

ENCINITAS: Preschool teaches parents along with children

- [Story](#)
- [Discussion](#)

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By [STACY BRANDT](#) - sbrandt@nctimes.com North County Times - The Californian | Posted: Wednesday, January 5, 2011 6:44 pm | [1 Comment](#) | [Print](#)

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[Buy this photo](#) Xia Zhang works with students, including her son Bruce Lei, 4, Wednesday during a parent participation preschool class in Encinitas. (Photo by Bill Wechter - Staff photographer)

For 40 years, a public preschool in Encinitas has offered a unique program that aims to educate parents while giving their children a solid foundation for kindergarten.

The program, run by San Dieguito Union High School District's Adult School, brings adults into the classroom twice a month to help teach the 3- and 4-year-olds. They also get together once a month for a field trip or a guest speaker.

Having the parents involved helps them learn new ways to educate and entertain their children, said Marcia Stanley, the lone teacher at the preschool. It also gives them ideas of family activities and easy trips, she said.

"A lot of parents just want to drop their kids off at 8 a.m. and pick them up at 6 p.m.," she said. "We're not for those kinds of parents."

Stanley, known to the kids as Miss Marcia, is aided each day by three or four parents who help present lessons and coordinate activities with the children. The classes run from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. and families can choose a two-day option ---- Tuesdays and Thursdays or Wednesdays and Fridays ---- or a four-day program.

The class size is typically about a dozen children.

Stanley said she tries to teach parents how to make learning more fun for their kids by helping them out when it's their turn to oversee an activity.

Parent Kathy Ling, who helped students make calendars Wednesday, said she enrolled her daughter in the program because she wanted to see her interacting with the other kids and also wanted to stay involved in her education.

The preschool has also given her a chance to make friends with other moms, she said.

"This is just a really nice way to develop friendships," she said.

Having their parents there also helps the children transition into kindergarten, Stanley said.

Some of the children said Wednesday they enjoy their time at the preschool because everyone's so friendly.

"We play together," 3-year-old Mia Scinta said about the other students. "They're nice."

Though the program has been around for decades, it has moved several times and was previously held at the Boys & Girls Club of San Dieguito, the Del Mar Fairgrounds and a church. The program has been run from the Masonic Lodge near San Dieguito Academy for the last two years.

As school funding has dwindled over the last couple of years, the adult school has raised fees for the program. Over the last decade the cost for an 18-week semester, with two classes per week, has gone from roughly \$100 to \$800 now. That breaks down to about \$45 per week.

Because money is so tight now, the program now has to be mostly self-funding, said Denise Stanley, principal of the Adult School.

"Everybody kind of pitches it to make it work," she said.

The classes follow San Dieguito Union High School District's school calendar with one semester from September to January and another from February to June.

More information on the preschool program and other adult education classes is available online at www.sdadulthood.com.

Call staff writer Stacy Brandt at 760-901-4009.