

# The Power of Two

## The Hardest Question: Is My Child Different?

Parents usually come to Mothers' Club because they want their children to be with other children. But, sometimes a parent comes because they feel in their gut that there is something wrong with their child. They have noticed that their child is not yet speaking, they can't control their child's behavior, or worse, people have asked about their child's conduct. In most of these cases, the child catches up with normal developmental behavior within just a few months. But sometimes other issues are present.

At Mothers' Club we have several assessment tools that we use to gauge a child's growth. We use the Desired Results Developmental Profile to assess their development in four key areas: social, emotional, cognitive, and physical. When staff suspects that a child might be experiencing a developmental delay, we use the Ages and Stages Questionnaire to determine if an intervention needs to occur.

Concerns presented by teachers or parents might be as simple as delayed speech or as complicated as early signs of autism. Whatever the issue is, we focus our energy on helping the child and the family.

Commonly, a concern about delayed speech emerges when chil-

dren are two or three years old. Most parents accept the recommendation that their child be evaluated by Pasadena Unified School District or the Lanterman Regional Center. We explain to parents that speech delays not only affect the child's ability to communicate but also their behavior. Children become easily frustrated; little ones hit, bite, and kick because they cannot express their feelings. This has an impact at home and at school.

The more difficult issues are developmental delays or serious behavior problems. It can be very difficult for parents to accept that their beautiful child may have a serious issue. Parents often excuse their child's delays with statements like, "he's just like my brother." But, more often parents play the blaming game. What did I do? What didn't I do? It's my fault because I didn't....

This is the hardest part of an intervention because we need to help parents accept that it is not their fault and help them support their child. This period of acceptance can last for several weeks. While we counsel the parents, we begin contacting the appropriate agencies to help evaluate the child and get a diagnosis. We provide guidance and support to the parents, *Continued on Page 6*



Three toddlers at play in Mothers' Club nurturing child development center.

## In This Issue...

**From the Executive Director and President**  
Evaluating Our Success.....Page 2

**Ways You Can Make a Difference This Holiday Season**.....Page 3

**A Volunteer's Perspective:**  
Mothers' Club Bucks Sad Trends in Education...Pages 4

**Welcome Back to School**.....Pages 4

**Our Special Stories**  
A mother shares their first literacy project.....Page 5

**Welcoming New Families**.....Page 6

**Upcoming Program Tours**.....Page 6

*Receive more news and updates, sign up for our E-Newsletter online at [www.mothersclub.org](http://www.mothersclub.org).*

*Mothers' Club has a **Facebook page!** Log into your Facebook account and search for Mothers' Club Family Learning Center*

**Mothers' Club**  
**Family Learning Center**  
980 N. Fair Oaks Avenue  
Pasadena, CA 91103  
626.792.2687 Office  
626.793.1832 Fax

[www.mothersclub.org](http://www.mothersclub.org)

## From the Executive Director and President: Evaluating Our Success

How successful in elementary school are the children who attended Mothers' Club? What happens to the parents after they leave Mothers' Club - how are their lives changed?

We have been asked these questions time again over the years from all segments of people who are interested in the work we do at Mothers' Club - from donors, foundations, and other organizations. These are important questions, but our answers have always had an apologetic ring to them.

Our mission is to "prepare children and families to succeed in school and in life." We have data that shows children and parents leave Mothers' Club well-prepared. We have great success stories and many anecdotes from families who have moved on to elementary school. But at this time, that is all we have. Quantitatively, we don't know what becomes of families after they leave Mothers' Club.

However, we have begun a process to answer these questions. With initial funding from First 5 Los Angeles we are embarking on a two phase evaluation process. We have selected the Institute at Indian Hill, the applied research center of Claremont Graduate University School of Educational Studies, to conduct phase one of the evaluation.



*Toddlers at Mothers' Club entertain each other with colored pegs, unaware that they are practicing sequencing, an important school readiness math skill.*

The scope of the first phase will examine the outcome measurements we currently collect in order to analyze the efficacy and impact of our program as a whole, and the interrelationships between the four family literacy components.

