



March 2014

Friday, March 14

Professional Day, No School

Friday, March 14

Enrollment Contracts Due

Wednesday, March 26

Berrybrook Board Meeting 7:30 pm

What do we do in March?
We skip in the new spring sun,
We chase the hats that breezes snatch,
We jump and hop and run!



Notes from the Head of School

This time of year, the children are feeling very comfortable with each other. They have been spending time together for six months now, and have formed many close friendships. These first friendships are very important to children and they provide opportunities for many happy days. However, as children grow closer, these same friendships provide the opportunity for hurt feelings. After all, a mere acquaintance can snub you and you hardly notice - only close friends possess the power to really hurt your feelings. To a child, having a friend sit next to someone else at circle time can be devastating. At Berrybrook, we spend a good deal of our time helping children manage these delicate relationships. Encouraging children to develop empathy for others is one of the most challenging jobs of the preschool teacher. Four and five year olds are just starting to learn that their actions may have an impact on someone else.

One of the ways we help children develop empathy is by being active listeners. We model good listening and encourage them to listen to each other. We suggest that they look directly at each other when they have something to say. We encourage responses that include how they feel about things. When children know they will be listened to, they are more likely to listen to someone else.

If you ask them, children know 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 job to provide them with opportunities to demonstrate how kind they are. Berrybrook teachers design their classrooms and curriculum to promote a sense of empathy and community, and conflicts between children are seen as opportunities for helping children become sensitive human beings.

Teachers respond to hurt feelings with compassion. They listen. They ask for details and, if necessary, they help children express themselves to their friends.

I thought it was important for me to let parents know how we deal with hurt feelings and how much time we spend doing it. It is a big part of our day, especially at this time of year when true friendships begin to bloom. I have said before that Berrybrook is a wonderful school with beautiful surroundings and wonderful traditions. Our tradition of creating an empathetic, respectful environment for children is our most important.

Pat Keeley

Beginners News

Welcome back from a fun and relaxing February Break!! As winter continues we are enjoying the snow as much as possible, but ready for spring and more outside play.

Since the new year began we have had fun with so many new things. Our housekeeping area has been a hospital, veterinarian office, and finally a post office. We were able to learn about mail and how a letter travels from one person to another. Each child created a special water color heart to hang on our tree, and they will be able to take it home.

Our class celebrated a Valentine's Day Gathering, with a special snack and passing out valentine cards to classmates. Children also made a valentine to bring home to their families and received a special valentine from teachers.

As spring comes we will be learning new and exciting things to spark each child's interest. Spring is about new beginnings, and with it we hope to encourage new opportunities for education and exploration. It is amazing to think how quickly our school year has passed, and it has been so much fun to see the Beginners grow and blossom.

Thank you to all of the parents who have spent time helping out in the classroom. The children have enjoyed interacting with new adults. We appreciate the help from parent volunteers, and look forward to additional moms and dads visiting the class!

Sincerely,
Miss McNulty,
Mrs. Delano
and Mrs. LaForest



First Year Program News

Reds, pinks, and WHITE, a lot of white, in the form of snow, filled the Berrybrook classrooms during the month of February. The children created many different types of hearts. One type was a watercolor heart for our Berrybrook tree. Another, were our very special valentines for our families! The children carefully created these valentines, put them in a pre-addressed envelope, and sealed it. Each child counted his/her own money to buy a stamp. At the post office they were able to complete the process by buying their stamp, placing it on their envelope, and mailing it! We hope you all enjoyed receiving this very special valentine in the mail. Although February was very cold and snowy, we enjoyed our time indoors

with fun games and some special visitors, such as Miss Kim, our yoga instructor, and a dental hygienist.

The month of March brings the hope of spring. Although we hope to be playing outdoors more often, please remember it will still be cold and sometimes muddy. Some of the classes will begin March by celebrating Dr. Seuss' birthday. As the month continues we will begin to think about spring and the weather. Spring often brings wind and rain. Birds begin to return to our area. Other themes we will explore include transportation and dinosaurs.

