

SCHOOL LETS PARENTS PLAY, TOO, IN GODDARD GAMES

Event to focus on importance of play in learning and in children's proper behavior

By Jennifer Amato • January 27, 2011

NORTH BRUNSWICK — Adults are in for some playtime on Feb. 5.

The Goddard School® of North Brunswick will take part in the first annual nationwide Goddard Community Games from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the school, 1846 Route 1.

To bring awareness to the school's focus on scientifically based role-play in developing critical life skills, parents and children from the community are invited to participate in games, activities and creative play.

"The more you involve [parents], the more they know what's going on, and the more they feel part of the school," added Ileana Schirmer, owner of the North Brunswick location. "Parents can focus on what [is going on] without worrying about their kids, and the kids will be engaged."

"It seems that at younger and younger ages, parents put pressure [on their children] to learn at a younger age, to learn their ABCs, to learn their 123s, to learn to read and write," said Laura Kohut, director of the North Brunswick location, "so the goal of our program is not ABC 123 first, but the whole child. It's teaching children what they need to know to get along in life. It's a lifetime love of learning."

Another focus of the Goddard games will be bullying, since Gov. Chris Christie signed the Anti-Bullying Bill of Rights into law on Jan. 6.

Goddard already has its "Guide to Getting Along" curriculum that teaches self-respect, respect for others, respecting property, proper behavior, avoiding tantrums, etc.

With about 85 children ranging in age from infants to prekindergarten at the school, Kohut said that bullying isn't a problem, but that teachers seek to avoid those behaviors later on in life. Schirmer also said that parents must instill a sense of good behavior at home because in circumstances where children do act out, it's most likely because those actions are accepted or not corrected at home.

"We think the thrust of early education should always be to focus on positive aspects. We don't see as much negative when we do that, because they're not learning the negative," Kohut said.

Sue Adair, director of education for Goddard Systems Inc., said that sometimes a child will pull a toy away from another child, or act out, which is not meant to be malicious but could be considered a type of bullying. Therefore, she said, Goddard teaches children to use vocabulary and problem-solving skills to be more empathetic.

“We instill a sense of confidence in children, and a confident child is more likely to engage in this type of behavior than bullying,” Adair said. “We encourage children to be actively involved in solving conflicts and treating one another kindly.”

In accordance, Ron Shuali will present his award-winning seminar “Parenting and Behavior Management.” Shuali is the author of “Building the 21st-Century Child” and is the founder of Shualife Skills, which holds Yogarate and karate classes at Goddard.

For more information, contact Schirmer at 732-951-9200.

Parents who bring a friend who enrolls his or her child will receive a free month’s tuition.