



# Innovations Academy

Powerfully creating our lives through self-expression  
compassionate connection and  
purposeful learning

## Family Handbook 2010/11 School Year

6154 Mission Gorge Road  
San Diego, CA 92120  
619-501-6327  
619-795-2850 (fax)  
[InnovationsAcademy.org](http://InnovationsAcademy.org)

Dear Families,

At Innovations Academy we powerfully create our lives through self-expression, compassionate connection, and purposeful learning.

We welcome you to the Innovations Academy 2010/11 school year. We are very excited to work together to create the optimal learning environment for our students.

As such a community, we invite you to share with us what is working for you during the year and where you would like to see improvements. Through practicing our mission we can cultivate a community filled with participation, communication, and contribution.

We look forward to building this community together.

**Please take the time to read through this handbook with your child and return the signature page by Wednesday, September 15th.**

Joyfully yours,

IA Staff





• **Signature Page**

I, [parent(s) name] \_\_\_\_\_  
have read and reviewed the handbook with my child. I understand that Innovations Academy is a school of choice and that I am choosing to take part in a school that has a Positive Discipline approach and student centered Project Based Learning.

I understand that by taking part in the Innovations community, I agree to uphold and abide by Innovations Academy's policies and procedures. I understand that doing otherwise results in the aforementioned actions set forth in the handbook.

I, [student(s) name] \_\_\_\_\_  
have gone over the handbook with my parent(s)/guardian(s). I understand what is expected of me at Innovations Academy. At Innovations Academy I am seen as a capable young person and am treated as such. I understand that Innovations Academy is a school of choice. By choosing to go to IA I am willing to be responsible and will be held accountable for my actions and words. I will do what I can to bring the Community Student Pledge (below) and Keys to Achieve to life.

Community Mission Statement:

Innovations Academy is a place where we powerfully create our lives through self-expression, compassionate connection, and purposeful learning.

Community Student Pledge:

I believe in myself and in my ability to do my best at all times. I act in such a way that I am proud of myself and others are proud of me too. I will not waste this day because it will never come again.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Child(ren) Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**[Please return this page to your teacher by September 15. Thank you!](#)**



## Table of Contents

<b>Mission Statement and Guiding Principles</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>School Calendar and Class Schedule</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>School Hours</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Drop Off &amp; Pick Up</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Attendance</b>	<b>10</b>
<i>Short Term Independent Study Contracts</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Tardies</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Leaving School Early</i>	<i>11</i>
<b>Health and Medication</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Informed Consent and Acknowledgment for Athletic Activities</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Visitation Policy</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Parent Volunteers</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>School Lunch &amp; Snacks</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Fieldtrips</b>	<b>14</b>
<i>Public Transit</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Payments for Fieldtrips</i>	<i>14</i>
<b>Fundraising</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Emergency Drill Procedures</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Bringing Personal Items to School</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Dress Code</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Academics</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Keys to Achieve Program</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Positive Discipline Plan</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Reflection Day</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Parent Responsibility &amp; Pledge</b>	<b>21</b>
<i>Keeping Connected with IA</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Adult Communication Policy</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>What to do when something is working or not working for you at IA. (We don't think "complaint policy" is an effective term so at IA we have renamed it)</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>Heart of the Matter Feedback Form</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs</i>	<i>26</i>
<b>Resources for Parents</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Community Directory</b>	<b>29</b>

- **Mission Statement and Guiding Principles**

At Innovations Academy we powerfully create our lives through self-expression, compassionate connection, and purposeful learning.

Our charter school, serving K - 8 students, is made up of difference makers who are inspired to contribute to our world. We involve students to create their own opportunities through enriching experiences and through making active choices throughout their day.

The accomplishments of Innovations Academy include providing an environment that respects the intellectual, emotional, and social intelligence of all children while supporting their innate human desire to learn through a multidimensional curriculum.

For a deeper understanding of our school's philosophy we recommend reading our school's charter online as well as reading information about constructivist teaching philosophy.

- **School Calendar and Class Schedule**

School Calendar

<b>Event</b>	<b>Date</b>
School Starts	Wednesday, September 1
Student Led Conferences (1/2 Days All Week)	October 11 - 14
Family Night	Thursday, October 14
Staff Development Day (No School)	Friday, October 15
Veteran's Day	Thursday, November 11
Thanksgiving Holiday	November 22 - 26
Family Night	Thursday, December 2
Staff Development Day (No School)	Friday, December 3
Winter Break	Dec 20 - Dec 31
Staff Development Day (No School)	Monday, January 3

<b>Event</b>	<b>Date</b>
Martin Luther King Jr	Monday, January 17
End of First Semester	Friday, January 28
Family Night	Thursday, February 10
President's Day Weekend	February 11 & 14
Family Night	Thursday, March 31
Staff Development Day (No School)	Friday, April 1
Spring Break	April 4 - April 8
STAR Testing	April 21 - May 12
Student Led Conferences (1/2 Days All Week)	May 23 - May 26
Family Night	Thursday, May 26
Staff Development Day (No School)	Friday, May 27
Memorial Day Weekend	Monday, May 30
End of Second Semester	Friday, June 17
Summer Recess Begins	Monday, June 20

### Class Schedule

Each class designs its own schedule as individual classes have different activities occurring through the school day. You will receive a class schedule from your teacher. If major changes occur in the schedule you will be notified.