As part of this phase, the Institute will develop an improved, efficient data collection system that will meet our growing needs. The results of Phase One, which will be completed by June, 2011, will be the basis of Phase Two's broader, quasi-experimental and longitudinal study which we anticipate will validate our anecdotal stories of success.

Here are some of the things we hope to learn:

- ♦ How well do Mothers' Club children perform at the end of second grade, and how do they compare to other children from similar backgrounds?
- ♦ How are mothers supporting their children's educational growth, and how does that compare to

mothers who have not participated in our programs?

- ♦ What are the key program elements that affect positive growth and change in our families?
- ♦ What are the leadership competencies in parents that need to be in place in order to successfully strengthen families?

As Mothers' Club approaches its 50th anniversary, it is a powerful statement of the deep commitment we have to being a model two-generation learning program that the Board of Directors is investing in this major, longitudinal evaluation of the impact we are having on children, parents, and our community. It demonstrates how strongly we feel our responsibility is to nurture the young children who are in our care.

All of us who are connected to Mothers' Club, as employees, volunteers, and board members, are keenly aware of the trust families, and donors, place in us to provide high quality programs that produce positive outcomes in families. The results of our evaluation will be a valuable tool in ensuring that Mothers' Club continues to excel during the next 50 years.

- Sue Kujawa, Executive Director and  
John Carlton, Board President



*Mothers are hard at work, increasing their own skills. Do these skills later impact the success of their children after they leave Mothers' Club? We hope to answer this question through our new evaluation project.*

# Ways You Can Make a Difference This Holiday Season

The season of giving is just around the corner and Mothers' Club has put together some wonderful ways for you to make a difference for the families in our programs:

## ***Donate in Honor of Friends, Family and Colleagues***

In lieu of gifts this holiday season, make a donation to Mothers' Club to support our programs for high-risk families. For every \$10 donation we will send you a holiday card which you can personalize for your friends, family members or colleagues. Place your holiday card order on-line at [www.mothersclub.org](http://www.mothersclub.org).

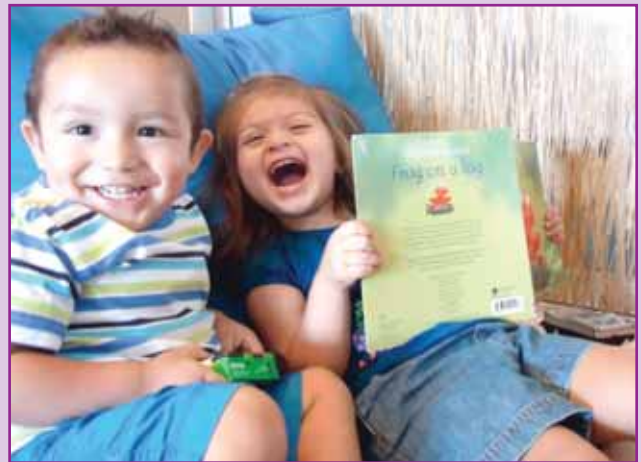
## ***Send Holiday Wishes to our Children's Teachers***

Our exceptional teachers educate more than 100 infants, toddlers and preschoolers each day. They guide children's learning and provide meaningful activities that increase the pre-literacy skills of some of Pasadena's most high-need children. You can help them fill their classroom with high quality learning materials by providing a gift card to one of their favorite supply stores: Discount School Supplies, Lakeshore, Michael's, Joanne's and Target. Send gift cards to: The Teachers of Mothers' Club, Mothers' Club Family Learning Center, 980 N. Fair Oaks Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91103.



## ***Turn Your Holiday Party into a Children's Book Drive***

Are you planning a holiday party? Add one more line to your invitation and ask guests to bring a book for a child at Mothers' Club. Your guests will be warmed by the thought that they are supporting the early learning of children in need. You can deliver the donated books directly to our center at any time. A wish list of children's books is available on our website at [www.mothersclub.org](http://www.mothersclub.org). For questions or more information contact Mara Leong-Nichols at [mara@mothersclub.org](mailto:mara@mothersclub.org) or (626) 792-2687 ext. 112.



