

May 2019

May 15	BPA Spring Fling 4:00 - 5:30 pm
May 21	4 and 5 Day Kindergarten Bus Trip
May 29	Board of Directors Meeting 7:00 pm
May 29	Ice Cream Day - Last Day for 3 Day Classes
May 30	Ice Cream Day - Last Day for 4 Day Classes
May 31	Ice Cream Day - Last Day for 2 Day, 5 Day and Beginners Classes
June 5	BPA Staff Appreciation Luncheon
June 11	Summer Nature Program Begins



Notes from the Head of School

“The days are long but the years are short” is one of my favorite quotes. To me it sums up parenthood in a nutshell. The days (Let’s be honest - sometimes the hours, and even minutes!) can seem to drag on, especially in the midst of some parenting phase that we’d rather skip over. Then BAM! Before you know it, you’re at some milestone and look back thinking “Where did the time go”??

This month highlights this in such a perfect way. Six years ago, my husband and I were at Jameson’s Ice Cream Day - on what will probably go down as one of the hottest and most humid in Berrybrook history! - and my husband was having what one might call an emotional breakdown, crying to one of Jameson’s teachers about how he couldn’t believe this was our family’s last Berrybrook Ice Cream Day. Well, the joke was on him when a couple of months later we found out that Jameson was NOT going to be the last Watts child going through Berrybrook. What is now one of our favorite and funniest family memories that we laugh about all the time seems like it just happened yesterday when now we really are enjoying the last Watts Berrybrook Ice Cream Day. As long as the days are of parenting in its toughest times, the years go by so quick. As cliché as it sounds, it’s so important - but arguably so hard - to take a minute and just enjoy the present. Yes, kindergarten is on my mind but I’m so trying to focus, enjoy, and

soak in these fun times of the last days of preschool and truly see them through Maya's eyes. It is possibly the last time she's going to look at school in this way - feeling carefree, looking forward to the daily projects, mastering pumping on the swing. Of course there will be the milestones she achieves associated with the later years of school, but with preschool it's just so magical and innocent. Next year, I will be the parent of a 9th grader (high school!), a 6th grader, and a kindergartner: one child in each of the three schools on the Sacred Heart campus. To say that I will be experiencing the extreme spectrums of child development is an understatement . . . one a tiny bit way from learning to drive a car, one learning to tie her shoes. And even though this will be my 3rd go-round with kindergarten I vow to really stop and enjoy each moment, because barring any absolute medical mysteries this will be our final Watts with these last "firsts". Jameson did ask me if I would be retiring now that I wouldn't have any children at Berrybrook. I started at Berrybrook a year after I was married, and had all three of my children while employed at Berrybrook. The majority of my adult life has been intertwined with Berrybrook, and I have celebrated so many life events - happy, sad, and in-between - during this time. I don't plan on the major life event of retirement any time soon, but I thought it was interesting how he just figured now that my children were done with Berrybrook, so was I. I'm sure in twenty or so years from now, I'll look back and say, "Wow, those years sure did fly by".

~ Mrs. Watts

Lunch Bunch

The last day for Lunch Bunch will be
Thursday, May 30. Thank you to all of the families who participated in our Lunch Bunch program. Mrs. Capasso, Mrs. Dunn, and Mrs. Lane want to thank all parents who were so careful to pack allergy safe lunches for their children. We appreciate our families who take the extra time to make sure all Berrybrook children are safe.





Beginners Notes

The Great Outdoors

Last month we were so fortunate to have a visit from Farmer Meg of Soule Homestead. It was exciting to meet her chicken, Henny Penny, and her cuddly bunny, Barnaby. She read “Farmer Brown Shears His Sheep: A Yarn About Wool”, and gave us wool from the farm to create our own sheep. Farmer Meg also described the new lambs and the beauty of the farm in the spring.

The beautiful weather that we experience this time of year reminds us that it’s time to get outside. According to Danielle Cohen (Child Mind Institute), there are many benefits to spending time outdoors for children:

- *Builds confidence because it is less structured than indoor play, giving children more choice and freedom*
- *Promotes creativity and imagination*
- *Teaches responsibility for natural surroundings*
- *Provides different stimulation by activating the senses*
- *Gets children moving, benefiting gross and fine motor skills*
- *Improves thinking and problem solving skills*
- *Reduces stress and fatigue, creating a calming effect*

She also suggests some ideas for getting children into nature:

- *Create a nature treasure hunt*
- *Consult references to identify things found in nature*
- *Provide tools to help with discovery (bug box, magnifying glass, shovel)*
- *Go to an outdoor performance*
- *Start a collection (rocks, shells)*
- *Use technology, such as a camera or phone, and create a journal*
- *Go fruit or vegetable picking*
- *Plant a garden*
- *Take a hike*
- *Use outdoor materials for an art project*
- *Build something such as a flower box or bird feeder*

The positive effects of outdoor experiences are sure to benefit the entire family!