All classes on Monday and Friday cover Skills Based Instruction in Math & Language Arts, C.A.M.P.S (Clubs, the Arts, Media, PE, and Science), Character & Community Development, breaks, and lunch.

All classes on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday cover Skills Based Instruction in Math & Language Arts, Project Based Learning (incorporating Science, Social Studies, Math, and Language Arts), Character & Community Development, break times, and lunch\*.

\*lunch is optional on Wednesday, students may eat after early dismissal in the after school program or at home.

• **School Hours**

<b>Starting &amp; Dismissal</b>	<b>Grades K-2</b>	<b>Grades 3-8</b>
Start Time	8:30 AM	9:00 AM
Dismissal (M, T, Th, Fri)	3:00 PM	3:30 PM
Early Dismissal (Wed)	12:00 PM	12:30 PM

Office Hours

8:00am - 4:30pm Monday through Friday  
You may contact the office by calling **619-501-6327**

• **Drop Off & Pick Up**

Drop off begins at a maximum of 15 minutes before start time. Parents are to walk their children into the building or drop them off in the designated area. Once on campus all students are to remain on site.

Pick up begins at dismissal for a 15 minute duration. **Parents must pick up their child from the classroom, there is no curbside pick up.** This fosters communication between parents/care-givers and teachers. Students who walk home or take public transit must have a signed waiver to leave the premises. Upon leaving Innovations Academy grounds, students must exit the premises immediately - no loitering before or after school hours.

Any child going home with another family for a play date must have a signed note to be given to their teacher that day or earlier. Ride coordination can take up quite a bit of time, please be respectful that teachers have tasks ahead of them after school gets out.

Any child remaining after pick up time has ended will be automatically enrolled in the after care program at a cost to the parent of \$1/minute. If parents call the school 15 minutes before dismissal to notify that they will be late in picking up their child(ren), the child is signed into the after school program and the parent is charged \$5/hr (not prorated).

Note: Siblings who have different start and dismissal times are invited to use the before and after care program, during the overlapped time only, at no cost.

- **Attendance**

If your child is absent, it is necessary for a parent/guardian to call the office at **619-501-6327** to report the absence.

When calling, please leave the following information:

- Student's name and grade
- Homeroom teacher's name
- Day(s) and date(s) of absence
- Reason for absence
- Expected date of return

A note about frequent absences

Each day that a student is absent negatively impacts our budget by about \$50. After your child has 5 absences, we meet with absentee families as a group to create a plan together for how to bring attendance up. Should your child reach 10 absences we review the plan as a group. If your child has more than 15 absences in a school year, a meeting is scheduled to discuss school participation, involvement, and placement.

While the most important factor of regular attendance is your child's education, the simplest form of fundraising that you can do for our community is to ensure that your child is here each day possible. When students are absent from their program, we miss out on their contribution to our community. Delinquent families may be reported to the School Attendance Review Board (SARB) for assistance from the San Diego Unified School District.

Sick Days

Please take a few minutes at home to carefully check your child's health before s/he leaves for school. The following are suggested times when a child should stay home. If they come to school with any of the following conditions you may be called to pick them up:

- A report of illness during the night
- Fever is present (100 degrees or more)
- Complaints of nausea, upset stomach, vomiting, headache, diarrhea
- Development of a rash on face and/or body
- Severe cold, cough and/or sore throat
- Inflamed eye(s) with discharge from them

Please remember: An ill child cannot function properly in school. The spread of illness and disease through school can be more easily monitored if sick children remain at home during the acute stage of an illness.

### Short Term Independent Study Contracts

If you know in advance, including the morning of, that your child will be absent from one to twenty-one days for any reason, your child's absence may be excused if a Contract of Independent Study is completed and signed before the student leaves.

When possible, please contact the office three days prior to the absence in order for teachers to adequately prepare lessons for your child. Students are expected to complete all work assigned and turn it in to the office within two days after s/he returns. (We can also prepare these the day of for a sick day)

### Tardies

William Shakespeare says, "Better three hours too soon than a minute too late." Plan ahead and drop your child off with 5 minutes to spare and they will never be late to class. If students are chronically late (more than 5 tardies a month) to school the family will have a meeting with the teacher to discuss the effect of said tardies on the student, teacher, and on the class. If tardies persist parents meet with admin to talk about school participation, involvement, and placement. We believe that when students arrive on time they are more connected to their community throughout the day which makes for a better educational environment for all.

### Leaving School Early

Once at school, a student may not leave the gated premises during school hours without permission from the office. If a student needs to leave school during the school day, s/he must be checked out in the office by a parent or guardian.

## • **Health and Medication**

Students may not have any medications in class. All medications must be turned into the school office. Medication given at school must be accompanied by two things:

1. A written statement from a physician detailing the method and amount and time schedules by which the medication is to be taken.
2. A written statement from parent/guardian indicating that they desire the school to assist the student with medication.

• **Informed Consent and Acknowledgment for Athletic Activities**

Students at Innovations Academy have the option to participate in a wide range of athletic activities.

