



## March 2018

**Thursday, March 7**

**Friday, March 15**

**Friday, March 22**

**Connections Night 7 pm**

**Professional Day - no school**

**Enrollment Contracts Due**



### Notes from the Head of School

Have you ever stuck your foot in your mouth, parenting-wise? Over vacation, I did. Maya was shopping with me at Target and all of a sudden she started saying she wanted to ride in the inside of the carriage which surprised me. I looked at her with a confused look on my face and said loudly to make sure she heard me over her protests, "Our family doesn't ride like that in carriages" . . . . and wanted to add "because Mommy has two friends whose children fell out of the carriages, hitting their heads on the concrete floor and resulting in ER trips with fractured skulls" but I spared her those details. I was still shaking my head a little wondering why she would ask to ride like that as I was putting my items on the belt and saw a woman giving me a dirty look, with her two children riding in the carriage part. Oops. But here's the thing - I wasn't casting judgment on her choices, I was stating to Maya what our family's rules are. Here's a little secret, because trust me as they get older it's not just the differences in parenting choices such as allowing two desserts after dinner - it's about screen time, choices in video game ratings, rules about underage drinking, and more. The qualifier "in our family" or "at Berrybrook" gives parents and teachers so much leeway. When I remind my children that in our family we brush our teeth each night before going to bed, I am stating what our family's expectations are. If another family lets children go days without brushing their teeth, that's their choice and it's not my business. I sometimes hear my boys say, "Well, so-and-so gets use their phone at dinner". I will reply, "In our family, we all put our devices

away at dinner so we can catchup on our day. That's up to so-and-so's family to decide what works for their family". You will often hear teachers start a statement with, "At Berrybrook . . . ." Many times, you'll catch a teacher slightly cock her head to the side when saying it - it's almost like the movement and the statement are intertwined ~ the next time you hear "at Berrybrook" try and see if their head tilted to the side!! It could be anything - "At Berrybrook, we put the caps on the markers when we're done" or "At Berrybrook, we use our words not our bodies" or "At Berrybrook, we go down the slide". Sometimes we'll hear a student say "Well my mom lets me do this" and the teachers will validate that as long as it's okay with their mom they can do it at home but at Berrybrook they will be expected to do x, y, or z. You can adapt it to your family's values and expectations. Before you know it, it will become second nature in your conversations with your children - head tilt and all!

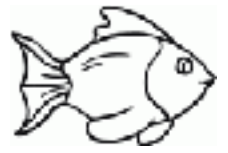
~ Mrs. Watts

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The Berrybrook Staff would like to thank the Parents Association for arranging snacks for our monthly after-school meetings. Each month we have a 2 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 of 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!!





## ***Beginners Notes***

And the fun continues!

Welcome back! We hope everyone had a fun and relaxing February vacation. It's hard to believe it's March already. We are all looking forward to warmer weather and spending as much time as possible outdoors in the months to come at Berrybrook. As spring arrives, we will plant, explore nature, and watch as everything turns green! It is amazing to think how quickly our school year has passed; it has been so much fun to see the Beginners grow these past few months.

In the classroom, the children have been enjoying the flurry of activities that have taken place throughout the month of February. We enjoyed a special Valentine's Day celebration that took place before vacation week. The children each made a watercolor heart, decided which color it should be (a very important decision) and carefully used a paintbrush to create a colorful masterpiece. We ate our sugar cookie snacks made with frosting and sprinkles and had fun passing out valentine cards to friends.

This month we are looking forward to another visit from Miss Kim, our yoga instructor. As well as a special visit from Claire Reilly, a dental hygienist who will teach us all about taking care of our teeth. Our housekeeping area will go through a few transformations this month; first it will be a hospital and then a veterinarian office to help babies and animals be healthy.

Think spring!

