

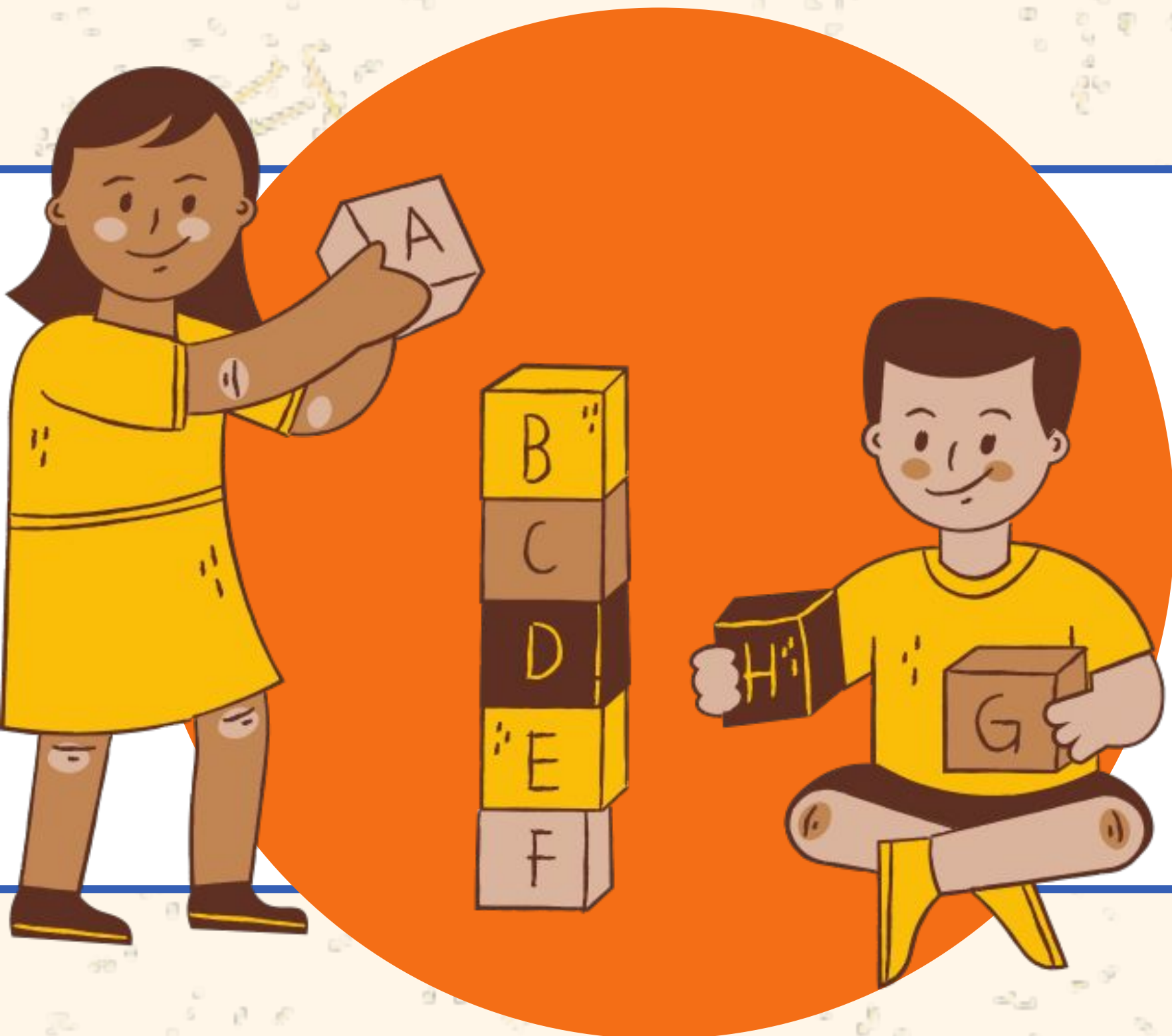
Preschool Parent University

February 12, 2024

Presented by

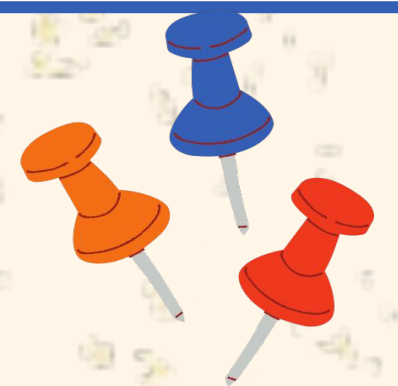
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History of Preschool in Pequannock

Prior to the 2012 – 2013 school year, Pequannock had one Preschool Disabilities Class. In an effort to provide the least restrictive environment for our diverse population of young learners and follow best practices, the administration saw the need for an integrated preschool program. Our Preschool Integrated Program, using ***Tools of the Mind*** as our curriculum, was adopted for the 2012 – 2013 school year. Twelve years later, we have two PSI classrooms and four Preschool Disabilities classrooms. The growing popularity of our tuition-based Preschool Integrated Program has required the district to accept students based on a lottery system.



Tools of the Mind



Tools is a Unique Program

Tools of the Mind is unlike any other early childhood program. It is designed to enable children to learn how to learn while building the skills needed for success in school and in life. **Tools** is a comprehensive program that includes daily opportunities for students to develop social skills and engage in math, science, literacy, make-believe play, music, movement and art.