We look forward to sharing this final month of school with your children, who have grown so much, and we are grateful for all of your support and involvement. Please join us for our traditional Ice Cream Day on the last day of school, Friday, May 31, as we celebrate a wonderful school year.

~ Mrs. Lane

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

2 and 3 Day Notes

The year has flown by



During the month of May, children are really using the social skills they have been learning and practicing during the school year. Along with the warming temperatures, teachers' hearts warm each time we hear our modeled words of care, comfort, and negotiation coming from our cherished students. We hear these words reflected in their dramatic play as they care for the babies or while they serve each other play food. Just today I heard one child stop and ask another if they were ok because the child had tripped and fallen. They give each other compliments such as "I like your shirt". And they offer help to each other when they seem sad.

When I think back to September, and saw each and every little face who came into the classroom on the first day, I hoped that those children would come together and feel like a classroom family. When May finally comes, as if by some miracle, they begin to live the words we have been using all year. We as teachers hope for this, and year after year, it happens. But when it does, it feels brand new! Just as if it were happening for the first time!

There have been many skills learned throughout the school year: learning to say goodbye to family and learning to be independent, maybe zipping up a coat or putting on shoes by themselves, sharing with others, learning colors and shapes, singing songs, recognizing names, and so many more.

The greatest by far, and most meaningful skills are learning to get along with others, and learning how to be a good human being. Here at Berrybrook, we value and practice being good human beings as best as we can. Your children have been great practitioners of learning to be kind and compassionate to one another.

Enjoy your summer, and enjoy your family time!

~ Mrs. Dunn

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

4 and 5 Day Notes

Springtime Science



Spring has sprung, and the 4 and 5 Day classes have been busy with many spring themed activities. As I thought about writing this article, it stood out to me how so many of these activities are science based.

Science in preschool should encourage experimentation, investigation, exploration, and observation. Preschoolers are naturally curious about the world around them. As preschool teachers, it is our responsibility to nurture that curiosity and provide them with opportunities to participate in many science activities.

In Room 2, the 4 and 5 Day children have been watching amaryllis plants grow. From time to time, we take out a ruler and measure the growth. The children observed how the plants grew in the circle time area versus how they are now growing in the windows. Sometimes this is a large group activity, where we talk about the plant and form a hypothesis about how much growth may or may not have happened since our last discussion. We then investigate with our ruler, and observe by making comments and documenting the growth on a chart. But there are many times that the children discuss the plants on their own, in small groups. They compare the 4 and 5 Day plants, and make thoughtful guesses about why one is so much bigger than the other. This is preschool science!

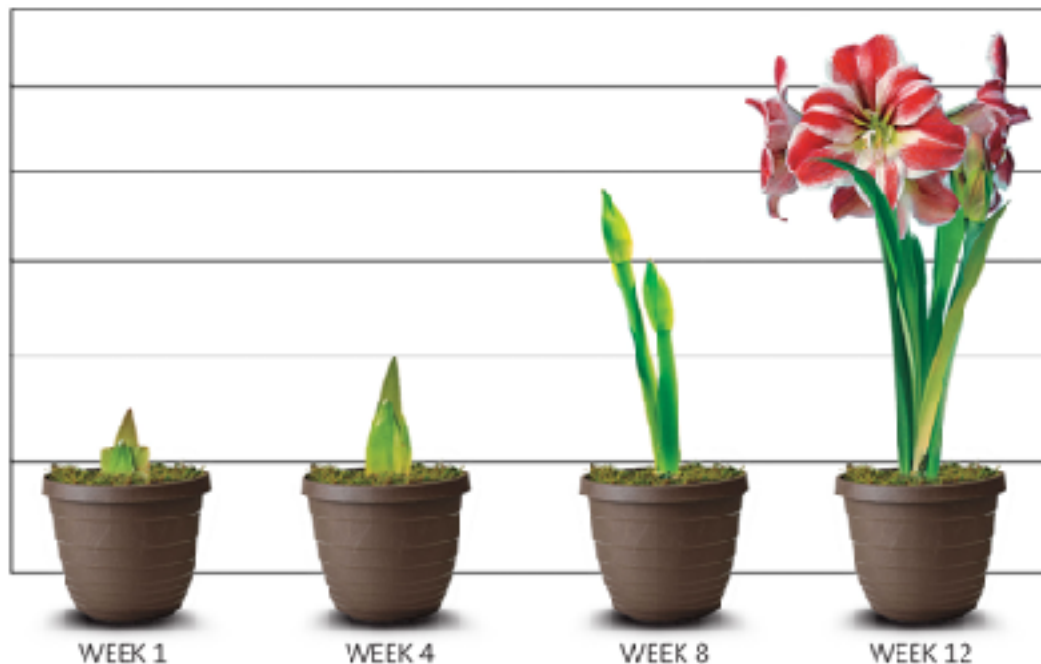
We tapped the maple trees recently. What an amazing experience to be able to see first hand where and how maple syrup is created! I myself learned so much, and felt very lucky to be a part of it all. These young children took it in stride, to them it is yet another fun Berrybrook activity. But to have the experience of being there when the trees are tapped, helping to strain the sap when it is brought inside, watching it boil on the stove, and then getting to taste it on top of ice cream! Not only did they witness it all happen, but they were active participants!!! This is preschool science above and beyond what most people ever get to be a part of.