By their very nature, athletic activities can put students in situations in which serious, catastrophic, and perhaps fatal injuries may occur. The injuries could include, but are not limited to the following:

Sprains/strains	Disfigurement
Fractures	Head injuries
Cuts/abrasions	Loss of eyesight
Unconsciousness	Death
Paralysis	

Students and parents must assess the risks involved in such participation and make their choice to participate in spite of those risks. No amount of instruction, precaution or supervision will eliminate all risk of injury. Although the school may suggest or recommend the use of certain equipment to be purchased by the students, the school does not guarantee that such equipment will be free from defects or protect the student from injury. By granting permission for your son/daughter to participate in athletic activities, you, the parent/guardian, acknowledge that such risk exists and assume these risks.

Participation by your child is voluntary and is not required by the school.

Parents have read and agree to hold Innovations Academy, its employees, agents, volunteers and/or sponsors and any other person, firm or corporation charged or chargeable with responsibility or liability, free and harmless from any and all claims, demands, damages, costs, expenses, loss of services, action and causes of action resulting from the use of facilities, equipment and participation by my son/daughter in all athletic activities, to the fullest extent of the law.

• **Visitation Policy**

The safety of all children is of utmost importance. Immediately upon entering campus, all visitors, including volunteers, are required to sign in with the school office and obtain a badge. All adults on campus during school hours must have a staff, visitor, or volunteer badge. Visitors may be accompanied by school staff while on campus and may be denied permission to enter classrooms if it is determined that there is a substantial likelihood of interference. Any adults seen on campus without a badge are asked to return to the main office or escorted off campus.

- **Parent Volunteers**

We love volunteers at Innovations Academy because they contribute so much time and energy to the students and staff. Here are a few things for volunteers to keep in mind.

TB Testing

Each volunteer must have a current TB test on file with the office. There are various locations that TB tests are given throughout the city. TB test results are good for 4 years.

Megan's Law Background Check

Volunteers not working under the direct supervision of a staff member must have a current Megan's Law Background Check on file with the office. If you have filled out this form in the past and filed it with Innovations Academy, you do not need to file another one. Megan's Law Background Checks only needs to be completed once per school. Again, anyone working under the direct supervision of a staff member (in the classroom or with administration) does not need this form on file.

Sign In

All volunteers are required to sign in at the office and put on a name-tag. This helps us identify people on our campus and helps keep our kids safe. Thank you for your willingness to volunteer and for your continued support of our school!

- **School Lunch & Snacks**

We do not have a free lunch program. However, if you need help finding ways to make affordable lunches at home please feel free to ask. We're happy to help with suggestions.

Lunch Options:

Bring a bag lunch

Bring a hot lunch (we have microwaves for student use)

Buy hot lunch through our vendor

### Snacks:

Please send your child to school with nutritionally sound snacks (and lots of them, your children will be hungry throughout the school day). **No energy drinks, soda, or junk food.** We suggest fruits, vegetables, nuts, whole grain breads, cheeses, etc. IA also sells snacks and fruit.

### • **Fieldtrips**

Innovations' students participate in many fieldtrips. They are a great way to reach out to the community and experience activities that we can't do at school. Some fieldtrips are as simple as walking around the block and others are more intensive such as going to the Convention Center. Therefore, we provide students with a blanket fieldtrip waiver to cover all such activities. Fieldtrips may come up at the last minute where a class wants to go to the park down the street or visit a neighboring business. **Please make sure to contact our office and/or your teacher if you are picking up early to ensure that the student is on campus at your arrival.**

### Public Transit

Students learn a lot about public transit by using our local resources. Buses, trains, trolleys, and subways are great learning experiences. If you would prefer your child to not ride public transit you may chaperone and bring them to the event.

### Payments for Fieldtrips

Payments for fieldtrips are due by the specified date. We keep our costs as low as possible by also fundraising for our trips. Thank you for your support.

### • **Fundraising**

At Innovations we do a lot of fundraising since we bring many more resources to our program than most (for example our C.A.M.P.S Program). Fundraising is a great way for students to learn about budgeting, resources, and planning. Furthermore, it makes our students accountable for the activities that they want to do.

There are many ways to contribute to fundraisers. You can help to organize it, bring supplies or goods for it, donate monetarily, and/or help us find grants or philanthropic organizations to partner with. One resource that many people do not know about is their own place of employment. Many companies do matching grants/contributions for fundraising/donations. Find out about yours!

- **Emergency Drill Procedures**

There is a complete Emergency Action Plan (EAP) on file in the office. It can be viewed in the main office.

Some emergency numbers to be aware of:

- Office number - **619-501-6327**
- Director Emergency Cell Phone Number - Christine Kuglen  
**619-379-9275**

- **Bringing Personal Items to School**

Innovations Academy believes in giving students choices. This includes making the choice to bring personal items to school to be used during breaks and at lunch. Students assume all responsibility for personal items such as cell phones, skateboards (not to be used on campus), gaming devices, wallets, toys, etc. Any personal item that interferes with the learning process must be put away and turned off during instruction. Any device with inappropriate materials (particularly those depicting violent, sexual, and/or derogatory content) is confiscated and returned to parents with the possibility of permanent removal from school. Innovations Academy has the right to confiscate and search any devices suspected of inappropriate use.

Additionally, if a personal item goes missing, Innovations Academy reserves the right to search all backpacks, purses, and other personal items.

- **Dress Code**

Innovations Academy believes that socially responsible behavior is crucial to improving and maintaining a climate of respect. Dress and grooming should not interfere with the educational process. School clothing should be neat, clean, maintain adequate coverage, appropriate for school activities, and follow standards of common decency (no profanity, discriminatory, sexually explicit clothing, etc).

