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Film 'No Small Matter' addresses the importance of early childhood education

The Baker Early Learning Collaborative is sponsoring the viewing of a documentary film, “No Small Matter”, at Churchill School on November 7. Early childhood education is becoming a national focus. This documentary film brings attention to the subject through true stories and struggles. The viewing is free to the public; on-site childcare is available.

Baker Early Learning Collaborative is comprised of over 15 community partners involved in helping improve opportunities for families with young children. Susan Townsend, a member of the collaborative, brings personal experience to this issue. Her perspective on early learning stems from the time she spent as principal of an Early Childhood Education Center in Carlsbad, New Mexico.

“So many needed the same kind of support services,” she said.

An outdoor learning environment (called OLE) provided a space for students to ride tricycles and interact with nature.

“We hatched eggs and grew plants – all sorts of connections with nature,” she said.

The focus of early learning, she said, is to help young children develop concrete ideas, such as connecting the verbal word “flower” to an actual flower. This leads to understanding abstract concepts in language – when a child reads the word “flower” he can connect it with the real object.

“You need all those steps in the progression to build comprehension,” Townsend said.

The center also started a conversation about reaching children before kindergarten.

“It brought an awareness to the entire community about the importance of early learning,” she said.
About the film
No Small Matter looks at how our country is raising its youngest citizens, why making the most of this
time in their lives is so crucial, and what we can do to change the perception of when learning begins.
The film's website explains: “With every new study, the incredible development happening in a child’s
eyears becomes more and more apparent. For example, we now know that the number of words a
child hears before age three can vastly improve her school readiness; the first few years of life are a kind
of 'big bang' for learning — 86 billion neurons being connected by synapses at a rate of a million times
per second; and when a child lacks an engaging, loving environment, ‘toxic’ experiences actually have
the power to rewire her brain with consequences that can last a lifetime”

To learn more about the film, visit www.nosmallmatter.com

Parent advisory
The conversation about early learning will continue at a parent advisory meeting set for 6 p.m. Tuesday,
Nov. 12, at the Baker School District office, 2090 Fourth St.

About Baker School District 5J
Nationally recognized Baker School District 5J (BSD) is a major employer in Baker City, OR, serving 1,700 students locally with an additional 2500 online students across the state of Oregon. Through enterprising, collaborative endeavors, BSD is creating an engaging educational foundation for future Oregonians. BSD believes strong school collaboration with local partners enables us to create vibrant communities that support lifelong learners.