

April 2019

April 15 - 19	Spring vacation week
*Tuesday, April 30	3 and 4 Day Class Pictures
*Wednesday, May 1	5 Day Class Pictures
*Friday, May 3	2 Day and Beginners Class Pictures

***Rain dates will be determined if necessary**



Notes from the Head of School

Can preschoolers be victims of peer bullying?

Can preschoolers BE bullies?

Those questions and many others were answered at our staff Professional Development day last month. The short answer to those questions is no, which I think is very comforting. Bullying involves the planned approach to get a desired outcome. Preschoolers are unable to meet the definition of a bully, because at that age they are developmentally impulsive; their behavior is mostly “all over the place” and there is no planning to deliberately one-up their classmate.

If preschoolers cannot developmentally be a bully, then how do we reduce the possibility of them becoming bullies or being bullied in the future? The simple answer is kindness. It is teaching and modeling for children from an early age how to act and treat others with kindness. How do you teach kindness, especially in a world that seems to be encouraging others to be the best at everything, potentially at the expense of others? As I write this, the Operation Varsity Blue scandal has been on the news all week, where celebrities and others cheated or paid officials to get ahead and

guarantee admission for their children into prestigious colleges. It's so discouraging when things like this happen, because what is it teaching their daughters and sons that they and their accomplishments are not good enough to meet their parents' standards? That they don't measure up to their parents' expectations? That at an adult age, they cannot navigate the next step in life and that they need to be rescued?

Years ago a Board of Director member joked that Berrybrook should have the tagline "We grow good people". Basically, it's what Dr. Phil says when giving parenting advice to his guests: parents are not raising children, they are raising adults. Every interaction is with the end goal in mind of raising productive members of society - bringing me back to kindness. We need to start early, because if we are modeling for children how to undercut others to get ahead, the future of this world seems bleak and depressing to me. Circling back to Operation Varsity Blues - what's going to happen when no one is there to rescue these college students? How are they going to be productive members of society?

Can a kind person also be someone who doesn't become a doormat for others? Of course! Being kind doesn't mean you lose your backbone. It means standing up for yourself in a way that doesn't hurt or insult others, again something we should be teaching and modeling for children early on. Think back to when you may have been in the dating world. If someone approached you and offered to take you out to dinner or buy you a drink, you could very kindly respond with a "No thank you, I'm not interested" rather than "That's a hard NO; I wouldn't go out with you if you were the very last person on earth! How dare you think I would spend time with you!" Think about which response YOU would rather receive, and help spread kindness with that in mind. Let's all have the mantra to help "grow good people"! The world will be a better place for all!

~ Mrs. Watts



Ready, Set, ... Smile!!
Berrybrook class photos are coming!

Tuesday, April 30th
will be picture day for both 3 Day classes and both 4 Day classes

Wednesday, May 1st
will be picture day for the 5 Day class

Friday, May 3rd
will be picture day for 2 Day and Beginners
Check your email in the coming weeks for details about Picture Day!



Beginners Notes

We are Blossoming!!

Hopefully our long cold winter is behind us and we can look forward to warmer temperatures in the spring. We will see nature begin to bloom and grow, just like the Beginners have done since last September. They have grown in all areas of development: physical movements, language capabilities, creative thinking, and most of all in their interactions with other children.

Our housekeeping area has recently changed into a vet hospital. All the children have been having so much fun taking care of the sick animals and fixing all their boo-boos. We have had dogs that fell off their bicycles and cats that have stuffy noses and sore throats. The imaginative play in this area has been endless, but soon will take a turn in another direction when the teachers transform the space into a grocery store complete with food, grocery carts, and cash registers. This arrangement will enable children to practice cooperative play, deciding on roles, and how to work together. The grocery store is a favorite with our students every year.

We had our first adventure on the big playground recently when we had our first measurable snowfall and it was a great success. The children loved exploring the snow in this new area. As the weather continues to improve we will be spending more time outside learning about the playground equipment, taking nature walks, and of course visiting the Nook!

The children really have enjoyed the parent volunteers that have come into the classroom for a visit. Reading to the children, building blocks, and playing in our housekeeping area really means so much to the children. They enjoy being able to show everyone all that they do and have learned in the classroom. There are still spots available on our classroom volunteer sheet if you would like to be a part of our daily routine.

In April we will be learning and exploring our natural surroundings, and learning about warmer weather with planting and growing. We will be doing our annual egg hunt which the children have so much fun hunting and counting out the eggs. Miss Kim will also be visiting us again with all her favorite yoga moves and songs which the children enjoy immensely.

This year has been passing by so quickly. The teachers have been reflecting on how much the children have blossomed in the months that they have been here. Thank you for sharing them with us and for all your support.

