

October 2018

October 8	Columbus Day - no school
October 19	Professional Development Day - no school
October 20	BPA Harvest Festival 11 - 2
October 24	Berrybrook Board Meeting 7pm



Notes from the Head of School

Over the summer I received a 'welcome' email from the principal at my middle child's school. Besides the usual reminders about uniform ordering and teacher assignments, he stressed that he was encouraging the students this year to FAIL. <Cue the record screeching!> while my brain said, "Um, say that again?" Then I read a little more slowly and with my attention solely to the email and not everything else going on around me and realized that he wanted students and parents alike to know that a little bit of failure is good, as you see FAIL means:



First Attempt In Learning. Well, now you're speaking my language (he's Irish, by the way, with an amazing brogue). We're on the same page because guess what? FAIL is Berrybrook. At Berrybrook, children are encourage to try and try again. At the Parent Back to School night in early September, the principal once again told parents he is encouraging parents to support the concept of FAIL. He stressed how important it is that parents allow a certain amount of failure with the students and how we, as parents and educators, need to help our children look at failure as something that is okay and is something we can embrace and learn from. We all experience failure at some point and it is crucial to our development as to how we approach the failures in life. As he pointed out, there are many challenges children face every single day, and the fear of failure

should not be one of those challenges. Many children these days are not able to deal with the possibility of failure, and are meant to feel as though perfection must be achieved at all times and by any means. However this is at the expense of our children, who feel the stresses of such perfection. The principal pointed out that children are not born this way - think of how babies/toddlers do not show failure as they learn how to walk. How many times do they fall? They get up and try again. And again. And again. Children develop a fear of failure when they worry about disappointing the adults in their lives, and as mentioned it is costing our children. The rates of anxiety and depression in teenagers are skyrocketing. We owe it to our children to know and understand that it is okay to fail and that we will be here to help them learn from their mistakes in a safe, loving, caring, and trusting environment. A child is struggling to master the horizontal ladder (aka monkey bars)? You will see a teacher coaching that child to try their hardest to get to the next rung, but if they drop down before they are able to reach it - rather than he or she feeling that they didn't accomplish their goal, you might hear a Berrybrook teacher saying something like, "Look at that! Now you know how to land safely from the monkey bars!" They tried, in their mind they failed, but they are encouraged to try again since it was their First Attempt In Learning. At Berrybrook, we are looking forward to a fun-filled year of FAILures with your children. Thank you for allowing us to encourage their learning in this manner.

~Mrs. Watts

Berrybrook Families are growing!!!!

Welcome

Desmond O'Malley

(big sister Clare is in 3 Day room 3)

Logan Foley

(big sister Avery is in 4 Day room 1)

Amelia Sylvia

(big sister Ella is in 4 Day room 1)

Brooke D'Ambruoso

(big brother Lucas is in 3 Day room 3)

Beginners Notes

The most wonderful time of the year...



I believe that being a teacher in the Beginners class is such a special opportunity at Berrybrook. The three of us... Mrs. Connell, Mrs. Lane. and myself thank the parents for entrusting these children to us. This youngest group of students are learning and figuring out the world around them at a quick pace, and we teachers have the privilege of seeing them make discoveries in the classroom every day. As the children get more comfortable with the mornings at school, we see more smiles occurring with goodbyes and the children know that their loved one will soon be back to get them after they “get to work”.

Our main goals as teachers in the Beginners class is to ensure that your children have a safe, happy, and successful start to their school experience. As the school year unfolds the children will begin to gain confidence in themselves and their abilities. They will start to show more independence and make choices based on their interests. They will develop friendships and seek out peers to interact with. They will learn to communicate their ideas and feelings, as well as how to listen to others and respect peers’ feelings. They will also experience the joy of of learning through play. We have so many exciting activities planned for our Beginners this year. We were just as eager as the children to get this school year underway!

We are off to a great start. Room 3 is full of busy, happy children. We encourage parents to visit our Beginners Shutterfly site often to see all the fun we’re having. The site is also a great conversation starter when you explore the pictures with your child.

Thank you again,

~ Mrs. Rosen

Mrs. Rosen teaches in the Beginners and 4 Day Classes





First Year Notes

Not Just A Painted Rock

Welcome to Berrybrook! We have many traditions we enjoy every year with the 2 and 3 Day Classes. One of our favorites happen in the first weeks of school. We read the book Rock Finds A Friend. In this story a lonely rock on the beach develops a friendship with a young boy. “Rock” guides the boy to become more socially aware and kind to others. Eventually, the two form a great friendship. This story parallels the type of relationship development we see in the first few weeks of school. “Rock” had never had a friend. The boy did not understand “how to be a friend”. Together they “figure it out”! Social and emotional growth is a key element to our 2 and 3 Day program.