## ***Give the Gift of Mothers' Club***

We hear time and again that Mothers' Club is the best kept secret in Pasadena. Use this holiday season to share our secret! Take a friend, family member or colleague out for a festive breakfast or lunch and then bring them to Mothers' Club for a program tour. Our door is always open - just let us know you are coming. Call (626) 792-2687 ext. 122.

## ***Give the Gift that Keeps on Giving***

Did you know that you can set up recurring monthly donations to Mothers' Club? What a great way to provide on-going support for our two-generation programs and services for low-income families in Pasadena. We partner with Network for Good to process on-line donations and make giving even easier. Sign up today at [www.mothersclub.org](http://www.mothersclub.org) and click on DonateNow!

## ***Adopt-a-Family***

You can make a family's holiday season a little brighter by purchasing food and gifts for the parents and children in our programs. You choose the number of individuals you would like to support and add them to your holiday shopping lists! You will be asked to deliver food and gifts to our center during the week of December 20th. Register for Adopt-a-Family on-line at [www.mothersclub.org](http://www.mothersclub.org).

## A Volunteer's Perspective: Mothers' Club Bucks Sad Trends in Education



*Talin Dikranian volunteers as a computer literacy coach at Mothers' Club.*

The state of the education system in California is an unavoidable topic these days. Pasadenans are certainly in the center of it all with unprecedented budget cuts and increased classroom sizes. We hear about all the things going wrong with education locally and nationally, but examples of how it is going right exist right here in Pasadena.

Mothers' Club Family Learning Center provides award winning early childhood education for children, ages six weeks to five years, living in poverty in northwest Pasadena (north of the 210 and west of Los Robles). The teacher-to-child ratio is a critical component of high-quality early childhood programs. Mother's Club provides an average of one teacher for every five children. "This ratio allows for small group activities, personalized care and stronger bonds between the children and their teachers," says Ana Gallegos, Children's Program Director.

While small class sizes are needed to create a nurturing learning environment, high quality teachers are equally important. Ms. Gallegos states that Mothers' Club is committed to the professional development of its teaching staff and even increased its budget for continuing education. "What's most important is for us to know what the teachers need to

accomplish our goals." Teachers are assessed throughout the year and have clear action plans for personal and professional growth. Continuing education is tailored to fit the needs of each teacher and supported by education stipends, trainings and a flexible work schedule that encourages lifelong learning.

Despite what's happening in the public education system and the struggling economy, Mothers' Club remains committed to delivering award winning early childhood education for Pasadena's most vulnerable children. Mothers' Club succeeds because it invests in its teaching staff and provides the resources necessary for children to learn and thrive. Now just imagine where society would be if federal, state and local governments were as committed to funding education.

*- Talin Dikranian  
Mothers' Club Volunteer*

## Shop at Ralphs? Earn Money for Mothers' Club!

By registering your Ralphs Rewards card with their Community Contributions Program, a percentage of every dollar you spend at Ralphs will go to Mothers' Club. Ralphs requires that you re-register each year, even if you have registered in the past. Please follow these simple steps to register or re-register today:

1. Pick up a Ralphs Rewards card at your local market.
2. Register online at [ralphs.com](http://ralphs.com) and clicking on the upper right-hand link "Sign-In/Register"
3. Once you have an account, click on the "Community Contribution Program" in the left column.
4. Confirm your Ralphs Rewards card number is correct.
5. Locate Mothers' Club by entering our code: 90748
6. Select Mothers' Club and know that you are helping families every time you buy groceries!

## Welcome Back to School!

On a Tuesday evening in early October, the staff of Mothers' Club welcomed families to Back to School Night. The children's teachers had prepared activities for parents and children to do together; the walls had been decorated with children's art work; and the classrooms quickly filled with laughter and joy as families explored their littlest one's classrooms. More than 40 families were in attendance, and we were thrilled to welcome them back to school!