~ Mrs. Connell

Mrs. Connell teaches in the Beginners, 3 Day room 3, and 4 Day room 2 classes



2 and 3 Day Notes

Spring Is In The Air

At last, spring has arrived! It's such an exciting season for observing all the changes that showcase the earth's reawakening after a long, cold winter. Soon, we'll notice buds on trees and bushes, and flowers emerging from the ground. The sweet sounds of spring peepers and busy birds will fill the air.

Like the rebirth that takes place in spring, the egg is a symbol of new life in many cultures around the world. Painting eggs has been an important spring tradition at Berrybrook for many years.

The children will be painting paper mache eggs as they hang on potted tree branches in our classroom. They will choose different shades of pearlescent paint that represent the vibrant colors of spring, and create their own designs. It's always fun watching the children put their own creative and unique touches on their work, enjoying the process as they go. No two eggs will look the same. When dry, the eggs will be sent home packaged as special treasures for years to come.

Additional egg activities will also be found throughout the classroom. There will be egg shapes to paint at the easel. Egg themes will be carried through story and circle times, as well as the water, sand, and play dough tables. Of course there will be an egg hunt!

Although there will predictably be April showers, we are looking forward to sunny spring days spent playing outdoors and using our senses to investigate in the Nook. It's a perfect time of year to explore all that Berrybrook has to offer. How lucky are we?

~ Mrs. Lane

Mrs. Lane teaches in the 3 Day Room 3 and the Beginners classes



4 and 5 Day Notes

“Thoughtfulness”

I was going to write about a project we are doing or an event that was coming up, but I thought twice about it and decided to share with you about some happenings in the 4 and 5 Day classes.

Whether it be a heart drawn on a piece of paper, or a bunch of scrap paper cut up into pieces, the 4 & 5 Day children have shown that they thoroughly understand the concept of thoughtfulness and gift giving. The writing table has been the home for all of these lovely creations that the children have been making for their teachers and for each other.

The teachers always plan the daily schedule to provide ample time for children to freely choose all the activities in the classroom. Many children have chosen to spend their independent choice time at the writing table. At this spot you will hear great conversations among classmates, see creativity, and watch children helping each other out. This is where friendships happen.

The thought and effort that goes into making all these “gifts” is immeasurable in 4 Day Room 2. I would like to share with you some of the “gifts” we have been seeing and receiving. The children have been making special crowns made out of scrap paper and lots of colored tape. These have been given to all the teachers to wear and some of the children as well. They carefully cut the paper, measure them around heads, and then decorate and tape them up. They are so proud of these as everyone wears them around the classroom. Some of the children pretend to be kings and queens with them on.

Another gift that we have been receiving is a decorated lunch bag for teachers to bring their lunch to work in. This is so thoughtful from the children and they put a lot of effort into making sure that they draw what we can bring in them for lunch. For example: grapes, oranges, bananas, avocados, and of course cupcakes! They share their food ideas among themselves at the table. You will hear “ohhh I have an idea, avocados” or “Ohhh Mrs. Connell loves yellow, let’s put bananas on hers!” or “I like grapes so Mrs. LaForest will like them too!”. This shows great communication skills, focusing on different kinds of food we eat, and the feeling of pride when they give these to us. We as teachers absolutely love to see the children laughing together at the table, coming together to create something so special for all of us.

The last kindness that I would love to share is the thoughtfulness of their idea of making notes and cards when one of the teachers is absent. These written sentiments have meant so much to us. Upon returning from being out, we find a small paper bag filled with notes that the children worked so hard on forming all the letters to the words that they want to write. They are just so happy and proud to give these to us and we know

they want to make *us* smile as much as we love *them* to smile. The notes usually read “I miss you” or “Hope you feel better” and “I love you”. These are just a few of the simple notes we get, and they mean the world to us. The amount of love a teacher has in their heart for all these children is immense. We think about the children when we’re not with them and constantly try ideas to engage and increase their learning. We hope they have a successful year at Berrybrook; making friends, being kind to each other, and feeling happy. We see growth and success in those areas by seeing all these special things they do for each other and us!

We feel so blessed to be a part of their lives and we thank you for sharing such a great group of children with us. We know the children are proud of what they do, but you as parents should be just as proud!

Thoughtful quote :

“The purest and most thoughtful minds are those which love color the most.”

~ *Mrs. Connell*

Mrs. Connell teaches in the 3 Day room 3, 4 Day room 2 and the Beginners classes

ALL-SPORTS TAG SALE TO BENEFIT CROSSROADS

Saturday, May 4th 8-11 AM



Spring clean out time - have any old sporting gear? Please consider donating to the All-Sports Tag Sale. The sale is for ANY and ALL types of sports equipment & gently-used clothing with all proceeds going to Crossroads located in West Duxbury. It is a camp and year - round program for at risk youth. Drop-offs are at the Duxbury Senior Center parking lot Thursday, May 2nd from 9 am - noon and Friday, May 3 from 9 am - noon and 6 - 7 pm. Then join us Saturday, May 4th, from 8 - 11 am and help us send a deserving kid to camp!