Creating a project in our 2 and 3 Day Program is a choice for each child. If your child did not paint a rock, don’t be disappointed. They simply chose not to paint that day. The teachers ask them daily if they want to make a project and respect the child’s decision for that day.

Although this may seem like a simple project, there are actually several steps involved:

- 1) Children must choose a rock. This can be more difficult than you might think. All the choices available to them - smooth, bumpy, flat, big, small - must be navigated as they gravitate to “the one”.

- 2) Children are then asked to write their name or make a mark on the paper plate/bowl their rock was on. This task alone requires a large amount of concentration to make a mark of ownership.

- 3) Next they choose a seat at the table and begin painting. The painting process is unique to each child. Some children use a lot of paint. Some use very little paint. Some use all colors available, others prefer one color.

- 4) Once they are finished painting, children carry their own rock on the paper plate/bowl to the drying area. This is actually quite challenging and involves a lot of coordination. Some rocks end up rolling around on the floor! That is a “teachable moment” and the teachers help the child problem solve a solution.

- 5) Lastly, children wash their hands to remove excess paint.

In this one activity children have been challenged in several key development areas: social and emotional development (learning about friendship, choosing a rock, sharing space and paint at the project table), language development (making their mark/ writing their name, listening to instructions from the teacher), social studies (sitting in a group for story, learning how to be a kind friend, choosing a seat at the project table), art and motor development (choosing paint and painting their rock, coordinating movements to carry their rock to the drying area, washing paint off their hands). This all happened in one activity! In the coming weeks we have so many more exciting and enriching activities in store for your children. But please remember playing is the greatest form of learning! And, if you don’t see a project come home, maybe it is because your child was busy building a friendship!

~ Mrs. Dunn

Mrs. Dunn teaches in the 3 Day Room 3 and 2 Day classes

Second Year Notes

Art Techniques



September provided time and opportunities for teachers and children to get to know each other and for all of us to become familiar with our daily routine. At Berrybrook, there is ample time for children to choose freely activities provided in all areas of their classroom. To prepare them for their future experience in kindergarten, children have the responsibility to visit the art project table daily. Different from the art projects of the 2 and 3 Day classes, children use various art techniques that are more appropriate to their age and development. These techniques not only allow for growth in fine motor skills but growth in artistic expression and appreciation of different art forms. They also allow for fun!

One of the earliest art projects children create is a shell collage. A collage is a wonderful experience where a lot of careful thought is used to express one's individuality as the artist decides where to place each and every shell. At a younger age, a child may first slather glue onto the wood shingle to which their treasured shells will adhere. Now older and more capable, children in the 4 and 5 Day classes practice the "Puddle Technique." They take their brush with its bristles, dip it into their container of glue, then wait patiently – focused – as they let the glue "puddle" at the spot of their choosing onto their wood shingle. Conversations naturally occur: "Why puddle the glue?" a teacher may ask. Children respond, "The shells are heavy...the shells are big...the shells would fall off if you don't use a lot of glue in that spot!" (Ah, scientific thinking: predicting, observing...hypothesizing!)

Throughout the year children will learn other art techniques such as the "Water Color Technique", the "Sandwich Technique", the "Drip Technique", and more! Be sure to ask your child, "What techniques are you learning at school?"

We are off to a wonderful start in the 4 and 5 Day classes! There is so much to learn about each other, ways to be more independent in our classrooms, discoveries to be made and challenges to be met. We appreciate your support throughout the year as we all grow together!

Happy Fall!

~ Mrs. LaForest

Mrs. LaForest teaches in the 4 Day and 5 Day classes

Lunch Bunch

The first day for Lunch Bunch will be Tuesday, October 2nd.

Mrs. Capasso, Mrs. Dunn and Mrs. Lane would like to thank all parents in advance for being so careful to pack allergy safe lunches for their children. We appreciate our families taking the extra time to make sure all Berrybrook children are safe.

Parents Association Notes

School is officially underway and it is wonderful to see all of the students in action! While the children have been exploring their classrooms, Mrs. Watts, Mrs. Piccuito, the BPA and many parents have been busy putting the details together for our **annual Harvest Festival**. Hopefully many of you can attend and enjoy the crafts, hay rides and food from **11-2 on Saturday, October 20th!** Early bird admission and raffle tickets are available until October 13th and can be purchased through Venmo, cash, or check.

Thank you to those individuals who have already donated a themed basket for the raffle. Many Berrybrook families and local companies have donated some fantastic silent auctions as well. It is not too late if you have a wonderful idea for a themed basket or a resource for a silent auction item. Donations are accepted until Friday, October 12th. The Harvest Festival would not be a success without the support and generosity from Berrybrook families!