## Our Special Stories

Three little words with so much meaning are what brought us face to face with our first Literacy project of the year. We were simply asked to write a short story about our distinctive relationship(s) with our child(ren).

What I didn't expect was to read such heartfelt stories about the people I encounter at Mothers' Club every day. The faces now have a story to tell and I am eager to be a part of it.

I'm new to Mothers' Club, so when our Parent Program Director, Silvana Casalegno, asked me to work on displaying the mothers' stories I was both excited and nervous about making sure that all the stories were showcased as best as possible.

We made the decision to showcase the stories on a colorful and educational alphabet train, so the children who walked by them each day could also enjoy them. We also attached a picture of each child with his/her mother to the story, and each mother decorated her story in a unique way.

While putting our stories to paper we faced two challenges. First, we had to write it in English which, for the majority of us, is not our first language, hence the literacy aspect of the project. Second, we were being asked to share our personal, cherished stories with other Mothers' Club mothers, staff and visitors.

Each personal story describes the special bond that a mother has with her child(ren). As I read each story I realized it was nearly impossible to pick one that stood out more than any other, however there was one in particular that made my heart melt. I could definitely feel the special bond between mother and child in this story.

The story by Abby Valdovinos is about the time she introduced her daughter Helen to the joy of riding a bicycle. Abby bought a bicycle booster seat and a helmet for her daughter and as soon as she put her in it and started riding with Helen right behind her she heard squeals of laughter and



*Diana, seen here with her son Aria, took on the task of displaying the mothers' stories in the Center (right).*

## Thank you to Our Program Partners

*Mothers' Club programs are funded in part by the following agencies:*

California Department of Education, Even Start Family Literacy Grant

Center for Community and Family Services, Early Head Start

First 5 LA Family Literacy Initiative

Los Angeles Universal Preschool

U.S. Department of Agriculture's Child and Adult Care Food Program

City of Pasadena, Community Development Block Grant

Pasadena City College Community Education Center

United Way of Greater Los Angeles

hand clapping. Her daughter was in love.

After much protest for more and another trip around her home, suddenly there was silence. When Abby looked back Helen was slumped over sound asleep. Her mother carefully removed her and carried her to bed where she had peaceful sleep probably dreaming about her new found joy.

Here is a time in this relationship that Helen's mother will probably never forget and it will be told over and over again as Helen grows up. Although everyone has different experiences of happiness, the sweetness of this mother and daughter's bond can be felt by everyone who reads Abby's story.

While reading Abby and Helen's story and others just as endearing, I repeatedly found myself thinking

about the people who help make it possible for us to share our stories. I asked myself, what special story do the kind individuals who have contributed and continue to support Mothers' Club have?

Your support has aided Mothers' Club to create a loving "family" community where all mothers and children feel loved and wanted. Through your support, the staff at Mothers' Club works tremendously hard to create an emotionally and intellectually nurturing environment that so many of us have come to rely on. But they can't do it without you. Your generosity means more to us than you know.

On behalf of all mothers at Mothers' Club I would like to say, thank you.

- Diana Sadri



# Settling in to New Routines

The new school year started off with a large group of families once again returning to Mothers' Club as well as many new ones joining us for the first time. I watched the experienced parents and children fall comfortably back into their well established routines. They met up with their friends, connected with teachers, and went right to work - not missing a beat and glad to be back from a brief summer break.

The newly enrolled parents came in with young children in tow, unsure of where to go or what to expect. Despite their trepidation, they were soon welcomed by our friendly staff and parents whose warm smiles eased their worries. Children were led to their classrooms, greeted by their

teachers, and introduced to their new friends who promptly invited them to play.

Making new friends, knowing what to do, and finding their place at Mothers' Club is very important to families who are new to our programs. Each parent and child develops their own unique routine to start the day, helping them establish comfort and trust in their surroundings and giving them an opportunity to develop relationships with the staff and families.