Of course, we will celebrate St. Patrick's Day. Children will enjoy our traditional Berrybrook Irish Bread and maybe even try an Irish jig! The Berrybrook grocery store will also come alive this month. Children will learn about healthy versus non-healthy foods. Grocery shopping at Berrybrook is always a favorite activity!

March is also the month we hold our final parent-teacher conferences. This is a wonderful opportunity to discuss your child's growth over this past school year. Please watch for your child's class to post a conference sign-up sheet soon.

Today you are you,
This is truer than true,
There is no one alive,
That is youer than you
-Dr. Seuss

We wish you all a happy and warm spring!

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

Reminder!

Friday, March 14 is a professional day.

Berrybrook teachers will be attending a BAEYC conference at Bridgewater State University.

Thank you!

Second Year Program News

Last month we had a busy time with activities concerning nutrition and health. Our dramatic play area was set up as Berrybrook Hospital. Children enjoyed taking great care of each other as well as the babies. Also in February, the children were busy decorating their special Valentine mail boxes and delivering valentine cards to friends within the class. We finished off the month with a visit from dental hygienist Claire Reilly, who demonstrated to us how to maintain good dental health.

In March we look forward to our annual traditional tree tapping of the maple trees. To begin this process we need ideal weather conditions with warm days and cold evenings. The maple sap will drip into special buckets on our Norway Maple tree for several days. We then will boil the sap which turns into maple syrup, and enjoy our Sugar on Snow Party.

March is the time we learn about planets, space, and phases of the moon. The full moon this month will be on March 16.

Another Berrybrook tradition is making Irish Soda Bread for our St. Patrick's Day celebration. We will learn about Ireland and be introduced to Irish music and dance.

March 20 is the first day of spring. We look forward to warmer spring-like weather after many cold and snowy days of winter. We will be learning new spring time songs, and observing nature for its first signs of spring.

Spring is coming
Spring is coming
How do you think I know
I saw a pussywillow
And that is how I know!

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!

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



Berrybrook
discover | play | learn

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.

Family Matters

The new **Family Matters** link on our school website is available for all parenting questions and comments. Teachers are happy to do research and gather resources for families looking for information about early childhood situations. It is also a great place for parents to post any parenting books, techniques, or strategies that they have used successfully. We all learn from each other! Please contact us. All information and comments are responded to in a totally anonymous format. Below are some recent questions:

Dear Family Matters,

Hello, Our daughter is typically delighted to go to school each day, always speaking well of her friends and teachers. Lately, she says “I don’t want to go to school today. I don’t like it anymore.” Please help, we are worried about her.

Response: We understand and sympathize with the concern you have about your daughter’s sudden change in how she views school. Thanks so much for your question, as others reading this will surely benefit. Please know that it is completely normal and expected that some days children may say they don’t want to go to school and not be able to completely understand or verbalize a reason why. Just as it is impossible for adults to be happy all the time, every single day, the same holds true for children. Children are just beginning to understand emotions, therefore their own emotions will be verbalized in ways such as “I don’t want to go to school”, “He’s not coming to my birthday party”, “Nobody wants to play with me”, and so on. It can be similar to deciphering a code.

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For example,

“He’s not coming to my birthday party” *may mean...* My friend sat next to someone else at snack time today.

“Nobody wants to play with me” *may mean...* Friends are starting to branch out and I don’t know how to join others in play.

“I don’t want to go to school” *may mean...* My friend was absent yesterday and I’m worried my friend won’t be there today.

It is always important to mention your child’s concerns to their teachers so they can help, too. Information you give teachers can help them to be better detectives as they observe and talk with your child throughout the day at school. Also, as worrisome as it may be when your child has feelings of not wanting to go to school, you are their ultimate role model. Validate them so they know their feelings are recognized and their words are heard but remind them that you, along with their teachers, can always help solve any problem together with them. Children need to know that they have power over their problems, feelings and emotions. As they grow, they will be practicing how to have control over their worries or fears and not be overwhelmed by them. When they are an active part in the solution to a problem or concern, they will then feel empowered.

Good Luck!