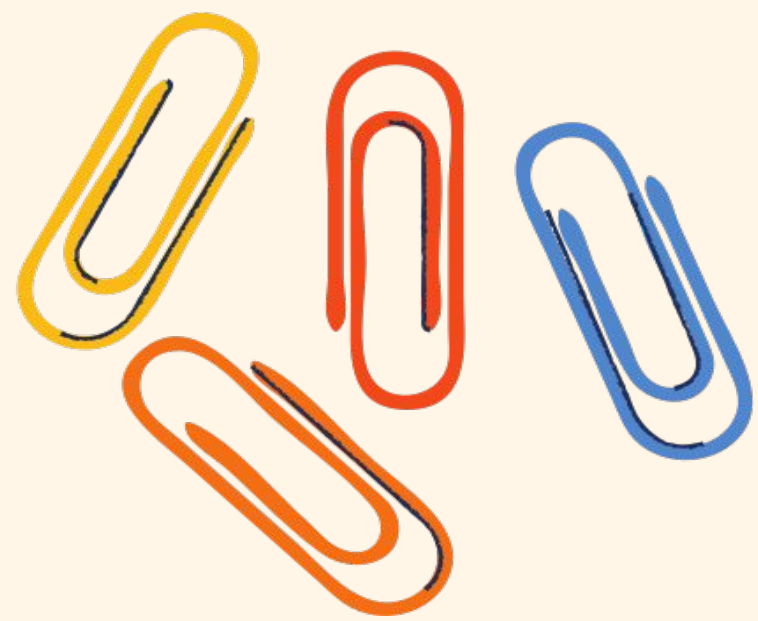
<https://www.toolsofthemind.org/our-unique-approach>

Focus on Self-Regulation

A key focus of **Tools of the Mind** is the development of self-regulation. As children learn academic skills, they are simultaneously developing executive function skills. Opportunities for developing self-regulation skills are embedded in all Tools activities. Based on Vygotskian theory, **Tools** recognizes the tremendous potential of make-believe play. In **Tools of the Mind** classrooms, children engage in intrinsically motivating play which propels the development of self-regulation.

Integrated & Inclusive Classrooms

In **Tools** classrooms every child reaches their own unique, full potential. **Tools** is designed to allow teachers to meet the needs of a diverse population of young learners. **Tools** empowers teachers with unique teaching practices to build inclusive, regulated classroom cultures. Being included and accepted affects children's motivation, cognitive functioning, and academic achievement.