Footwear: Please wear or bring to school closed-toe athletic shoes for outdoor activities during P.E. which is on Monday and Friday.

- **Academics**

Fun, excitement, curiosity, and engagement. These things make joyful learners.

At Innovations we create this through four core components: Skills Based Instruction in Math & Language Arts, Project Based Learning, Character & Community Development, and our C.A.M.P.S (Clubs, the Arts, Media, PE, and Science) Exploration.

We provide standards based Instruction in Math & Language Arts skills. Students learn through direct instruction and learning centers. Teachers aid academic growth by providing students with opportunities to work at or above their level through differentiated instruction.

Our Project Based Learning curriculum integrates students' interests into meaningful standards based projects incorporating Math, Language Arts, Science, and Social Studies. We believe that fulfilling projects engage both the hands and the mind. Examples include Kindergartners learning about our neighbors in Tijuana while painting stools for the Tijuana Children's Village, first graders taking their love of bugs to insect projects, and upper graders discovering the roots of our monetary system while creating a student run store.

Character & Community Development underlines the importance of effective and productive social interaction and communication for success in life. Morning Meetings, self evaluations, and Class Counsel are some ways that we teach communication skills & conflict resolution. We have a structure to develop relationships conducive to social and intellectual well being. Over the year, teachers and staff model effective communication skills and techniques.

Eager voyagers are found in our C.A.M.P.S (Clubs, the Arts, Media, PE, and Science) Program. We partner with community members, organizations, and staff of IA to develop well-rounded students. Our partnerships in the past have included learning about mathematics through Woodshop, dancing to world beat rhythms in our Creative Movement class, and making some Non-Newtonian goop in MadScience. During the 2010/11 school year we will also be including student clubs such as Math Club, Student Government, and Environmental Awareness Club during the school day. For more information on our curriculum please see our website.

- **Keys to Achieve Program**

“A small key opens big doors.” - Turkish Proverb. At Innovations Academy we believe that to achieve our dreams it helps to have certain keys or tools to open doors to us. The following are our keys that we use at school. Reinforcing these keys at home only makes our community stronger.

Character is doing what is right even when no one is looking - Dr. Martin Luther King

- 1) Make eye contact and greet others. When someone is speaking, face them with body and eyes at all times.
- 2) Actively listen and wait silently while others are speaking, instructing, sharing.
- 3) Enter all rooms, conversations and situations quietly and blend in with what is going on.
- 4) Leave all spaces organized and cleaner than when you entered.
- 5) When we are in transition from one subject to the other the change is swift, quiet and orderly. We are consistently able to turn from one book to another, from one activity to another and enter and clean up with speed and efficiency.
- 6) Spread happiness! Speak with positive purpose. No hurtful words, gestures, or expressions.
- 7) Perform acts of kindness such as holding the door and giving compliments to others.
- 8) Treat all school guests (substitutes, partners, speakers, parents, visitors) the same as your teacher. All agreements continue to apply.
- 9) No matter what the circumstances, always be honest.
- 10) Show appreciation by saying the magic words, “Please,” “Thank you,” “You’re welcome,” and “Excuse me.”
- 11) Be a good sport! Congratulate each other for doing well and encourage others when they don’t do so well.
- 12) The staff is here to support you. If you are feeling overwhelmed or unsafe, go straight to an adult for assistance.

## • Positive Discipline Plan

Opportunities to learn come from making mistakes. By addressing mistakes we can move towards the path of resolution. We use positive discipline to help children become competent conflict resolvers.

As relationships with students are important to us, we work hard to make consequences for misbehavior respectful and constructive rather than punitive. This supports us in being decisive and action oriented in discipline measures.

Early in the year, each class creates its own expectations to establish a successful community. These classroom expectations encompass our four school-wide policies below. Each policy is guided by a premise with resulting actions.

1. Making amends -- “You break it – you fix it”
  - Premise ~ with guidance, children can meet their needs and take responsibility.
    - Children are assisted in making amends.
    - If the child(ren) is unable to find a solution, the staff member sets parameters for the timeliness of the solution and is responsible for follow up on the resolution.
2. Mishandling responsibility leads to more limits.
  - Premise ~ children thrive in an environment that fosters freedom and responsibility.
    - Classes create expectations/limits that provide the structure for how much freedom a group can responsibly uphold.
    - When a freedom is mishandled, new limits are set until the student(s) can demonstrate their readiness to regain the original freedom.
3. Jeopardizing the functioning of a group/activity results in time away from the group or activity
  - Premise ~ staff provides children with the time and space to reflect and settle themselves when individual attention detracts from the group dynamic.
    - When misbehavior affects the group, the child is guided to a space previously agreed upon by all students for reflection and restoration.
    - A staff member follows up on a resolution.

4. Physical aggression/threat/harassment results in an evaluation by staff.
  - Premise ~ a strong foundation of physical safety and security must be present for children to maximize their learning potential and opportunities in any environment.
    - All physical aggression/threat observed by a staff member or reported by students is investigated immediately and evaluated to find out what would be in the best interest of all parties involved. This can include:
      - Make ups (minor infraction)
      - Increase in limits (minor infraction)
      - Class council discussion (if it involves the safety of the classroom)
      - Day of Reflection (major infraction)
      - Intervention Meeting with parents (major infraction)

Incidences Compromising Safety and a Productive Learning Environment

Parents are contacted when a child is acting in any of the following ways below, or for repeated minor infractions. Any incidence compromising safety or a productive learning environment is evaluated for a Reflection Day or suspension with a possible recommendation for expulsion. The governing board reviews all suspensions and handles the expulsion process. For more on this process, see our charter petition found on our website or front office.