*~ Mrs. Rosen*

*Mrs. Rosen teaches in the Beginners and 4 Day room 1 classes*



## ***First Year Notes***

In March we turn our thoughts to spring. After such a strange winter, I think it's safe to say we are all "over the snow", or lack of it! One of my favorite lessons during the month of March is the Rainbow. When we talk about St. Patrick's Day, rainbows always come up. As teachers, we take this opportunity to examine rainbows with the children. What are they? Where do they come from? How do they form? Have you ever seen a rainbow? And the inevitable...is there really a pot of gold at the end? We focus on the colors of the rainbow. To reinforce this lesson, we teach the children a song about the colors of the rainbow. Rainbow puzzles are available for children to work with. Materials such as blocks and manipulatives are presented in rainbow colors to subtly encourage sorting by color. Rainbow shapes and colors are available at the easel, for those who wish to create a rainbow.

A rainbow project is presented to the children. For this project varying size half moon shaped color pieces, representing each color of the rainbow, have been precut by the teacher. The sizes and colors match the order of the colors in a rainbow. Children choose one of each color, bring it to the table, and begin assembling their rainbow. Although the pieces have been cut and lined up in the "proper" order, once the child brings his/her pieces to the table it does not matter how they order them. Children are hands - on learners. They learn by doing. Teachers observe as the child's creative process take over. This seemingly simple project may take five minutes for some children or twenty five minutes for others. Children absorb the knowledge they are ready for. So for some children the lesson may not be "the order of the rainbow colors", it may be manipulating a glue brush, or making pieces stick, or lining the pieces up ascending in height. Berrybrook teachers do not "correct" or change this because the child is learning what he/she needs at that moment. So when you notice our unique rainbows or other crafts, hanging in the classrooms or hallways, know that each child learned exactly what he or she needed to on that day when they made that craft!

Our last rainbow activity is a surprise experiment! It is typically a favorite among the children, so be sure to ask them about it after our St. Patrick's Day celebrations.

Happy Spring!

~ *Mrs. Capasso*

*Mrs. Capasso teaches in the 2 Day and 3 Day Room 1 classes*



## ***Second Year Project Notes***

*Time to make some music*

In March we begin to welcome spring to Berrybrook. One of our favorite ways to do that is creating music! To do this, children in the 4 and 5 Day Classes create a collection of instruments to use throughout the remainder of the school year.

One favorite of mine is the tambourine. Like many of the projects that we do, this is a multistep process and takes more than one day to complete. Students are presented with two paper plates which they paint with bright watercolors. The plates all have unique looks based on colors and designs that they decide. Teachers assist, for safety, by poking six holes along the edges of the plates. Children are then asked to select six small bells and six pipe cleaner pieces. This step helps students strengthen math skills. Students exercise fine motor strength when they thread pipe cleaner pieces through the top of the bells, then put the pipe cleaners through each hole in the plates. This step is time consuming and requires a steady hand and concentration.

The two plates are glued together with assistance from a teacher, as the faces of the plates need to be facing each other. This helps create the rounded shape of the tambourine. Students then arrange clothes pins along the edges of the instrument, so the two plates will hold and dry together. This again reinforces skill in mathematics and fine motor strength. After a day the instruments are dried and ready to play! We celebrate with a traditional Berrybrook parade around the school.

*~ Miss McNulty*

*Miss McNulty teaches in the 5 Day and 4 Day room 2 classes*

## ***Parents Association Notes***

Welcome to March, Berrybrook families! February vacation is now behind us and although we have had a few snow days, we are hoping that spring is near. March is turning out to be a very busy month for BPA programming.

### Enrichment Update

March will bring quite a few enrichment activities to the children sponsored by the BPA. Yoga will continue for all classes this month with Kim Spires. To help celebrate St. Patrick's Day, the Haley School of Irish Dance will be sending dancers to demonstrate their skills the week leading into St. Patrick's Day.

We are also fortunate to have Claire Reilly visit us as well. Mrs. Reilly is a Community Dental Health Educator from Dentistry for Children in Weymouth. Mrs. Reilly has visited Berrybrook for many years and is wonderful with the children. She presents great information about dental health in a developmentally appropriate way.

Be sure to ask your children to share their thoughts about these fun visits!

### Family Fun Friday

Thank you to all the families who attended KidZone in February. We had a fantastic turnout.

Our next Family Fun Friday will take place on March 15th, at Goldfish Swim School in Rockland.