Dear Family Matters, I appreciate this opportunity to touch base with Berrybrook on a situation that has developed at our house. We have a 4 and a 6 year old, and a 6 month old. During dinner the 4 year old tries/succeeds to dominate the entire dinner time conversation. We have tried reminding her to wait her turn, allowing her to talk first, etc. No luck! Any ideas?

Response: All children need to be heard, some more than others! Find time to talk, or should we say listen, to the 4 year old at another time in your day. Give her your full attention even if for a short time, and if possible, jot down her thoughts... validating is so important to us all! At the dinner table, its important to model respect for the thoughts of others, “Your words and ideas are very important and I want to hear them. Now, let’s hear what dad has to say about that subject.” While listening to others your 4 year old could finish her ziti - something to keep her mouth busy. Eating dinner together as a family has many proven benefits, including better grades and social skills. In time, your talker will mature when it comes to dinner conversation!

Welcome!
Congratulations to the Swain Family in the 4 Day-Room 2 Class. They have welcomed a new baby sister, Molly.

Congratulations to the Frazier Family *also* in the 4 Day-Room 2 Class on the arrival of their baby sister, Quinn!

Save the Date!
School Pictures
will be taken in April.
The 3 Day and 4 Day Classes on
Wednesday, April 16 and the
2 Day, 5 Day and Beginners on
Thursday, April 17.

Berrybrook Parents Association

Happy March! Hopefully, by the end of the month we will be saying good-bye to this frigid winter and enjoying the beauties of spring. March is a very busy month for BPA programming. We hope the children enjoy it!

Enrichment Update

March will bring two events to the children sponsored by the BPA. Yoga will continue on March 5th and 6th with Kim Spires. To help celebrate St. Patrick's Day, the Haley School of Irish Dance will be sending dancers to demonstrate their skills on March 12th and 13th. Be sure to ask your children to share their thoughts about these fun visits!!!

Family Fun Friday

Join us for March's Family Fun Friday. We hope you are all able join us sing along with Mama Steph, who scheduled for March 21st at 1:00 (\$5 per family-thank you). Please be sure to look for the sign up sheet located at the BPA table.

Also hold the date for the last two Family Fun Fridays. The first one being April 11, since it has been such a rough winter and there has not been a lot of opportunity to enjoy the playground, we thought it would be fun to have an afternoon of peanut - free lunch, swinging, and running around. Keep your fingers crossed that Mother Nature cooperates! The last Family Fun Friday will be help on May 9th at Dalby Farm in Scituate. This is still in the process of being finalized, more info to follow!

Spring Fling

Each year the BPA sponsors a casual end of year celebration for all the families. Please save-the-date for this special event on May 14th from 4-6 p.m. with a rain-date of May 21st.

BPA Dues

The BPA has been very busy this year with lots of programming and activities. As of last week we only had 42% of families who have supported us with dues. If it is at all possible for your family to support our work it would be very much appreciated. We suggest \$30 per family, but all amounts are welcome!

Here's to spring!! Please don't hesitate to reach out to us if you have any questions, comments, or concerns!

berrybrookparentsassociation@gmail.com

Thank you-Donna and Karoline

All-Sports Tag Sale to benefit Crossroads For Kids

Please consider donating to the All-Sports Tag Sale which is for ANY and ALL types of sports equipment and gently-used sports clothing. Lots of people donate a bike and then buy a new one or buy skates for next year. This year's sale is on Saturday, March 22nd at the Duxbury Senior Center with all proceeds going to Crossroads for Kids, a camp for at-risk youth located in West Duxbury.

Please start checking your closets now for used equipment that you would like to donate and call Selden Tearse at 781-864-9599 with any questions. Drop-off is at the Senior Center parking lot on Thursday, March 20th from 9 am – noon & Friday, March 21st from 9 am – noon and 6 – 7 pm. Then join us on Saturday, March 22nd, from 8 -11 am at the Duxbury Senior Center to get some great equipment at fantastic prices and help send a deserving kid to camp.