Property damage	Use of profanity/vulgarity
Truancy	Sexual Harassment
Use of force	Use of intimidation
Theft	Disruption of class
Hazing	Possession of weapons
Rude Behavior	Possession of drugs

Recommended Reading:

- Positive Discipline in the Classroom
- The First Six Weeks of School
- Solving Thorny Behavior Problems

• **Reflection Day**

There may be incidents when your child is asked to take a Day of Reflection. Students may be sent home without the parent/guardian being able to speak with the teacher right away about the incident as s/he is teaching. Follow up on the situation will be addressed by the evening. We've found that the Day of Reflection can bring to light situations and feelings that have yet to be addressed at school. With your support we can meet the child's needs and maintain a healthy classroom community. See below as an example of the form:

Dear Parent,

Your child has been asked to take a (day/evening) of reflection. We believe that mistakes occur because of unmet needs and that through communication we can understand each other even through events that we don't like. The (day/evening) of reflection is put in place when the behavior has caused physical harm to others or when there is an ongoing disruptive behavior that has been addressed with your child and yet the behavior continues to affect others negatively. A time of reflection is put in place when the event warrants more time, attention, and/or energy than we have to give in a normal school day.

Today your child is being asked to reflect because of (a):

- Physical harm to (or threat to harm) another person
- Disruption that has been ongoing throughout the day
- Inappropriate gesture/words
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

In summary:

---

---

---

Please speak with (name of teacher/administrator) \_\_\_\_\_ for more information on the situation. They can best be reached at (phone number) \_\_\_\_\_ at or after (time) \_\_\_\_\_.

Before your child returns to (school/extended care) we ask for a reflection to be written (by either child, or parent and child together) stating the following:

1. What is working for the child at (school/extended care)?
2. What is not working for the child at (school/extended care)?
3. What didn't work about the situation stated above?
4. What ideas for a make up (an apology in action) would work for the child (please list at least 2 - 3)? In other words, how can the child show that s/he is sorry.
5. In addition, for an ongoing, unchanging behavior, specifically address what the child feels it is going to take to stop this behavior.

Please bring this with you to (school/extended care) the next day at least 30 minutes before the start of (class/extended care) and go over it with your child's teacher (or administrator if needed) before resuming regular activities. Thank you for taking the time to reflect with your child. We want reflecting to be a time to share and explore how we can make amends in a way that honors all parties involved.

## • Parent Responsibility & Pledge

Responsibility for our children's education must begin at home - President Obama

As a parent of a student attending Innovations Academy, I support the school's Mission Statement. I choose to be an active participant of Innovations' academic community. I do my best to support the school's learning philosophies, values and goals. As part of this, I actively pursue an understanding of the school's curriculum, and support, to the best of my ability, its implementation at home.

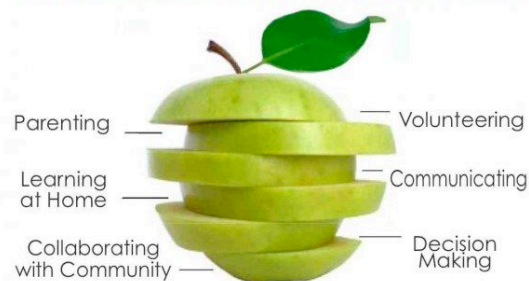
I also understand that as a member of Innovations academic community I have a vital role that I can play by showing support and participating in school activities when I have the time and space to contribute.

Some great ways to participate are:

- Chaperone a field trip.
- Read to your children or do an outside activity.
- Foster friendships between IA students by having play dates.
- Contribute to a fundraising event (bake sales, Know Your Valley, IA Education Conservators, etc.).
- Attend Family Nights (every 6 weeks to showcase student work and foster connection between families).
- Be a Reading Buddy in a classroom.
- Participate in our C.A.M.P.S program by teaching a class or running a club.
- Interview students during Biz Town.
- Come to Coffee Connection to talk about how life is going for you at and outside of IA.

If you'd like to help with any classroom or school wide events please speak with your teacher or Michelle Anderson. They can help you to get started.

### The Six Slices of Parental Involvement



1

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.projectappleseed.org/npid.html>

- **Keeping Connected with IA**

We often hear from parents about the need to be connected and how challenging that is. The first step is by knowing what is going on in the classroom and at school. Another component is communication between home and school. This letter will explain some good ways to get the information and communication you want with I.A.