In Room 1, the 4 Day class did art projects that were based on pussy willows and forsythia. We were able to have the plants there for the children to look at, touch, and observe. Most adults I know have no idea what forsythia is, but these 4 and 5 year olds do! As they used their creativity to represent each plant in the form of artwork, they used science based language to describe what they saw. Again, this is preschool science!

I walked down to the Nook, to hide eggs for the 5 Day classroom's egg hunt just before our April vacation. As I walked, I passed the buckets and spouts hanging on the maple trees, I saw a chipmunk scurry by, I heard the beautiful bird song of springtime as I hid the eggs, and then I saw a turkey by the rocket ship on the way back. I thought to myself, how lucky we are as teachers to have all of this nature based science around us everyday. From my experience, science is probably the most overlooked component of many early childhood curriculums, but certainly not here at Berrybrook. Here, science is all around us - it's hands on, it's a part of our day-to-day. It is something that seems very normal and regular to the children of Berrybrook. But for this preschool teacher, who grew up in a city, and taught in mostly urban environments, I was always struggling to find appropriate science activities for preschoolers. Here at Berrybrook, I find preschool science to be almost as magical as childhood itself.

~ Ms. Kelley

Ms. Kelley teaches in the 5 Day and 4 Day room 2 classes



I Scream, You Scream, We All Scream For Ice Cream!

It's May! Ice Cream Day is upon us at the end of the month on the last day of school. First of all...yum!! Secondly, what a way for families to celebrate a full year at Berrybrook!

At first glance, the simplicity of a vanilla ice cream cone may not be the most appropriate representation of all that is involved in a year at Berrybrook. However, upon taking a closer look, one might notice it is just that simplicity that best represents it after all. Simplicity doesn't necessarily mean easy. Something that is simple can be magical, clear and easily understood and truly seen because of its simplistic nature.

A vanilla ice cream cone is simplistic in its ingredients:

**a cone*

**a scoop of vanilla ice cream*

(vanilla - not a fancy flavor, not a mix of flavors, and with no extra things mixed in, like gummy worms or chocolate chips)

A vanilla ice cream cone is simplistic in the way it is enjoyed:

**scoop *hold *eat*

Berrybrook is simplistic in its "ingredients":

**respect and validation = "the cone" *emotional and academic learning = "the ice cream"*

Berrybrook is simplistic in the way it is enjoyed:

**respect each other's ideas and opinions *validate the feelings and perspectives of others *embrace a love for learning*

In the same way we hold an ice cream cone, we hold onto the importance of respect and validation for one another. An ice cream cone is strong to withstand the tasting and melting of the ice cream. This is also true of the strength of respect and validation at Berrybrook. It holds all of the emotional and academic learning, the practice of problem solving, the building of friendships, the understanding of numbers and letters, the remembering words to a song or story and the awareness and appreciation of the world around us.

"What? No sprinkles on the ice cream cones on Ice Cream Day?" you ask? There is no need! Toppings, like "the icing on the cake" are just that – the extras, the visual celebration of something already great. The smiles, the laughs, the joy on Ice Cream Day among all the families will be the sprinkles!! Simple? Yes! Delicious? You bet!

How delicious the year has been, thanks to all of you! Happy Summer!

Mrs. LaForest

Parents Association Notes

It is hard to imagine this is the BPA's final newsletter for the school year! What an amazing year it has been and it is all thanks to our wonderful Berrybrook community. Thank you to all who have participated and supported the BPA this year. We really could not do it all without your help.