Preschool Programs PSD vs. PSI

Preschool with Disabilities (PSD)

PSD is a self-contained program for students ages 3-5 that focus on a variety of teaching modalities. Classrooms typically have a smaller cohort of students with different needs. In Pequannock, we have four PSD classrooms that follow Tools of the Mind and/or Applied Behavior Analysis principles.

Preschool Integrated (PSI)

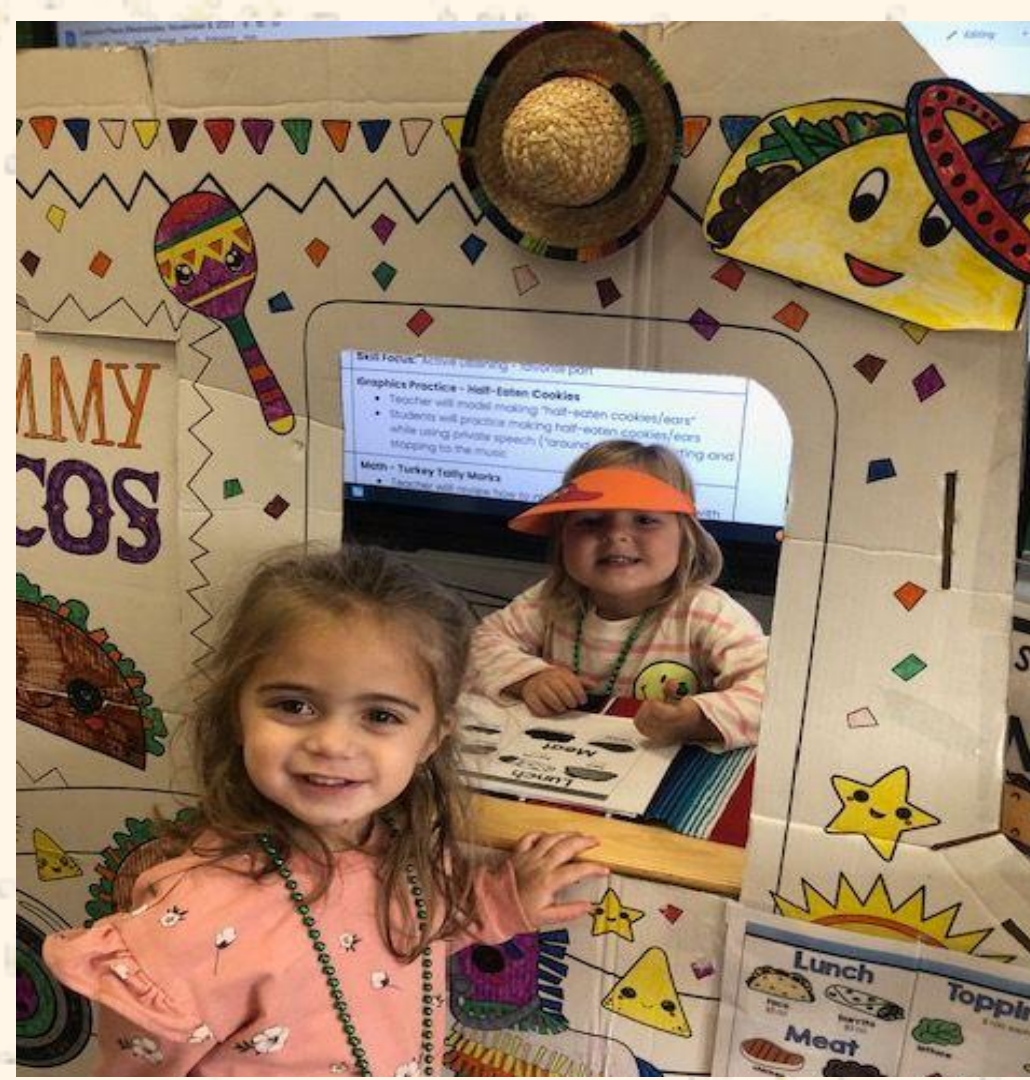
PSI is comprised of general and special education students. Classrooms typically have a larger cohort of students. In Pequannock, we have two PSI classrooms that follow Tools of the Mind.