- **Monthly Newsletter:** The I.A. newsletter is handed out at Family Night (every 6 weeks) and is available at the front office. We are working on having it published online.
- **Innovations Academy has its own website:** [www.innovationsacademy.org](http://www.innovationsacademy.org)  
On this website you will find updates, information about our philosophy, info on our ride-share program, links to our teacher blogs, etc.
- **Teacher Blogs:** All Innovations teachers have their own blog which is updated weekly. Each blog is a little different but all contain essential information about upcoming fieldtrips, areas of study, projects and other useful information.
- **Teacher/Staff Emails:** All I.A. Staff have an email address. We have a commitment to respond to emails by the next business day. Email us any time.
- **Sunday Blast:** At 7:00 p.m. on Sundays we have a phone call and email that go out to all of our parents with activity updates and information for the upcoming week.
- **Family Nights:** During the 2010-11 school year we will have Family Nights approximately once every six weeks. Family nights are times to come experience the community of I.A., visit classrooms, and chat with other families and staff.
- **Home Folders:** Some of our teachers have folders/envelopes that are sent home once a week with classroom communication and completed work. Check with your child's teacher.
- **Come In!** We are here every school day (and hopefully we'll see you at pick up or at Coffee Connection on Wednesday mornings). Please come in and say hi and let us know if you have any questions. If we can't address them on the spot then we can schedule time with you.
- **Coffee Connection:** Every Wednesday at 9am - 10am, current and new IA parents have the opportunity to meet with the Director and get questions answered. It's also a great place to connect with other IA families and have fun.

Please let us know if you have any ideas that can improve our methods of communication. Thank you.

## • **Adult Communication Policy**

What to do when something is working or not working for you at IA. (*We don't think "complaint policy" is an effective term so at IA we have renamed it*)

"What is the shortest word in the English language that contains the letters: abcdef?  
Answer: feedback. Don't forget that feedback is one of the essential elements of good communication." - Author Unknown

Feedback is an essential part of communication which is very valuable to us as a community. If there is something you like, let us know (we can publish it in our gratitude book)! If there is something you do not understand, are confused by, or do not like, also let us know. Going directly to the source generally gives clarity and understanding.

There are many ways to give feedback: talk in person, write an email, send a note, or make a phone call. Maybe you can think of something more creative like writing a song or drawing a picture. Feedback is all about being expressive and getting heard. Though giving feedback sounds good on paper it can truly be the most difficult thing you will do. When you need to give feedback about a need you have that is NOT being met you will be challenged. Understand that we would rather have the information so that we can improve than to have rumors and negative information being spread through the school or community grapevine.

If you have a concern that has not been addressed, after initial feedback, here are the appropriate steps to take:

1. Start at the source! (For example, you may be confused by something in the classroom, so start with your teacher. Your teacher probably has a clear explanation for how and why they are doing something. You can start with, "I'm confused; I'm hurt; I'm happy; or I'm excited; when I see \_\_\_\_\_.")
2. If you have a concern about the educational program or your teacher please speak with Christine.
3. If you have a concern around student friendships we recommend that you speak with the other parent directly, if you need more support please speak with Christine.
4. If you have communicated thoroughly and do not feel that the concern has been fully addressed, please get in touch with our board in one of the following ways.
  - a. Write a letter addressed to our board and send it to the school address.
  - b. Email our board at Board@InnovationsAcademy.org
  - c. Attend a board meeting and present during community comments.
5. Only if you have a major health or safety concern that you feel has not been met after speaking with our Board, contact the district charter office.

Remember Key to Achieve #6 - Spread Happiness  
If you have high praise of someone or something, sing it to all you see.  
Joy is contagious!

**Heart of the Matter Feedback Form**  
(in place of a typical Uniform Complaint Policy)

Name/Anonymous: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

If there is something that you'd like to give feedback on, we'd love to hear it. Below is a form that uses a communication tool, called Compassionate Communication, to get to the heart of the matter. Please take your time and turn it back in to the main office. Children and adults are encouraged to use this form.

When I (circle one) see/hear/experience/observe \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

I am feeling (check all that apply or add more):

- |                                       |                                     |                                       |                                      |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Excited      | <input type="checkbox"/> Angry      | <input type="checkbox"/> Grateful     | <input type="checkbox"/> Peaceful    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Curious      | <input type="checkbox"/> Happy      | <input type="checkbox"/> Afraid       | <input type="checkbox"/> Inspired    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sad          | <input type="checkbox"/> Scared     | <input type="checkbox"/> Nervous      | <input type="checkbox"/> Embarrassed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Upset        | <input type="checkbox"/> Overjoyed  | <input type="checkbox"/> Vulnerable   | <input type="checkbox"/> Longing     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Confused     | <input type="checkbox"/> Bewildered | <input type="checkbox"/> Disconnected | <input type="checkbox"/> Hopeful     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |                                     |                                       |                                      |

(Circle one) Because I am needing **OR** my needs have been met for:

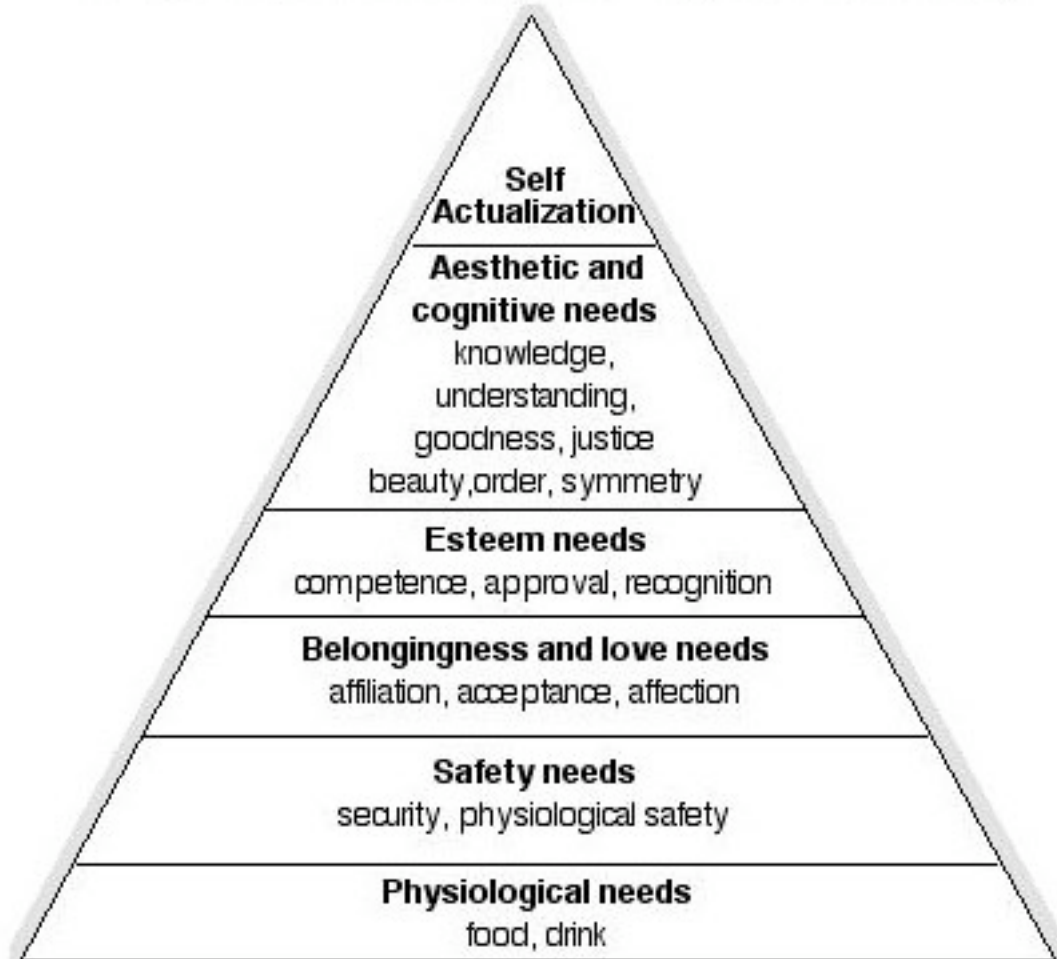
- |  |  |                                      |                                       |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Connection      | <input type="checkbox"/> Understanding | <input type="checkbox"/> Peace       | <input type="checkbox"/> Cooperation  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self expression | <input type="checkbox"/> Safety        | <input type="checkbox"/> Information | <input type="checkbox"/> Appreciation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Acceptance      | <input type="checkbox"/> Fun           | <input type="checkbox"/> Clarity     | <input type="checkbox"/> Authenticity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friendship      | <input type="checkbox"/> Relaxation    | <input type="checkbox"/> Comfort     | <input type="checkbox"/> Mourning     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Predictability  | <input type="checkbox"/> Consistency   | <input type="checkbox"/> Reassurance | <input type="checkbox"/> Choice       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trust           | <input type="checkbox"/> Order         | <input type="checkbox"/> Support     | <input type="checkbox"/> Belonging    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____    |  |                                      |                                       |

I would like (check all that apply):

- To talk to a particular staff member (name: \_\_\_\_\_)
- To call a conference for my family with staff of IA.
- To call a conference for my family with another family at IA.
- This form to be acknowledged by the staff.
- This form to be acknowledged by the Board.
- This topic to be addressed and discussed at the next Family Night.
- To thank the parties involved who are \_\_\_\_\_.
- To express my appreciation for \_\_\_\_\_.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_.



## Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



## Explanation of the Pyramid

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs shows a clear explanation of the needs of young children, in order to be comfortable in their environment, and even within themselves.

It begins at the bottom, with physical requirements. These requirements are rather simplistic, which allow the child to be comfortable, without being hungry, sleepy, thirsty, etc. It progresses to a feeling of safety. This in itself could fall under emotion, but the feeling arises from a safe physical situation.

The middle of the pyramid deals with the emotional fulfillment of a child. A child must feel loved, and feel like they can belong to a social group in order to feel comfortable within their surroundings. Linked to this is the need to achieve recognition within a group. It is one thing to join a group of other children, but the child must feel accepted and recognized to be truly welcome and comfortable.

Once children become accustomed to their surroundings and their acquaintances, they must accustom themselves to knowledge, by learning, knowing, and understanding. This is the aesthetic part of a child's needs.

The last part of a child's needs is self-fulfilling, by realizing who exactly they are. Children achieve this by knowing about themselves, and learning about who they are, which is achieved in the aesthetic portion of the needs pyramid.

## The Main Point of the Pyramid

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs shows exactly what a child of any age, whether it be toddler or teenager, needs. A strong foundation must be built in order for the other levels to build upon one another. Each foundation level must be strong to get to the next level, and so on. If one level is weak within a child, then the needs above that level will be very difficult to develop, because all of the needs interrelate.<sup>2</sup>

At Innovations Academy we work to accommodate every level of the pyramid possible. As a parent, your role here is invaluable. Providing a safe and nurturing environment for any human being is vital to their well-being. If you need assistance, we're here to help.