Enrichment

Our enrichment activities are winding down for the year as the end of school nears. Miss Kim will return one last time this month for yoga (which continues to be an all time favorite activity for the kids). The 4 and 5 Day students will have a visit from Annawon Weeden, a member of the Mashpee Wompanoag and Narragansett Tribe. It was a wonderful opportunity for the students to learn more about native people and their culture and traditions. The Soule Homestead animals recently visited the younger classes which gave the children an opportunity to have a hands-on experience and learn some interesting facts about chickens and rabbits.

Family Fun Friday

The last Family Fun Friday of the year is on Friday, May 17th. The outing will be an ice cream sundae cruise around Plymouth Harbor with Plymouth Cruises. Families will get a boat ride, some stories, games and dancing, and a make-your-own sundae treat. The cost of this trip is \$14 per person. **The cruise filled up very quickly and if you would like to be added to a waitlist,** please stop by the office.

BPA Spring Fling

All families are invited to the Spring Fling on Wednesday, May 15th (rain date May 21st) from 4-5:30 p.m. for pizza, a treat for the kids, and some playground fun. The Spring Fling is an annual event that allows us to celebrate the end of the Berrybrook school year together. Be on the lookout for an evite!

BPA Summer Play date

Again this year, the BPA is happy to sponsor play dates on the Berrybrook playground for all currently enrolled students for the 2018-2019 school year. This is a wonderful opportunity for students to meet their new classmates before the start of the summer. The schedule of summer play dates will be included in the info packet sent from school in June. As always there will be additional play dates in the fall before the start of classes.

BPA Officers 2019-2020

The BPA is looking for new officers for the 2019-2020 school year! New faces bring new ideas and your commitment can be as little or as much as you like. If you are interested please reach out to the BPA or Mrs. Watts/Mrs. Piccuito.

As always thank you to those who have already paid their BPA dues! Each contribution provides great school enrichment and subsidizes many of our Family Fun Friday events. If you have yet to do contribute it is not too late. If you have any questions, concerns or feedback email us at berrybrookparentsassociation@gmail.com.

Thank you!

Diana Stewart and Jenna O'Donnell - *Co-Presidents*

From The Board of Directors

I came across this article a few years ago - and it hit me like a ton of bricks. So much so, that I saved it on my laptop and have re-read it many times. Every time that I read it - it seems to hit home with me time and time again in different ways and for different reasons each time. When you have a 6 year old, 4 year old, 2 year old and a newborn this takes on one vision. When you have a 13 year old, an 11 year old, a 9 year old and a 6 year old it looks and feels different - but in the end, the meaning is exactly the same. I found this article in the Huffington Post and it was first posted on August 22, 2014.

The Day My Son Gave Up On Me

Ever since our two sons began sharing a room, their bedtime routine has been the same. Baths, PJs, teeth, stories, cuddles. And every night as I leave their room, Eli always says, "Remember to come up, cuddle, and bring water!"

I head down the stairs with a quick, "Okay!" knowing full well that the likelihood of following through on that promise is next to nothing. The days are long, and by bedtime I'm ready for some downtime. Even then, I still need to finish cleaning the kitchen, pick up stray toys in the living room, and pack a lunch for my kindergartener before I can even consider sitting down.

Occasionally, after several minutes of quiet, the hollering will begin. Although it's low at first, it quickly gains volume and frequency. "Mommy. Moommmmyyyy. MOOOOMMMMMMYYYYY!!!"

So I stand at the bottom of the stairs and yell back in annoyance, "What??"

"Can you bring up water?"

"I'll be up in a few minutes."

I finish my current task, fill a couple of water bottles, and begrudgingly climb the stairs, annoyed that my 'me time' has been cut into. Quickly handing out the waters, I give one last round of kisses, and skedaddle on out of there as fast as possible, telling myself that my children need sleep. I'm just looking out for their best interests.

For over two years, some form of this scenario has played out nearly every night, which makes it all the more surprising that I didn't notice when it recently changed.

I was cuddling with Samuel and listening with one ear as he told me his latest superhero tale while with the other I caught snippets of the conversation between Eli and my husband. 'Mommy' and 'grump' were the two words that stood out. I jokingly reached across the beds to tickle or pinch whatever flesh my hand could reach while crying, "Hey, who are you calling a grump??"

Not long after, I plopped myself in the living room chair beside my husband. As I settled in, he said, "Did you hear what Eli said? 'Mommy was always grumpy when I'd call her to come back up to cuddle, so I stopped asking.'"

Immediately, I felt the old familiar weight of guilt drape itself over my shoulders like an unwelcome blanket on a hot day. I stood, dashed up the stairs, and rounded the corner into the boys' bedroom. Eli had just dozed off. As I lay down on the bed, he stirred and I took the opportunity to whisper in his ear, "I love to cuddle you."