Make-Believe Play

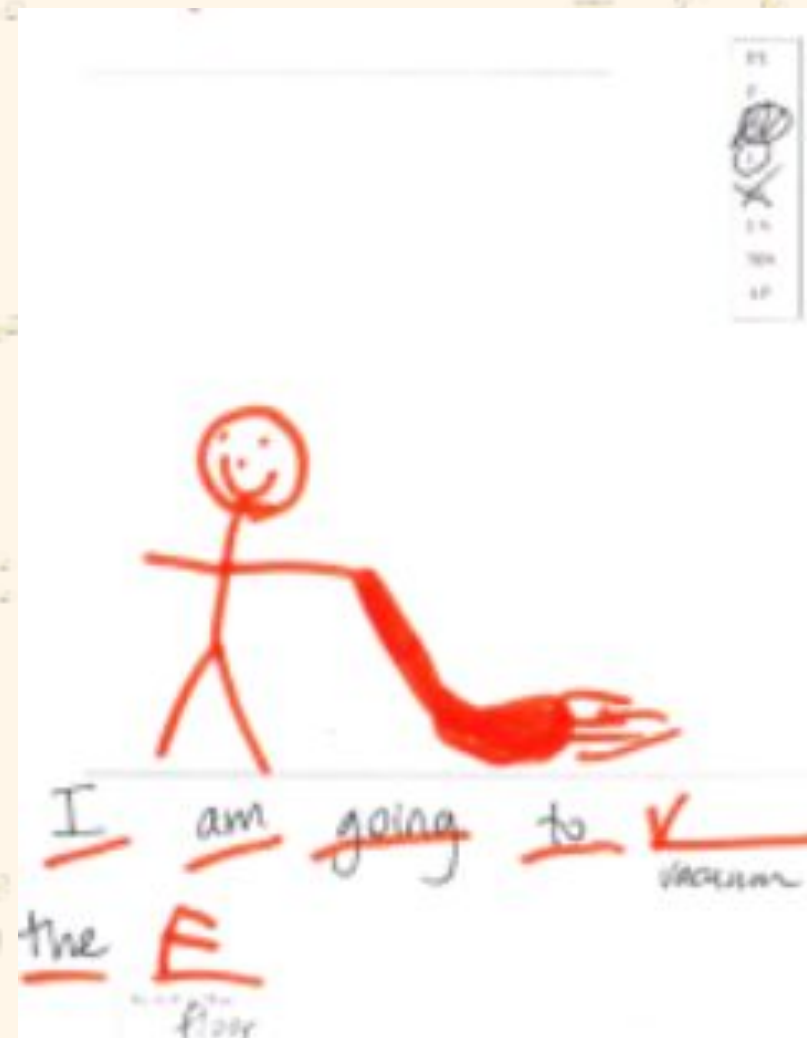
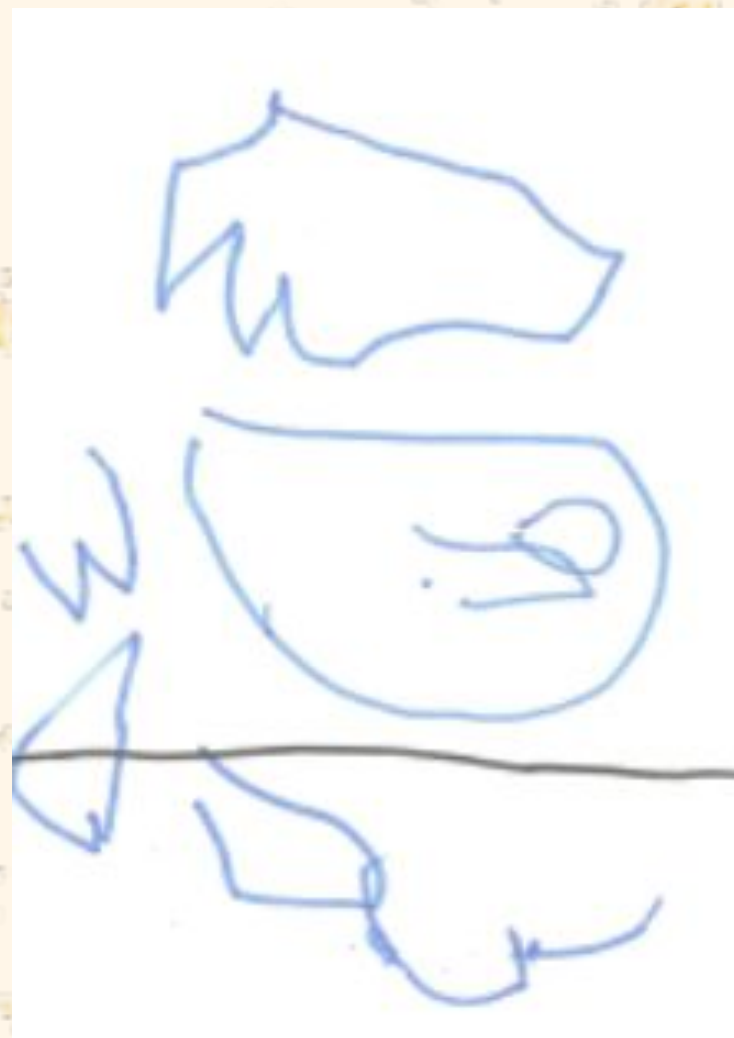
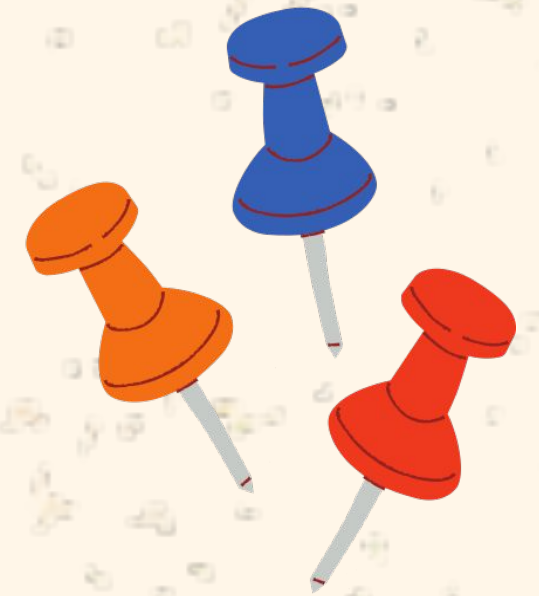
Play is essential to young children's development. Pretend or “make-believe” play, in particular, is important for building foundational skills, like executive functions and self-regulation.