Our enrichment coordinators, Kim Joyce and Tracy Mayo, have been planning too. They have organized a great Family Fun Friday (FFF) for **Friday, October 12th at Sauchuk Farm**. Sauchuck Farm is a wonderful place to visit and a fall favorite for many of our families. Enjoy pumpkin picking, jumping pillows, and of course some fresh air! To register for this event and all other FFF visit the BPA table. Tickets are \$10 per person, but siblings under 3 are free.

Enrichment is also beginning this month. The BPA is happy to welcome back Kim Spires from Inspire Kids Yoga. Miss Kim is a certified children's yoga teacher and has worked with Berrybrook students for the last six years. She brings yoga postures to life through music, stories, and activities. The 4 and 5 Day students will begin this month and continue where they left off from last year, while the younger students will begin in January. Make sure to ask your child what they have learned this month!

Thank you to everyone who has already paid their annual BPA dues! If you have yet to do so we ask for a \$30 contribution which goes directly to student enrichment in and out of the classroom. Every Berrybrook parent is automatically a member of the Parents Association and welcome at all BPA meetings. We encourage you to join us at the meetings to share ideas and volunteer to help in any way you can. We are actively seeking help with games for the Harvest Festival as well as assistance with silent auction items.

Thank you for your support and participation! For any questions please email the BPA.

Diana Stewart and Jenna O'Donnell - *Co-Presidents* berrybrookparentsassociation@gmail.com

The Berrybrook Staff would like to thank the Parents Association for arranging snacks for our monthly after-school meetings. Each month we have a two hour meeting to discuss curriculum and other matters. These meetings are scheduled from 4:15 - 6:15 and we appreciate having a snack to fortify us. We are thankful for all the support and encouragement we receive from parents. It is very thoughtful of parents to take time from their busy schedules to prepare refreshments for us.

Thank You Very Much!!!

From The Board of Directors The Berrybrook Neighborhood

A few weeks ago, my husband and I had the rare opportunity to watch a movie, just the two of us, our choice, with no input from our three young boys. On this night when we weren't beholden to children and their tastes in shows, we made what may seem like the strange choice of watching a movie about children's television, the documentary, *Won't You Be My Neighbor?* about the life of Mr. Fred Rogers.

For those of you who haven't seen the film, I don't think it's a spoiler to say that in it, Mr. Rogers was portrayed exactly like those of us who watched his show remember him and it seems, exactly like he was: kind, loving, open-hearted, and open-minded. The movie undoubtedly was inspiring and uplifting, but it was also genuine, challenging us to think about how we treat one another adults, how we talk to children, and what we expect of our youngest citizens. The documentary highlighted how the show, *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*, didn't gloss over sad and scary topics, tackling issues like assassinations and racism, or tragedies, like the *Challenger* explosion. The show dealt with these topics in age-appropriate ways, recognizing children's fears and concerns while reminding children of the good in the world. Mr. Rogers respected and believed in children, listened to them, never talked down to them, and grounded his approach in the cutting-edge child psychology of his time. He understood children and childhood and helped parents, and other adults, do the same.

While watching the movie, I was reminded of the similarities between Mr. Rogers' approach and that of Berrybrook. At Berrybrook, teachers respect and validate children, whatever their needs may be. Teachers listen to children and speak with them, not at them, helping children to better understand themselves and our world. At Berrybrook, families are supported and encouraged in the relentless work of parenting. It truly is a neighborhood in the Mr. Rogers' sense - welcoming, loving, accepting. I feel so fortunate that my family and I have been, and continue to be, part of this special place.

Rachel Ezell

President - Berrybrook Board of Directors

Berrybrook Open House

Admissions 2019-2020

Saturday, November 3, 2018
10 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Spread the Word!!!



NOOK FUN



Starting in October, we will begin offering Berrybrook families the opportunity to explore The Nook under the guidance of a Berrybrook teacher. Families will be able to enjoy time together using materials, guided activities, and themed topics for exploration and conversation. Each session will have a new theme based upon the weather or the season.

This is intended to be a family interactive experience, so children must be accompanied by an adult.

There is no cost but we ask that you sign up, indicating the number of children you will be bringing so that appropriate materials can be available for projects and activities. Please see the sign-up sheet on the small clipboard hanging on the bulletin board opposite the BPA area.

Please dress for the weather and remember layers are best. Boots for damp weather and rain gear for light drizzle are always a good idea. Bug spray will be available for you to apply to your children.

Our first Family Friday Nook Day will be Friday October 26th from 1-3.

Looking forward to many fun Nook afternoons,

Mrs. Dunn

