The Land of the Longhorns

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Expansion of the Longhorn Early Childhood Program

There are MANY keys to a quality education. Along with having great people in the system, a clear vision for the goals of the educational experience, a viable and inclusive curriculum experienced through engaging learning activities, and fostering and maintaining excellent relationships with all of the players in the greater educational community, something has been missing – FULLY encompassing Early Childhood programming. Yes, there have been kindergarten classes and even four-year old preschool programs for years and years, but the programming geared at the even younger kids has been hit and miss around the country, and that is a real shame as there is STRONG evidence regarding the importance of having quality early childhood programming that goes all the way back to when the child is still being carried inside his mother’s womb. Well, I have great news for you. Here in the Land of the Longhorns, we have expanded our Early Childhood programming by launching our Parents as Teachers (PAT) program and our Three-year old preschool, and we couldn’t be more thrilled.

I can tell you, firsthand, the importance of these early childhood programs. I have not ALWAYS been a weathered member of the educational community. Once upon a time I was a young man with a young wife and young family. As we were young and pretty doggone ignorant, we repeatedly tried to do harm to our kids all in the name of being “good parents.” There is a whole story about using syrup of ipecac with our daughter when she was but a mere toddler. Trust me – we should NOT have had that magic elixir in our possession. And, that was merely one sorted episode that occurred while my wife and I were learning to be parents. It’s not that we didn’t care or that we didn’t put forth great effort. We were simply ignorant of what should and should not be done with itty bitty kids. Soooo, it was a Godsend when we discovered the PAT program in our local district. Through this important program, we learned facts about childhood development and a series of strategies to use to help with that very development. Along with the information about mental and emotional development, we also learned about basic care dos and don’ts (back to the doggone syrup of ipecac…) So, as we went on to have two other children, we did a somewhat better job of helping them through these pivotal early developmental stages.

Now, with the PAT program up and running here in Holcomb, we are set up to assist our parents of these little longhorns, and I think that is a great thing as the children will be given a leg up on their schooling experiences as the activities that take place as a part of the PAT program certainly do prepare the students to hit the ground running when they get to the school building be it as a part of our three-year old, four-year old or kindergarten program. Bottom dollar, the student will be that much more prepared for the educational experiences awaiting him. This is a BIG deal as there is some pretty solid research related to learning to read and early childhood experiences. This is PARTICULARLY important when considering if a student isn’t reading at grade level by the end of third grade, there is a VERY good chance that student will not graduate from high school, and THAT is simply unacceptable. We will do WHATEVER it takes to set the students up to have the skills necessary to walk across that stage to receive their diploma as they prepare to launch into life away from home. All of this is THAT important!

Our PAT program serves families with kids ages of 0-3, and the Three-year old preschool program serves kids who are … you guessed it – three years old, so if you have a young child in these age ranges, or if you know of anyone who does, please reach out to us at Wiley Elementary School to learn more of the details of these programs. I KNOW you will not be disappointed. In fact, I am pretty sure you will be thrilled. I doubly KNOW our poor little daughter would have appreciated it if we had learned not to cause her to have the dry heaves from us force feeding her syrup of ipecac back in the day… Oh, our intentions were pure. We THOUGHT we were saving her as she had swallowed a button, but all we were really doing was putting her in risk and making her really, really sick… (Did I mention we were young ignorant parents once…) ☺