape (or chalk if you're playing outside) for lots of fun driving cars on the road.







Родители и опекуны в классах SITES: Чего ожидать

Если вы новичок в нашей программе или впервые на занятиях SITES, прежде всего, мы очень рады вам! Возможно, вам интересно, чего ожидать в начале работы с нами. Наша программа уникальна тем, что каждый ребенок приходит на каждое занятие или каждое домашнее посещение вместе с родителем, членом семьи или опекуном — и это самая важная часть нашей программы. Мы здесь, чтобы поддержать вас во всех ваших взаимодействиях с ребенком! Родители и опекуны — первые и самые важные учителя ребенка; ваш ребенок учится лучше всего именно у вас! Поэтому в SITES мы здесь для того, чтобы поддерживать, обучать, наставлять и расширять возможности наших семей.

Что вы можете ожидать от нас в SITES:

- Активное слушание
- Коучинг и наставничество
- Помощь в поиске ресурсов
- Предоставление стратегий и предложений в реальном времени
- Разработка целей и планирование

Что ожидается от вас в программе SITES:

- Активное участие во всех мероприятиях вместе с вашим ребенком
- Присутствие «здесь и сейчас»: просим отложить мобильные устройства и другие отвлекающие факторы

Как выглядит занятие в классе SITES:

Начало занятия

Мы встречаемся у ворот перед каждым занятием, а затем вместе идем в класс. Мы начинаем занятие с того, что снимаем обувь и моем руки перед игрой. Это отличное время для практики самостоятельности и навыков самообслуживания.

Направленное игровое время

Это время, когда мы обсуждаем с вами, как идут дела, а также предлагаем стратегии для применения в повседневной жизни и играх. Это время, ведомое ребенком, позволяет детям исследовать свои интересы, наблюдать за сверстниками и практиковать социальные навыки.

Круг общения (Circle Time)

Во время «круга» мы используем картинки, чтобы увидеть, кто пришел, поем песни, читаем истории и активно двигаемся. Мы уделяем особое внимание развитию у детей самосознания, социально-эмоциональных навыков, готовности к обучению, развитию речи и моторному планированию.

Время развития моторики

Это время для дальнейшего совершенствования двигательных навыков, а также умения следовать указаниям, соблюдения распорядка и расширения словарного запаса.

Время за столом

Здесь мы фокусируемся на мелкой моторике и навыках сенсорного восприятия. Это может включать искусство, сенсорные игры и занятия, насыщенные общением. Время за столом также включает мытье рук, упражнения для развития оральной моторики и перекус — всё это дает много возможностей для развития мелкой моторики и коммуникации.

Завершение

Мы заканчиваем каждое занятие тем, что снова надеваем обувь и поем нашу прощальную песню с куклами.