It might be cold outside, but it's warm and sunny inside Goldfish Swim School in their tropical atmosphere and 90-degree water. Goldfish Swim School is generously opening their pool to Berrybrook at no cost, so come join us for a fun afternoon of splashing in the pool! The pool will be open to Berrybrook from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. and this event is open to siblings as well.

There is no cost for this event, but we would like to have a headcount so please sign up through SignUp Genius to let us know you plan to attend.

To learn more about Goldfish Swim School check out their website: [www.goldfishswimschool.com/rockland](http://www.goldfishswimschool.com/rockland)

### Save the Date 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!

### BPA Dues

The BPA has been very busy this year and we would like to thank all of the families who have paid their BPA dues. We could not plan these fun events for our children and families without your help. It is not too late for your family to support our work! All donations are very much appreciated. We suggest \$30 per family, but all amounts are welcome. Please don't hesitate to reach out to any members of the BPA if you have any questions, comments, new ideas or concerns.

Thanks,  
Jenna O'Donnell & Diana Stewart Co-Presidents

## ***From The Board of Directors***

Recently my eldest son turned six years old. My husband and I bought him a 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition copy of “The Little Prince” by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry and we’ve all been reading it, little by little, each night before bed. While we usually select a Berenstain Bears story for bedtime reading (they are short with captivating illustrations and succinct moral lessons), we decided to try something a little different, a little longer, and a little more complicated. I don’t know what my children make of it, but they haven’t complained. There are only a few illustrations and most is left to the imagination. But they seem to be enjoying the adventures of the eponymous hero as told from the perspective of the Aviator: a grown-up.

As parents (and grown-ups), we are definitely enjoying the change and a theme of innocence and discovery. The Little Prince inhabits a miniature planet in which he can watch a sunset all day, every day, simply by moving his chair fifteen feet at a time. Surrounded by majestic stars, planets, and other wonders of the universe, the Little Prince is relentless in his pursuit of knowledge about more local objects of nature: flowers, trees, animals, and people.

When we first visited Berrybrook School as a prospective family, we fell in love with its dedication to discovery. As grown-ups, we sometimes believe that discovery is something that happens a million miles away in unexplored dimensions of the galaxy. But for our little princes (and princesses) who are three to six years old, there’s so much for them to learn about fifteen feet in front of them. Things such as flowers and trees, animals... and people.

Our children love The Nook (Who doesn’t?). There they are thrust into a special capsule of nature and exploration that cannot be found in a book in the classroom or a website on a computer. There they can be relentless in their pursuit of knowledge about things that are often taken for granted by grown-ups.

“Grown-ups” is a major theme of the book and in his adventures to several planets on which he meets kings, businessmen, lamplighters, and geographers, his takeaway thought is always some version of this: “Grown-ups are certainly very, very strange.” And we really must seem so sometimes to our preschoolers. Then again, everything in the world must seem strange to them. That thought has stuck with me over the course of our reading this beloved classic.

As a mom, I can relate to the narrator (the Aviator) in many ways. He’s stuck in the desert trying desperately to repair his airplane when he encounters the Little Prince and his barrage of inquiries. Sometimes we’re fixated on our own (adult) problems and issues which demand our attention. Sometimes fielding questions all day can be a little taxing. But he soon realizes the purity and innocence of the Little Prince’s wonder and stops to fully engage and teach and support. And more importantly, to learn alongside him. Perhaps we can all be better “Aviators” when it comes to our own fixations. Perhaps there’s still so much for us to discover as well.

Now that school vacation is over, the winter will be winding down, days will be longer, and there will be more time to explore and discover. We couldn’t be happier to be a Berrybrook family and that our children’s curiosities are fostered. No better a place is there to play under the magnificent stars above only to spot a rose below and ask why it has thorns.

And like it did for us in the story... the answer to that may surprise you.

*~ Laura Picard*  
*Board of Directors*



***The Berrybrook Summer Nature Program is offered during June and July on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 9:00 – 1:00. Children must be 4 by September 1st, (or Berrybrook Beginners!) to register. We also welcome siblings up to 7 years of age. More information can be found on the Berrybrook website or stop by the office.***