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# New school boosts young, struggling students



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Photo Courtesy Of Kim Acker

Sand Hill School Head of School Cindy Lopez, left, discusses school business with teachers Nick Ratcliff and Shayla Hulgan.

Dr. Lynne Huffman, developmental pediatrician, Stanford University researcher and director at Children's Health Council. "Once established, school-based problems can affect many aspects of psychological well-being. Early intervention increases the chances of good outcomes."

Sand Hill School is based on research that reports that children who receive early intervention for problems struggle far less in later years. These typically are children who struggle to sit in circle time and get labeled a troublemaker; who have trouble with "t" sounds one day but not the next; who assert themselves on the playground and in the classroom; and who begin to dislike school and want to stay home. Sand Hill is a place where they can feel understood, learn skills and begin to enjoy school and learning, according to school officials.

Led by teachers and a staff of child-development specialists, Sand Hill students learn skills not always taught in traditional classrooms, such as managing high energy, joining a group when it doesn't come naturally or learning how to read words, which they see differently from other students, said Kim Acker, communications manager for Children's Health Council.

Sand Hill is a transition school, designed to help children understand how to learn and develop a package of skills from emotional regulation to academic competence so that they can succeed in a more traditional learning environment, Acker said. Once students acquire the new skills and feel more confident, the staff will assist them to return to their former schools or find a different school that provides a better fit, she said.

Cindy Lopez, Sand Hill School's Head of School, said it is no accident the school is named after the street where out-of-the-box leaders of Silicon Valley have launched dreams into reality.

"Silicon Valley is full of quirky, brilliant minds who don't fit a conventional path," she said. "Where would we be without them?"

Sand Hill School is currently accepting applications. Classes are scheduled to begin Feb. 1.

The school is located at 650 Clark Way in Palo Alto.

For more information, visit [www.sandhillschool.org](http://www.sandhillschool.org).