One of our new mothers loves to spend her first few minutes of the day with her son at the breakfast table. There, she talks with the preschool teachers, asking about how her son is feeling and inquiring about what is planned for the day. This parent is

finding comfort in knowing the teachers understand what she and her son need to get off to a good start. "What does he like to play with the most? Who is he making friends with? How will he know when it is time to clean up?" The answers to these questions make her feel reassured so she can turn her attention to her own studies.

At the end of September, all the parents worked in small groups to learn a nursery rhyme which they



Three moms perform "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" for the children at Mothers' Club.

*Continued from Page 1*

and once we know the issue, our staff works hand in hand with both the parents and the interventionists.

One example of how Mothers' Club provides such early intervention is a 24 month-old child who came to our Center last year and was delayed in speech. After several evaluations it was determined that the child was autistic and developmentally delayed.

The two-year-old's therapist came to our Center twice a week and taught our teachers to use picture cues for the child to express her needs. There was a picture for a glass, toy, table and so on. The child would grab a picture card and show the teacher what

she wanted. After a lot of practice, patience and positive reinforcement by the therapist, the staff and the parents at home, the child developed the ability to communicate.

Another example was a child whose emotional affect was not engaged. In other words, he did not display appropriate reactions to stimulus. One day while I was observing him in play, another child dumped a whole pail of water (by accident) on the child, but the child did not react - not even a gasp.

I immediately spoke to the parents and we got him assessed. He is now working with an occupational therapist to help him cue into events. He is

## Join us for a Tour of our Two-Generation Learning Program

The best way to learn about what happens at Mothers' Club is to visit our Center and take a guided tour with staff.

Tuesday, November 9 - 9:00 am  
Thursday, November 18 - 11:30 am  
Tuesday, December 7 - 9:00 am  
Thursday, December 9 - 11:30 am

To provide a courtesy RSVP or for more information call (626) 792-2687 ext. 122

Tours are conducted monthly. View a schedule on-line at [www.mothersclub.org/V1/Events.html](http://www.mothersclub.org/V1/Events.html)

presented to the children at our first special event: "Mother Goose at Mothers' Club." The mothers decorated a poster for each rhyme. I watched in amazement as the parents performed with their new friends.

The new families are now fully integrated into our program. As full-fledged members of the group, they participate and contribute in significant ways as they learn and grow just like their children.

- Julie Espinoza,  
Family Literacy Coordinator

making a lot of progress, responding to people and interacting with his teacher. But, he still has a long way to go in socializing.

I often wonder what would happen to these children without the supportive, loving environment of Mothers' Club. Would they have to wait until kindergarten to be identified? Would there be the support for the family?

Will someone be willing to hold a parent as they cry or ask all the scary questions? I don't know, but I am very glad that we can do this at Mothers' Club.

- Silvana Casalegno,  
Program Director

## Welcome New *Guardians*

Thank you to following individuals for joining the Mothers' Club *Guardians*; a group of individuals who provide cornerstone support for our programs by donating \$1,000 or more to our annual fund.

