



March 2013

Friday, March 15

Professional Day, No School

Thursday, March 21

Parent Discussion Group 1:15 pm

Wednesday, March 27

Berrybrook Board Meeting 7:30 pm

Friday, March 29

Good Friday, No School



Notes from the Head of School

On the last two days of February Claire Reilly came to Berrybrook to visit all of our classes and talked to the children about dental hygiene. Mrs. Reilly is a great fit for Berrybrook. She is warm, engaging and brings along a great variety of materials; from some actual tools dentists use, to puppets with extraordinarily large teeth that children take turns brushing with with really big toothbrushes! Her presentation meshes well with our Berrybrook philosophy - "discover, play, learn." This enrichment program, like all of the others at Berrybrook was organized and funded by our Berrybrook Parents Association. The BPA manages all of their activities by asking each family for a minimal annual dues and by charging a small admission fee to our fun filled Harvest Festival. Every penny the BPA raises goes directly to enrichment programs and other activities that benefit every single member of our community. Coming up in March, all children will have another *Grow Fit Kids* fitness class, a wonderful Irish Step presentation around St Patrick's Day, and a third visit from Annawon Weedon, our Wampanoag friend. All enrichment activities are chosen with care to ensure they are developmentally appropriate and a good fit with our curriculum goals.

Parent involvement is crucial to the success we enjoy at Berrybrook. We are so thankful for all of the parents who volunteer in classrooms, participate in birthday celebrations, collect recyclables, cook, sew and donate items for projects. Allyson Frazier, Sherry Monroe, Karoline Martin, Donna Hillary, Jill Cooney, Erin Martin Candice Smith-Corby and Jennifer Lightfoot deserve special thanks for volunteering to organize BPA activities. Thank you to all of our classroom parents who arranged back-to-school playdates and helped out with classroom communication this year, and thank you to all of the families who have contributed dues to support the BPA enrichment programs. I recommend all parents get involved with the BPA. In addition to being a lot of fun, it is exciting, satisfying and rewarding work. It is a tremendous opportunity to enhance the quality of the Berrybrook experience for all families and for yourself.

~ Pat Keeley

First Year Program News

February was a month that seemed to fly by in the blink of an eye! At Berrybrook, the first year classes were able to enjoy many activities between the snowflakes! We celebrated Valentine's Day, worked in the Berrybrook post office and visited the US Post Office in Duxbury!

As we head into March, first year students will be involved in many different topics including transportation, Dr. Seuss, and the coming of spring. March gives us the opportunity to explore the color green. For St. Patrick's Day. Classes will be making a special snack and creating projects to celebrate the special day. We also will be on the look out for a change of the weather-warmer days accompanied by cold nights will signal the start of maple sugaring season – an other tradition at Berrybrook. We will tap our own tree and see the sap drip into the bucket. The sap will then be boiled into syrup, and enjoyed as part of a special treat!

Math, Science, Literacy, Social Studies and Health are all part of the interconnected curriculum at Berrybrook. Classrooms and activities are arranged to include all of these important areas, but also included are interactions to help children develop social skills. Our classrooms and curriculum promote a sense of empathy and community, and conflicts between children are seen as opportunities for helping children become sensitive human beings. We help children develop empathy by being active listeners. We model good listening and encourage children to listen to each other. We suggest that they look directly at each other when they have something to say. When children know

they will be listened to, they are more apt to listen to someone else.

Children are able to recite many ways to be kind and good to friends. Intellectually, they know the right choices, but developmentally, they are just beginning to put them into practice. It is our pleasure to provide them with opportunities to practice these important social skills. It is so important for teachers and parents to remember that children are learning from us in our daily interactions – in the ways we treat and speak to them and others. The manner in which we handle difficult situations or problems will determine how they will respond to a similar situation in their future.

At Berrybrook, we believe that children learn everywhere and at all times. Teachers see even the tiniest incident as an opportunity to help a child learn something about the world or themselves.

Watch for parent-teacher conference sign ups in your child's classroom during the month of March. We look forward to talking with you about the growth in your child.

Mrs. Barlow, Mrs. Capasso,
Mrs. Delano, Mrs. Dunn,
Mrs. La Forest, Mrs. Piccuito



Reminder!

