

Community

We believe that with the coordinated support of parents, teachers, and the larger community, every child can become a skilled and confident learner. An essential element of our vision is the full participation of all the parents in our program. To be considered for admission to the San Diego Cooperative Charter School, the parent(s) of each child must enthusiastically agree to be an active participant in the school community, including

- ◆ Support of their child's school work.
- ◆ Attendance at parent meetings (four per year).
- ◆ Conferences with their child's teacher (twice per year).
- ◆ Completion of a school job, incorporating a minimum of 54 hours per school year. These hours need not be performed during the school day, nor on the school grounds.

For More Information...

please contact our Principal at,

SDCCS
2850 Sixth Avenue, Suite 201
San Diego, CA 92103
(619) 574-0694
sdccs@sbcglobal.net

Visit Us Online

www.sdccs.org

Highlights

- ◆ A K–8 school, each student will access Balboa Park's scientific and cultural venues every week.
- ◆ Class size reduction in all grades (approximately 20 students to 1 teacher).
- ◆ We value teachers and students alike. Thus, a unique hiring process has given SDCCS the most creative teachers in San Diego. All teachers have California teaching credentials.
- ◆ We strive to match the diversity of San Diego neighborhoods.
- ◆ Students are taught to think critically and creatively—not just memorize information.
- ◆ Families are a highly valued and integral part of the educational community. Family members of every student volunteer throughout the school year at flexible times that will fit into busy schedules.

The San Diego Cooperative Charter School is a public school authorized by the San Diego Unified School District. SDCCS is nonsectarian in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices, and all other operations; shall not charge tuition; and shall not discriminate against any pupil or employee on the basis of ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, or disability.

The San Diego Cooperative Charter School

A Public School Built by Parents

"The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes."
— M. Proust

A Partner in Education with the San Diego Natural History Museum, the San Diego Museum of Art, and the Museum of Photographic Arts



The San Diego Cooperative Charter School opened September 2002. We are dedicated to serving a diverse student population. We are equally dedicated to supporting our teachers and staff.

Mission Statement

The San Diego Cooperative Charter School supports a progressive, developmentally-based, child-centered community for active and collaborative student learning where shared values of family, diversity, relationship, creativity and academic excellence flourish.

Our History

The San Diego Cooperative Charter School was started by a group of parents and educators from a variety of professions and backgrounds, who came together through a parent cooperative preschool. The experience of being a significant part of our children's education led us to feel that a school that emphasized parent involvement and respect for each child's learning style was an appropriate option for all children.

Curriculum

Constructivism is an uncommon term for a common and well-respected educational philosophy. Constructivism refers to the fact that as children (and adults) learn, they construct their understanding of a fact or concept based on knowledge they already hold. Therefore, if you are explaining a dictionary to a first grader, it helps if they have knowledge of the sequence of letters in the alphabet. All knowledge builds on prior knowledge. This fact directs teachers to take as their first task, an understanding of the experiences and knowledge of the children in their class. If you want to teach someone, it helps to know what he or she already knows.

The second guiding principle of constructivist curriculum design is that students are more likely to learn when they are engaged in the subject. The job of the teacher is to plan lessons in such a way that every student's learning style is taken into account. One child may be engaged by reading stories about westward expansion, where another may be excited about drawing maps of explorers' routes. A teacher who knows her/his students learning styles and interests is going to be more able to design learning experiences that address the needs of all the students in their class. If you want to teach someone, it is helpful to know how she or he learns.

The third principle has been simplified into the phrase "learn by doing." It refers to the fact that it is easier to learn how to do something when the learner is able to try to do that thing. In other words, it is easier to learn to use a ruler to measure when you have a ruler and something to measure, than when you listen to someone describe measuring, watch a video about measuring, or do a workbook page about measuring. It's even better when the measurements are going to be used for something.

These are the three basic principles that underlie our classroom activities. Our curriculum content is based on the grade-level content standards of the State of California. What is different is how we present the content.

*"Philosophy arose then, as it arises still, from wonder.
All begin... by wondering that things should be as they are."
— Aristotle*

The SDCCS Environment

CONSTRUCTIVIST CLASSROOMS

- ♦ Curriculum is presented whole-to-part with emphasis on concept development
- ♦ Pursuit of student questions is highly valued
- ♦ Curricular activities rely heavily on primary sources of data and manipulative materials
- ♦ Students are viewed as thinkers with emerging theories about the world
- ♦ Teachers generally behave in an interactive manner, mediating the environment for students
- ♦ Teachers seek the students' points of view in order to understand students' present conceptions for use in subsequent lessons
- ♦ Assessment of student learning is interwoven with teaching and occurs through teacher observations of students at work and through student exhibitions and portfolios
- ♦ Students primarily work in groups

Typical Public School Environment

TRADITIONAL CLASSROOMS

- ♦ Curriculum is presented part-to-whole, with emphasis on basic skills
- ♦ Strict adherence to fixed curriculum is highly valued
- ♦ Curricular activities rely heavily on textbooks and workbooks
- ♦ Students are viewed as "blank slates" onto which information is etched by the teacher
- ♦ Teachers generally behave in a didactic manner, disseminating information to students
- ♦ Teachers seek the correct answer to validate student learning
- ♦ Assessment of student learning is viewed as separate from teaching and occurs almost entirely through testing
- ♦ Students primarily work alone

Parent Involvement

It is our belief that children do not cease to learn when they leave the classroom, nor do they cease to develop values and self-image when they are away from their families. Raising children is, or should be, a joint effort of the home, school, and the community. In typical conventional schools, all too often, parent involvement is limited to fundraising for the PTA and helping out at classroom parties and field trips. Our experience tells us that the resources parents represent are woefully underutilized. Children thrive when parents have a visible, significant role in their child's school life.

We are well aware that most parents have a lot of demands on their time. Our plan offers a wide range of opportunities for involvement, and to encourage parents to select ones that best fit their skills and time constraints. The goal of these tasks is to add enriching activities to the children's program, to free teachers and other salaried workers for tasks related directly to the children, to increase the connection and communication between the parents and school staff, and to rely on parent participation in making policy decisions.

Some examples of ways in which parents could participate are: provide professional services, as in landscaping or construction; serve on textbook or instructional material selection committee; coordinate a school event; guest teach a subject; take a shift as school receptionist; or serve on the school governing board.

Participation in a school community can also encourage parent growth. A parent can take on a new role or task, challenge him or herself, and develop collaboration skills.

Facility

SDCCS resides in newly remodeled classrooms in the northern wing of the Sixth Avenue Medical Building. Our rooms are completely separate from the office of other tenants within the building. However, the building does contain a family planning clinic and the presence of small groups of pro-life demonstrators walking along Sixth Avenue is not uncommon. Please inquire with our principal to learn more.