Judy & David Brown      Sue & Jim Femino

## Our Continued Thanks to All of Our *Guardians*

Maye Albanex & Tim Marty	Stephanie & J. Dale Harvey	Kathleen & Donald Orth
Gwen & Guilford Babcock	Deborah Heitz &	Sandra & Charles T. Osaki
Carole & Mike Babcock	Shaw Wagener	Claudia & Ramon Pack III
Ann & Olin Barrett	Tracy & Richard Hirrel	Sylvia & Benjamin Paz
Renu Bhat-Hansen &	Adelaide Hixon	Stephnie Rasines &
Alex Hansen	Mariko & Martin Howard	Richard Norton
Claire & Bill Bogaard	Charles Hubay &	Gay & Ron Redcay
Clara & Emily	Kathleen Shields	Shanna & Michael Rosengarten
Lanzas-Bogaard	Ellen & Harvey Knell	Aty & Howard Rotter
Judy & David Brown	Susan Kujawa	Elsa Ruiz-Balle &
Barbara Campbell	Annette Kunzman &	Julio Garcia-Aguilar
Marie Campbell	Douglas Soloman	Fran Norris Scoble
Nancy & John Carlton	Charles Kurzweil	Nan & Howard Schow
John Carmichael	Marge Leighton	Pam & Tony Schwarz
Mary Anne Cunningham	Valerie & George Leiva	Carol & Carl Selkin
Richard Davis	Fong Liu	Jil & Joel Sheldon
Bonnie & John DeWitt	Maria Low Way	Shirley & Otis Spencer
Talin & Armen Dikranian	Kathy & Tony Magistrale	Phillip V. Swan &
Ann Erdman	Judy & Stephen McDonald	Sara Lee Swan
Anne Esbenshade &	Pat & Jim McLaughlin	Victoria & John Tongish
Michael Miele	Margaret & David Mgrublian	Maxine Tongish
Helen Minton Farley	Norah Morley	Sonia Trejo
Sue & Jim Femino	Janice & Richard Morris	Lorraine Triolo & Jeffrey Burke
Jean & Louis Fleming	Adonis Morrison	Heather & Michael VanMeter
Susan Futterman &	Wendy Munger &	Julie & Scott Ward
Arnold Siegel	Leonard Gumpert	Wanda Wheeler
Jennifer & Mark Giles	Jennifer & E. David Murphy	Connie & Arthur White
Marcia Goodstein & Bill Gross	Nanette & Henry Nevins	Judith & John Whiting
Margie & Paul Grossman	Mary Lois Nevins	Cindy & George Wiley
Sandra Guerrero	Beth & Christopher Orndorff	Judy & Randy Wilson



## Leave a Legacy to Future Generations, Remember Mothers' Club in Your Will

All gifts to Mothers' Club provide you with the personal satisfaction of providing critical services to our community's most vulnerable children and families. Planned gifts can give you even more in return.

By including Mothers' Club in your will or living trust, you can ensure that Mothers' Club will remain a valuable resource for generations of families to come.

We can refer you to professionals who can help you design a charitable gift plan that benefits Mothers' Club and enables you and your family to fulfill your personal financial goals.

If you would like to learn more, please contact us at (626) 792-2687, ext. 122.

Thank you for partnering with us to meet the needs of future children and parents.





Mothers' Club Family Learning Center  
980 N. Fair Oaks Avenue  
Pasadena, CA 91103

Non Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Pasadena, CA  
Permit No. 265

*Return Service Requested*

## Our Mission & Guiding Principles

Mothers' Club Family Learning Center prepares families living in isolation and poverty to succeed in school and in life. Our programs are built on two guiding principles: in order for significant, long-term change to occur within a family, you must reach both parent and child and educate them together; and, the most critical time to reach a family is when children are proven to be most vulnerable and impressionable, between birth and 5 years-old.

## The Power of Two-Generation Learning

We fulfill our mission by providing FREE programs to disadvantaged families with children ages 0-5. Our two-generation learning model helps mothers and children gain the knowledge, skills and confidence they will need to break out of poverty. National research and our own evaluation results confirm that increasing the education levels of both a parent and their child is an irrefutable way to promote long-term, positive change within a family and a community.

Donate On-Line & Learn More at [www.mothersclub.org](http://www.mothersclub.org)

### ***Executive Director***

Susan Kujawa

### ***Board of Directors***

John Carlton, *President*

Maye Albanez

Judith Brown

Marie Campbell

Susan Futterman

Mark Giles

Marcia Goodstein

Patricia McLaughlin

Norah Morley

Ramon Pack III

Sylvia Paz

Aty Rotter

Fran Norris Scoble

Jil Sheldon

Heather Boyle VanMeter

Julie Ward

George Wiley

### ***Community Advisors***

Judith Wilson, *Chair*

Carole Babcock

Joan Cathcart

Mary Ann Cunningham

Ann Erdman

Jean Fleming

Adelaide Hixon

Councilman Chris Holden

Maria Low Way

Judy McDonald

Mary Lois Nevins

Congressman Adam Schiff

### ***The Power of Two***

October 2010

*Editor:* Sarah Orth

Mothers' Club is a 501(c)3  
non-profit organization.  
Tax ID 23-7275324