---

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/schools/senecavalleyhs/childdev/maslow.htm>

- **Resources for Parents**

Classes/Workshops/Presentations: The following resources are parenting/ discipline classes as well as Special Education workshops that we've found to be beneficial for all of our students:

**Learning Development Services** – Established in 1970 as an educational, psychological, and neuropsychological center for children, adolescents, families and adults. They offer a full range of diagnostic, educational, and clinical services. They offer many free lectures on Special Needs children, ADD, and other topics. <http://learningdevelopmentservices.com/>

**Positive Discipline Family Education Centers** - Positive Discipline is for parents and teachers who are looking for skills that do not include punishment or rewards to encourage their children to think for themselves, feel capable, become more responsible, and have a greater respect for themselves and others. Classes are held at Innovations Academy. <http://www.familyeducationcenters.com/index.html>

**Team of Advocates for Special Kids (TASK)** - TASK is a nonprofit charitable organization whose mission is to enable individuals with disabilities (and their families) to reach their maximum potential by providing training, support, resources & referrals, and more. For the current free workshop schedule go to: <http://www.taskca.org/workshops-schedules.html>

Assessments: Below is a list of information regarding outside assessments that we recommend for all students. The below assessments are **free** of charge.

**Center for Behavioral Teratology** - This SDSU Research Group gives a free cognitive screening to children ages 5 – 17 years of age. They can be reached at 6363 Alvarado Court, Suite 100/200, San Diego, CA 92120, or by phone at (619) 594-1228, or by email at [cbt@projects.sdsu.edu](mailto:cbt@projects.sdsu.edu).

**The Learning Convergence** - The Learning Convergence provides a free reading screening for children of all ages. They can be reached at 3505 Camino del Rio South, Ste. 138, San Diego, CA 92108. Or at their website <http://thelearningconvergence.com/> or by phone at 619-640-6835.

**Dana Dean Optometry** - Free developmental vision screening. They specialize in processing delays. They can be reached at 3990 Old Town Ave, Bld C107, San Diego, CA 92111. Or at their website [http://4eyesight.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=100&Itemid=109](http://4eyesight.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=100&Itemid=109) or by phone at 619-688-Eyes.

• **Community Directory**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>Email</b>
Christine Kuglen	Chief Education Officer	619-795-0584 619-379-9275*	<a href="mailto:Christine@InnovationsAcademy.org">Christine@InnovationsAcademy.org</a>
Michelle Anderson	Program & Volunteer Coordinator	619-795-1737	<a href="mailto:Michelle@InnovationsAcademy.org">Michelle@InnovationsAcademy.org</a>
Donna Napier/ Tina McGinnis	Administrative Coordinator/ Admin Support	619-501-6327	<a href="mailto:Donna@InnovationsAcademy.org">Donna@InnovationsAcademy.org</a>
Lindy Belk	Kindergarten Teacher	Leave a message with Donna	<a href="mailto:Lindy@InnovationsAcademy.org">Lindy@InnovationsAcademy.org</a>
Jennifer Kirkby-Tatro	Kindergarten Teacher	Leave a message with Donna	<a href="mailto:JenniferKT@InnovationsAcademy.org">JenniferKT@InnovationsAcademy.org</a>
DeeDee Remington	1st Grade Teacher	Leave a message with Donna	<a href="mailto:DeeDee@InnovationsAcademy.org">DeeDee@InnovationsAcademy.org</a>
Karrlie O'Connor	2nd Grade Teacher	Leave a message with Donna	<a href="mailto:Karrlie@InnovationsAcademy.org">Karrlie@InnovationsAcademy.org</a>
Patrick Garland	3rd Grade Teacher	Leave a message with Donna	<a href="mailto:Patrick@InnovationsAcademy.org">Patrick@InnovationsAcademy.org</a>
Kim Brunetto	4th Grade Teacher	Leave a message with Donna	<a href="mailto:Kim@InnovationsAcademy.org">Kim@InnovationsAcademy.org</a>
Bill Thomas	5th Grade Teacher	Leave a message with Donna	<a href="mailto:Bill@InnovationsAcademy.org">Bill@InnovationsAcademy.org</a>
Michael Grimes	6th Grade Humanities Teacher	Leave a message with Donna	<a href="mailto:Michael@InnovationsAcademy.org">Michael@InnovationsAcademy.org</a>
Stephanie Robinson	6th Grade Math and Science Teacher	Leave a message with Donna	<a href="mailto:Stephanie@InnovationsAcademy.org">Stephanie@InnovationsAcademy.org</a>
Tony Spitzberg	7th & 8th Grade Humanities Teacher	Leave a message with Donna	<a href="mailto:Tony@InnovationsAcademy.org">Tony@InnovationsAcademy.org</a>
Lisa Moncrief	7th & 8th Grade Math and Science Teacher	Leave a message with Donna	<a href="mailto:Lisa@InnovationsAcademy.org">Lisa@InnovationsAcademy.org</a>
Jill Keltner	Home Learning Community Teacher (K-2)	Leave a message with Donna	<a href="mailto:Jill@InnovationsAcademy.org">Jill@InnovationsAcademy.org</a>
Jennifer McMakin	Home Learning Community Teacher (2-6)/ Special Education Administrator	Leave a message with Donna	<a href="mailto:Jennifer@InnovationsAcademy.org">Jennifer@InnovationsAcademy.org</a>
Alex Antohin	Extended Care Manager	619-501-7125 619-546-8435	<a href="mailto:Alex@InnovationsAcademy.org">Alex@InnovationsAcademy.org</a>

\* Use for emergencies only. Call or text message.