He mumbled something back and drifted off again, arm around my neck, face pressed in close to mine, just the way he likes it. All was forgiven; the situation rectified.

But as I lay beside him, the true weight of his words hit me.

"I stopped asking."

I never gave much thought to the way he perceived our nighttime ritual, always assuming my words and actions were inconsequential. Unbeknownst to me, however, my hurry to be somewhere else did not escape him, nor did my attitude. At some point he decided that it wasn't even worth the trouble anymore. Which makes me wonder what else he might eventually stop asking.

"Mommy, will you read to me?"

"Will you play with me?"

"Mom, listen to this joke!"

"Guess what happened at school today."

"Will you watch me shoot hoops?"

"What do you think of this girl?"

"Can I talk to you about something important?"

And what will be my reply? What will be my attitude?

"In a minute." That turns into three, four, ten, twenty minutes.

"I don't have time right now," mumbled in frustrated distraction.

"We'll do it later." And the pile of broken promises builds and builds.

My excuses may be valid and sometimes even necessary. Children need to learn patience and that sometimes something other than them must take priority. But it is my words coupled with my attitude, week after week, month after month, year after year: At some point maybe he'll stop asking again, and it might be about something a lot more important than a glass of water and an extra hug.

So lately I've been giving longer cuddles at night and I've been making sure that when I say 'Just a minute', it really is just one minute.

My son gave up on me, but I realized it early enough to make it right. I shudder to think how life might turn out if I had learned that lesson too late.

I promise that I am not trying to lay any more “Mom or Dad Guilt” on you - I am well aware of the fact that we all walk around with a fair amount of that every day (or at least I do). I am sharing this because of how true it is and how I still, after all of these years fall into the same habits that this woman describes. Our life is crazy busy. They all play sports, they all do different things and they all have their own social lives. My husband and I both work and no matter how hard I try, I always feel like I’m behind the ball on something. It feels like I am constantly rushing somewhere or should have already left to be somewhere else. The mound of laundry that seemingly multiplies overnight is daunting. The amount of times I say, “In a minute”, “After I finish this”, “When I get back”, etc. is more than I like to admit. It isn’t easy - but I am trying sometimes to not look at the kitchen, not think about dinner, ignore Mount Laundry, put my phone down and really listen to them; look at what they are trying to show me, or just talk to them. I urge you to try it ... because they get big really fast. Unfortunately, life becomes more complicated than the Berrybrook playground and pretty soon they might not want to talk to us at all or worse, perhaps they will “give up” on talking to us because we didn’t listen prior. I know that is not how I want my children to feel. Life is still going to be there. Even if you clean the mess, it’s going to be there again in 5 minutes. It really is okay for dinner to be cereal and toast. Facebook and Instagram really are not an actual life line. Take the time to be present with your children as much as you can. I promise you, it will never be a waste of time.

Karen Gallagher
Berrybrook Board of Directors



Berrybrook teachers would like to thank parents for everything they do to support us during the school year. Thank you to the BPA and especially co-presidents Jenna O'Donnell and Diana Stewart for arranging September playdates, our wonderful Harvest Festival, and engaging enrichment programs for our children and families. We also appreciate the snacks classroom parents arrange for our after school meetings! Thank you to all parents for working with us to provide the best possible experience for the children. We are grateful for all of the smiles, nods, suggestions, and words of encouragement and appreciation that nourish us and make our work at Berrybrook so rewarding. Thank you for creating a true partnership between school and home.



Berrybrook Annual Appeal and Helen Wheeler Scholarship Fund

Every year, the Berrybrook Board of Directors conducts an Annual Appeal to raise money for the Helen Wheeler Scholarship Fund. Each May, current and alumni Berrybrook families receive a mailing asking for support. Every dollar donated to the Annual Appeal reinforces our commitment to provide tuition assistance for families who wish to send a child to Berrybrook but cannot because of financial constraints. The funds also enable current families who may experience a sudden financial emergency to continue at Berrybrook. Before we reach out with our 2019 Annual Appeal this month, we wanted to acknowledge the generous donors to the 2018 Annual Appeal which raised one thousand two hundred forty dollars for the scholarship fund. We are so grateful for their financial support and their dedication to Berrybrook. Gifts to the Annual Appeal have made a lasting difference in the lives of many children and their families who are experiencing Berrybrook because of their generosity.

2018 Berrybrook Annual Appeal Donors

Debra Adriani
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Kathy Hogan
Jim and Pat Keeley
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