Berrybrook Book Review

Joanne LaForest

The Parent Backpack for Kindergarten Through Grade 5- How to Support Your Child's Education, End Homework Meltdowns, and Build Parent-Teacher Connections; ML Nichols 2013

At Berrybrook, children in the 4 and 5 Day Classes will soon begin talking about visiting kindergarten. Although they won't be bringing their backpacks to kindergarten as of yet, ML Nichols writes about everything *parents* will need in their "backpacks" upon starting their voyage to elementary school. A voyage of sorts it is, where she says, "our role as parents - to guide, support and nurture...values and skills as we walk along the bank of our children's river of learning – is critical." (p.18).

Nichols has provided a heartfelt abundance of helpful information which she acquired from her thorough interviews with teachers and parents, in addition to her very active involvement in her children's education. By participating in everything from the PTA to volunteering on many levels, she found to be true what she suggests to all parents: being actively involved in your child's education makes your bond with them tremendously strong. She also cofounded **The Parent Connection**, a non-profit organization here on the South Shore that educates parents.

Her book outlines beautifully all the areas that affect a successful elementary school experience. From understanding the importance of social-emotional development, identifying our role as parents to be sure children can *apply* what they learn in school, how to effectively communicate with teachers, to handling homework, organization and the overall well-being of our children, including nutrition – Nichols has given a "backpack" that parents who have already gone through the elementary years with their children only *wish* they had owned (like me!).

There was great validation as a Berrybrook teacher with which I walked away from this book, as it applies to the here and now of how we prepare families for what awaits them beyond Berrybrook: the skills necessary for children to be successful. Nichols writes, "The Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21), a think tank focused on the future of education, has...identified four core skills that students need to succeed in this millennium...

- Creativity and Innovation (The ability to think outside the lines)
- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving (Turning our kids into thinkers)
- Collaboration (Working with others effectively)
- Communication (Writing, listening and speaking well)

...and are the goals of readiness for college, career, and citizenship...that begin in kindergarten..." (p.208)

I believe the above goals begin in preschool, for these are the same goals reflected in the vision that Mrs. Mann held for Berrybrook almost 60 years ago. ML Nichols captures the essence of supporting your child's education throughout this book...in a very "Berrybrook" way. Not surprising; the Nichols family attended Berrybrook years ago!



Dear Mrs. Keeley &
Berrybrook Families,

Hello! My mom told me that you have been eagerly waiting for news about the Jumpstart book drive. Berrybrook families and teachers have donated so many books over the past three years, thank you so much for your help!

Jumpstart is a leading nonprofit organization dedicated to ensuring that every child in America enters school prepared to succeed. Corps Members work with low-income preschoolers twice a week for two hours at Head Start schools in Taunton and Brockton. Jumpstart at Bridgewater State University is again holding the now annual book drive this year. The classroom libraries at the Head Start schools are often sparse because books are expensive, lost, or read so often that they fall apart. At home most of the low-income preschoolers unfortunately only have a few, if any, books. Jumpstart at Bridgewater State serves about 240 preschool children in the Brockton and Taunton areas. It is our hope that with this book drive we will be able to donate a few books to each of the classrooms and send each Jumpstart child home with several books as well.

I volunteered with Jumpstart for the past four years and absolutely loved every minute of it! I can tell you from witnessing it firsthand that these books will be loved and cherished by the extremely excited children who receive them.

Unfortunately, I could not volunteer with Jumpstart this year because I am completing my student teaching in order to graduate in May. I started the book drive three years ago and I am ecstatic that the now annual book drive will continue even though I am not a current Jumpstart volunteer! Berrybrook has graciously participated in the book drive for the past three years and I would love for that tradition to continue as it not only helps less privileged preschoolers but is also a great learning experience for the wonderful Berrybrook kids.

We are looking to collect gently used preschool aged books for the Jumpstart Head Start classrooms and the Jumpstart children. There is of course no obligation to donate books or go out and buy new books.

Thank you in advanced for your help!

To learn more about Jumpstart please visit the website at www.jstart.org

Thank you! Kate Capasso
(Mrs. Capasso's daughter)