

NEWSLETTER

WebParentTip, Volume10, # 12 for December 2, 2009

A PRESCHOOL VISIT

I recently visited a Montessori preschool and kindergarten in Tucson. All of the young children were busy. They were completely engaged in what they were doing. No one was idle. They each had a place and a task. They were doing these tasks on their own for the most part, although adults were present. They were being useful, both learning and enjoying themselves.

As I was taken from room to room to observe what the children were doing I had the nagging thought that I had seen children like this in a setting outside a school but just couldn't remember where.

Later it came to me. It was in a village I visited in East Africa. The children there were doing tasks. Some were caring for animals, others carrying grain or water, others weeding. Some worked alone; others in groups. They chatted and sang, laughed and shouted. They ran to the nearest adult for help when they needed it. They were being useful, both learning and enjoying themselves.

The work of childhood is learning. Children learn from their parents as well as teachers, and peers. A good preschool is a valuable way to begin preparing our children for their life here as the children in the African village were preparing for their life there.

There was one difference: The children in Africa were happily noisy as they performed their chores. The classrooms in the Tucson school I visited were quiet. No TV, no background music, no beeping or talking toys. Just happy children learning.

There was no sign, but a sign might have read, "Quiet, young minds at work!"

One of the things parents should look for in a preschool is the level of noise. Yes, children need time for exuberant play which is often noisy. But they don't need noisy classrooms.

PS. I wish all my subscribers a Very Happy Holiday Season and a Happy, Healthy, and Peaceful New Year! MH