Through intentional play in preschool, Tools learners build self-regulation by staying in roles, using role speech, planning what happens next and more.



Play Planning

In Tools of the Mind classrooms, we use play planning as a strategy—an approach in which, prior to starting play, children discuss what they are going to do and represent their plans in pictorial form. First modeled by the teacher, planning later becomes a child-initiated activity.



Proposed Changes

In an effort to fully embrace the Tools of the Mind program, we are proposing to change preschool times for the 2024-2025 school year.

Current full-time hours: 8:15am-2:45pm

Proposed full-time hours: 8:15am-2:00pm





Reasons for Change

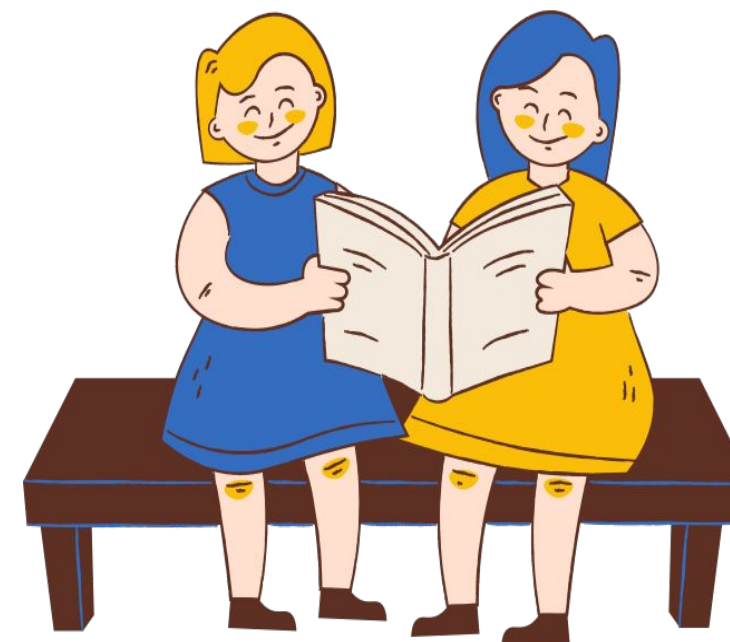
Reason 1

Tools of the Mind is a comprehensive program that includes daily opportunities for students to engage in music, movement, art, and story time. Since art, music, physical education and story time are already embedded in the curriculum, there is no need for preschool to attend special classes just to provide teachers with a prep.



Reason 2

Adhering to a K-5 building schedule, does not permit preschool teachers the flexibility to modify activities and meet student needs while building self-regulation and attention focusing skills.



Reason 3

The proposed change is more developmentally appropriate for young learners. It is quite difficult for preschoolers to sit and attend for 50 minutes in Specials classes.





Looking Forward



Adjustment of Day

- Change the time from 8:15am-2:45pm to 8:15am-2:00pm

Half-Day Consideration

- Do we continue to offer the half-day option?
- Is the Tools of the Mind program best carried out with a half-day format?

Expansion

- Where can we find more space to add more classes so that we can add preschoolers to the PSI program?

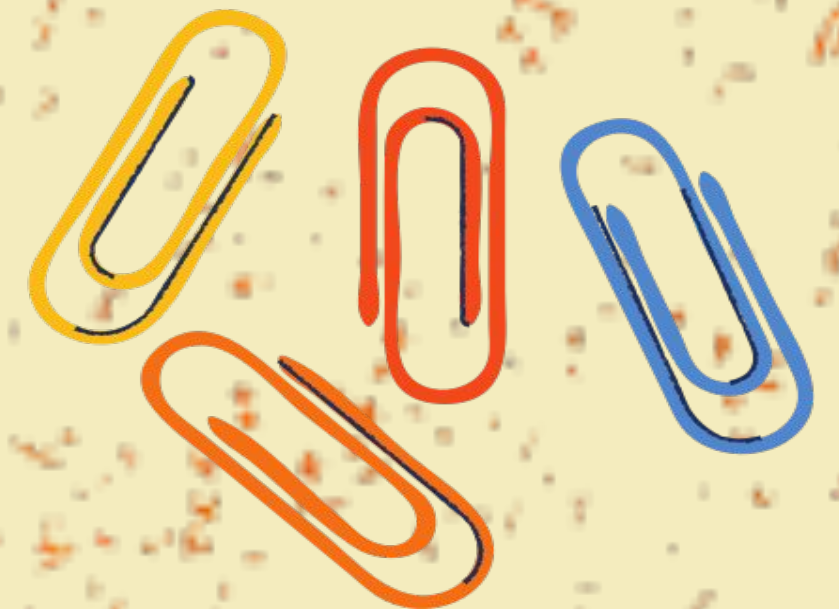
Additional Resources

- <https://www.toolsofthemind.org/preschool-for-families>
- http://www.mariereedes.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Tools-Preschool-Parent_Brochure_Eng.pdf

- [But me wait!](#)

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- [What are we going to play today?](#)



Thank you for attending!