Friday, March 15th is a professional day. Berrybrook teachers will be attending a BAEYC conference at Bridgewater State University. Thank you!

Second Year Program News

February with all its weather and power related challenges is in the past! Last month, we were very busy with our Valentine projects and celebrations, and other February activities included lessons about nutrition and health. The hospital set up in our dramatic play area was very well received by our students who spent lots of time taking good care of babies, animals and each other.

March has us looking forward to spring, and many of our favorite Berrybrook traditions. For St. Patrick's Day we will be preparing our Berrybrook Irish Soda bread, as we learn about Ireland. The children will listen to Irish music and try to dance the Irish Jig. Another of our traditions is the painting of blown eggs. We ask parents to supply the eggs, and we appreciate the time and patience required to prepare the eggs for the children to paint. The end result is fabulous. Spring is on its way and we will be learning new spring time songs, and observing nature for its first signs of spring.

Spring Is Coming
Spring is coming
Spring is coming
How do you think I know
I saw a pussywillow
and that is how I know!

When the conditions are just right, (warm days, cold nights) we will be tapping the maple trees. The children with their classes gather outside to watch the sap drip from the Norway Maple trees into special buckets. Once the buckets are full, the sap is boiled into syrup. We will then read *Sugar on Snow* by Nancy Dingman Watson and have our sugar on snow party. (The "sugar" is maple syrup and the "snow" is vanilla ice cream.)

Also this month we will be studying planets, space, and phases of the moon. We have interesting projects the children will be busy working on during this time. Note: Watch for the full moon on March 27.

The children are now beginning to have that more mature, "kindergarten look" to them and they delight in exploring in all areas of the curriculum and classroom. Learning is fostered through ideas in math, science, social studies, art and music on a daily basis. Social interactions among peers are enjoyable and satisfying. The children have built their skills of expressing their feelings and being good listeners!

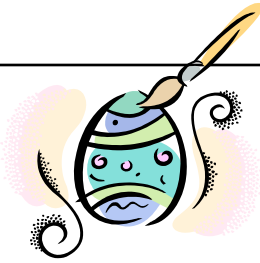
Time for us to leave winter behind and welcome spring with all its wonder.

Mrs. Caddle, Mrs. Fosdick, Mrs. Neal,
Mrs. O'Neil, Mrs. Piccuito, Mrs. Rosen,
Mrs. Swan and Mrs. Worley



Summer Enrichment
The Berrybrook Summer Nature Program will be offered again this year during June and July, on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 9:00 – 1:00. Children must be 4 by September 1st to register. All families will receive complete information about the program and registration the week of March 18, 2013

A Spring Tradition



Painting “blown eggs” is a spring tradition at Berrybrook. Children have been creating these beautiful works of art for many years. It is a precious project that requires help from families.

All classrooms need “blown eggs.” If you could donate a few eggs (brown or white) that you have “blown” at home we would appreciate it very much. Simply poke a hole in both ends of the egg. A turkey skewer or push pin work well. Each hole should be about the size of a paper punch hole. If you break the yoke it is easier to blow. Blow into one hole and the egg comes out the other. Please rinse egg shell inside and out. Berrybrook teachers will spray the eggs with a bleach solution before children paint them. Experienced Berrybrook parents will tell new parents that the end result is worth the effort.

The blown eggs can be sent in whenever they are ready, but we really need them by Friday, March 14.

Thank you!
Berrybrook Teachers

Parent Discussion Group

On the eve of the 2013 blizzard, a small group gathered at Berrybrook to explore early childhood friendships. This intimate group shared and expanded our knowledge of how preschoolers perceive “friendship”. Preschoolers understand friendship as the child who is beside them now. For example, John is my friend. He sat next to me at circle

time. Sally is my friend because she painted at the easel with me. They may even make statements such as I’m not Karen’s friend because she played with Alicia.” On the surface, this may seem unkind, but in reality, we understand that Karen and Alicia were physically together and not next to the child who made this statement. As preschoolers gain more experience in the social world, they begin to understand and sort out the qualities about children, which they find appealing. During the prekindergarten year, children begin to understand that I wish to be Darren’s friend because we both like to play with Legos. Karen likes to swing and so do I. Children begin to seek out friends who exhibit the qualities they like.