FROM THE LUNCH BUNCH TEACHERS

Thank you to parents for carefully packing lunches that are safe for everyone. We appreciate your cooperation, understanding and your attention to checking ingredient labels.

Thank You!



Parents Association Notes

Spring is here! Let's cross our fingers that the some warm weather will allow us to pack nut free lunches and enjoy extended time on the playground!

Enrichment

April is always a busy month for enrichment. Miss Kim will continue the student's yoga exploration. Plus school pictures will take place and the staff from Soule Homestead will make their annual visit after April vacation. During Soule Homestead's visit, 2 and 3 Day students will learn about farm animals and participate in an exciting craft.

Family Fun Fridays

Our next Family Fun Friday will take place on Friday, April 26th. We will have fun bowling at Alley Kat in Kingston at 1 pm.

Save the date!! The last Family Fun Friday of the school year is scheduled for May 17th. Once the details are finalized, we will send out more information.

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 Wednesday, May 15th from 4 - 5:30 p.m. with a rain-date of Tuesday, May 21st. Be on the lookout for additional details regarding this fun afternoon!

Thank you!

Diana Stewart and Jenna O'Donnell Co-Presidents

From The Board of Directors

It is hard to believe that in a couple of months, our children will say goodbye to their current Berrybrook teachers and classmates, and after a restful summer, they will start the next Berrybrook chapter or head to Kindergarten. Along with thinking ahead to this new chapter, I can't help but reflect on the first days at Berrybrook. The adorable pictures by the easel, the visiting day, and the excitement, and some tears, that permeated those first few days immediately come to mind. I was happy that we were starting a routine, as the summer had been the perfect amount of time for seeing friends, going to the beach, and traveling. I was excited for our daughter to make new friends, meet her teachers, and learn more about the world around her. And my husband and I were interested in becoming part of the Berrybrook community.

When my husband and I began looking at preschools, our daughter did not have a food allergy. During our tour, I remember learning that the school was nut-free, which I noted but it did not affect our decision-making. Towards the end of our daughter's first year, we learned of her allergy. As much as the diagnosis was initially hard to swallow, we were determined to find a balance between allowing her to do as much as she previously could and keeping her safe. We poured over websites about food allergies, joined Facebook groups, and read every label. A quick trip to the grocery store to pick up dinner items easily turned into forty-five minutes as we learned how to substitute ingredients.

Shortly after learning about our daughter's food allergy, we scheduled a meeting with her Berrybrook teachers. During this meeting, our daughter's teachers were calm, positive, and empathetic. They assured us that they had encountered many students with allergies and had a plan in place. In fact, they had even researched various snack ideas and proposed them to us, so that our daughter did not have to regularly eat something different than her classmates. One teacher noted that Berrybrook will never make a child feel isolated due to something she or he cannot control. Another noted that, at Berrybrook, we want children to feel safe, and we will work together to create and maintain a safe environment. This immediately made us feel relieved, and even

teary-eyed. We knew we had to continue educating our daughter about her food allergy, but perhaps for the first time since diagnosis, we felt like she had a team of supporters that would look out for her when she was away from us.

As we look back to almost a year ago when she was diagnosed, we have learned many new things about food allergies. For instance, one in thirteen children has a food allergy, according to the Food Allergy Research & Education (FARE) organization. In addition, approximately forty percent of children with food allergies have more than one food allergy. Almost every parent can point to a friend or a child's friend that has a food allergy, and thus, it is certainly something that most parents encounter in one way or another.

We have also learned to sincerely appreciate anyone who makes an effort to understand our daughter's allergy as well as anyone who offers a substitute snack or birthday treat. A question can make all the difference! Similarly, we also realize that unless one has a child or close friend with a food allergy, one may not ask questions or even think of it, and that is completely normal. We have also learned of some great resources for those with food allergies and their families. These include FARE (www.foodallergy.org), Kids with Food Allergies (www.kidswithfoodallergies.org), the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (www.aafa.org), and Allergy Eats (www.allergyeats.com). In addition, we have found several restaurants that are allergy-friendly. These include: Cask 'n Flagon, Not Your Average Joe's, and Burtons Grill.

As we prepare for the next transition, whether it be to another classroom at Berrybrook or onto Kindergarten, we reflect on the exciting and busy year. We reflect on that day when we took pictures at the easel, found our daughter's name on her cubby, and met her new classmates and teachers. We also now reflect on this caring community that goes above and beyond to understand food allergies and to create a safe environment for all children. We are thankful for this community.

~Andrea Doton
Board Member