



****News Release****

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Tough Decisions Coming Sooner for Parents *Is Your Child Ready for Kindergarten?*

San Diego – The public school system has changed. For one thing, the kindergarten of yesteryears simply does not exist anymore. It has become quite rigorous, and seems more like a slightly altered version of first grade – this according to the educators at Integral Elementary School.

“It is a difficult choice for parents – hold their children back, or put them into an environment that may not meet their child’s developmental needs, and may actually deter them from learning,” said Prapanna Smith, the school’s founder and principal. “What these young children really need is a curriculum that will encourage growth and learning, yet be developmentally appropriate for their individual needs.”

The teachers at Integral Elementary work closely with prospective parents to determine whether their child is emotionally, psychologically and intellectually prepared to move from preschool to elementary school. If they are ready, the students are brought along in the classroom at their own pace, with a great deal of thought and feedback.

This student-centered learning environment falls right in line with the school’s Integral Education philosophy. It is described not just as teaching, but creating lifelong learners, as students are inspired by their teachers and curriculum. According to Smith, the United States’ current educational climate under No Child Left Behind is obsessed with test scores and this obsession is actually making it more difficult for teachers to teach and for children to learn. After teaching for several years in California public schools, Smith decided there had to be something better. He found that better way with Integral Education.

Inspired by his vision, Smith has been successfully running Rainbow Kids Integral Preschool, in the Sorrento Valley/Mira Mesa area, since 2002, and the Integral Elementary School, in the UTC/La Jolla area, since 2006.

While still following the California State Standards, an Integral Education allows students to create, with the help of teachers and parents, a learning plan that also focuses on their individual strengths and interests. This allows them to experience a stronger sense of self-worth and joy in the learning process. The school uses nontraditional approaches and assessments to let children demonstrate what they know in real-world situations. It also utilizes multiage and interdisciplinary groupings so that the students can learn from, and help teach, each other.

Integral Elementary boasts an approximate 12:1 student to teacher ratio. In addition to traditional academics, students also focus on the arts, values and character development, meditation skills, and physical education, including yoga for children. More information can be found at www.IntegralElementary.com or by calling (858) 450-4321.

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