As parents and teachers, we help children navigate through the friendship process. As adults, we can support children’s choices by engaging children in play dates. It is important to respect *their* choice of who they want to invite for a playdate. Supervision during play sessions is important, and keeping initial play dates short is often more beneficial. It is valuable to end on a positive note rather than having a longer play date that might end with frustration!

Please feel free to pick up some handouts in the school foyer, which we have found helpful in navigating the friendship process. Our next Parent Discussion Group will be **Thursday afternoon March 21, 2013 at 1:15.**

Please join our conversation:
“Transitioning to the next level of schooling - Preschool to Pre-K and Pre-K to Kindergarten”

Mrs. Delano, Mrs Dunn and
Mrs. LaForest

Berrybrook Parents Association

Happy Spring! OK maybe a little wishful thinking but with any luck it will be by the time my next update reaches you. Well, March is shaping up to be a busy month for BPA programming. We hope the children enjoy it!

Enrichment Update

March will bring three exciting events to the children sponsored by the BPA. Fit Kidz continues this month with Coaches Andy and Carrie bringing age appropriate fitness programming to all of the children on March 6 and 7th. To help celebrate St. Patrick's Day, the Haley School of Irish Dance will be sending dancers to demonstrate their skills on March 13th and 14th. A special thanks to Mrs. Stravin for organizing the dance visit this year! And Annawon Weedon of the Wampanoag tribe will be making his 3rd visit of the year on March 20-21st. Please be sure to ask your child to share their thoughts about these special visits.

Family, Fun Friday!

Join us for March's Family, Fun Friday on March 22nd at 1 p.m. to learn about the fascinating life of bees. We will be joined by a local honey bee expert who will discuss with the children the life and times of bees—honey sample included! You may remember a similar children's program that was held at the library with great success. Thanks to Mrs. Lightfoot for organizing this month's family, fun Friday! Seating will be limited so please sign up at the BPA table!

Also hold the date for our final Family, Fun Friday of the year on April 26th as we take a field trip to Soule Homestead. Soule Homestead is a hands-on learning farm where the children will get

to know the farm animals, and learn how they help farmers work, provide food, create fibers, and more. This will be a nice continued learning opportunity as Soule will be visiting the children in class in April.

Spring Fling!

Each year the BPA sponsors a casual end of year celebration for all of our families. Please save-the-date for this special event on May 15th from 4-6 p.m. with a rain-date of May 22nd. Family, food and fun on the playground!

Next Year Planning

We are already starting our planning for next year. I encourage each of you to think about volunteering with the BPA as a great way to get more involved in the Berrybrook community. If interested or curious please reach out and attend our April meeting.

BPA Dues

So BPA has been pretty busy this year with lots of programming and activities. As of last week we only had 40% of families who had supported us with dues. If it's possible for your family to support our work in any amount it would be very much appreciated. We suggest \$30 per family but all amounts are welcome. If you are like me and can't remember whether you already contributed or not Mrs. Watts can let you know.

Hope to see you around school soon! Please reach out if you have any questions, comments or concerns to berrybrookparentsassociation@gmail.com or 617-458-1621.

Allyson

Berrybrook Book Review

Kris Delano

Children Learn What They Live, Parenting to Inspire Values by Dorothy Law Nolte

The title of this book says it all. Children truly do learn by the words, actions and intentions of those around them. Mainly this is their parents, family and society. The book was an easy, comfortable, reflective and informative read. Each chapter has words of advice. However, if you are unable to read the entire book, simply choose the chapter that appeals to you.

Some words of advice I noted are...

- “If our kids grow up knowing that we will listen to them...they will be more willing to talk to us... page 8
- “Fear undermines the supportive environment a child needs...” page 26
- “Children learn to tap their inner strengths for the challenges they encounter” page 37
- “Steer them (children) away from self-pity and toward self determination.” page 47
- “Developing a strong internal moral compass is a life-long process...” page 69
- “Knowing when to step in and when to step aside...” page 83
- “The amount of patience needed to be a good parent is phenomenal.” page 104
- “...accepting our children unconditionally does not mean tolerating inappropriate or irresponsible behaviors...” page 121
- “Sharing needs to make sense to a child and to not feel like a loss.” page 152

As stated in the foreword, there is a bonus in this book ...along with learning how to be a more effective parent you will also learn how to be a better spouse, teacher or manager.

Enjoy the book!