



October, 2011

Thursday, October 6	Parent Discussion Group 7:00pm
Monday, October 10	Columbus Day, No School
Wednesday, October 12	Berrybrook Board meeting 7:30 pm
Monday, October 24	Professional Development Day, No School
Wednesday, October 26	BPA meeting 7:00 pm

Notes From the Headmaster

During the summer months, I have a chance to catch up on my reading. I love to read and I usually try to include a variety of genres; best sellers, classics, recommendations from friends and a current early childhood publication. This summer, I picked up *Mind In The Making* by Ellen Galinsky, president and co-founder of the Families and Work Institute. Her book lists what she feels are "The seven essential life skills every child needs." I was particularly interested in her book because I feel that at Berrybrook, teachers focus on these same skills that serve a child well over a lifetime.

Focus and Self Control

Perspective Taking

Communicating

Making Connections

Critical Thinking

Taking on Challenges

Self-Directed, Engaged Learning

(Galinsky, E. (2010). *Mind in the Making* NAEYC Special Edition,. NY, NY Harper Collins Publishers)

We have only been in school a few weeks, and already, children are building these skills. Just think of how children are taking on challenges at the start of school by separating from parents and learning new routines. Ms. Galinsky confirms what we already know - "Life is full of stresses and challenges. Children who are willing to take on challenges (instead of avoiding them or simply coping with them) do better in school and in life." Berrybrook children are embracing their environments where self-directed and engaged learning is provided and encouraged. As our school year unfolds, children will continue to develop these seven important skills. At Berrybrook, we often say that we prepare children for life. We are off to a good start.

- Pat Keeley

First Year Program News

Our First Year children are making new friends and learning lots of names and new songs. As children become more familiar with classmates and teachers saying goodbye at arrival time is more comfortable and children are completely at ease with our healthy hand washing routines. Maybe you have heard "Make New Friends" which is a favorite song that we sing before snack time. We hope all families enjoyed the yummy homemade jelly children made at the end of September. The children were very proud to prepare this delicious treat. Lots of work goes into sorting, mashing and squishing the grapes and measuring all of the ingredients!

Berrybrook emergency evacuation drills started in September and will continue during the year. During our drills, teachers discuss the necessity of being able to get all children and teachers out of the school in case of an emergency. It is a good idea for families to talk about safety at home too, and to agree on a safe meeting place.

In October, classes will explore fire safety and the changing of the seasons. Nature projects will be part of our days. We will look at fruits from this harvest season, some red, some green and some orange. Of course we will be learning songs, hearing stories and playing games around these topics. We may even be able to do some leaf raking. October wraps up with a friendly celebration for Halloween. We will carve a class pumpkin and make a special snack in school.

Our Berrybrook Parent Discussion group kicks off in the month of October. The first evening is very helpful in sharing and offering tips on helping out in your child's classroom. Following this evening,

parents will have the opportunity to sign up as a volunteer. If you plan on volunteering, it is a good idea to attend the October 6th Parent Discussion Group at 7:00pm.

Soon we will be sharing information about the first year "Memory Books." The books are a Berrybrook tradition and a lovely keepsake created for each child. The books contain photographs of the children taken by teachers throughout the year and some parents like to include some of their children's art work. So you may want to save some treasures found in your child's cubbie for this project!

Our First Year Program is off to a wonderful start! Please share any questions and concerns with your teachers at any time.

Make new Friends,
But keep the old.
One is Silver, and
The other, gold.

Thank you,

First Year Teachers -
Mrs. Capasso,
Mrs. Delano, Mrs. Dunn,
Mrs. La Forest, Mrs.
Piccuito and
Mrs. Rosen.



Reuse-recycle!

Our Berrybrook jelly making tradition is a favorite activity, but we are finding it harder and harder to gather glass babyfood jars to store the jelly. We thought this year we would ask families to return the jars and their lids after they have enjoyed the jelly. There will be a basket in the office for recycling the jars. Thank you!

Second Year Program News

Since the first days of school in September, Second Year students have been practicing saying goodbye at the door, washing their hands and beginning their day. Thank you to all parents as you have helped tremendously with this step of independence for your children.

September involved interesting first projects of the year such as watercolor fish, fish suncatchers...even fish for "fishing"! Children practice skills such as tracing, cutting and writing daily at Berrybrook and these projects got us off to a wonderful start! Traditional projects hold strong importance, also. Waiting in cubbies, families found their child's quahog garden made by choosing their shell, then carefully placing statice (another term for sea lavender) and baby's breath in that shell. The process of making jelly occurs for all Second Year Classes in September and October and delicious Berrybrook Jelly is enjoyed by all families.

October brings with it learning about apples and nature. There will be taste testing and the recording of results of friends' favorites, leaf identification and more. Our unit on Fire Safety will involve meeting a very special character named Pickles in a chapter book read in all classes. Much thought and care will go into our projects relating to Halloween as spiders, bats, witches and pumpkins will decorate our room. Children work on some projects for a period of days and see how each step builds upon the last. We will make a favorite story about a Little Old Lady Who Wasn't Afraid of Anything come to life as October comes to an end.

Please feel free to visit our classrooms at Dismissal Time to see displays of our work, however thank you for keeping in mind that the children worked very hard

cleaning their space for the next class to use it.

Teachers will be in touch with parents to arrange for volunteers to help with our pizza making snack for our Harvest Celebration, as well as finding out what hobbies or talents parents might be interested in sharing with their child's class this year.

Thank you for all you do!
Happy Autumn!

The Second Year Teachers,
Miss Bent, Mrs. Caddle, Mrs. Fosdick,
Mrs. LaForest, Mrs. Neal, Mrs. O'Neil,
Mrs. Piccuito and Mrs. Swan



Halloween at Berrybrook

Children will celebrate Halloween by learning Halloween songs, decorating classrooms in Halloween colors and carving pumpkins. As part of our Halloween activities, we will be discussing the differences between make believe and reality. Halloween can be overwhelming for some children and that is why we ask that costumes remain at home.

Individual classes will be choosing and preparing special snacks. **Because Berrybrook has children with severe food allergies, we ask that candy be enjoyed at home.** This is especially important to remember after Halloween when children may want to bring candy to school in pockets or backpacks.

Thank you!

The Value of Parent/Teacher Conferences

By Mrs. Delano

Berrybrook strives to provide a positive, nurturing and open environment for children, parents and staff. Day to day interactions provide an opportunity to address questions and concerns and in November, parents will have the opportunity to schedule individual conference time with one of their child's teachers.

Why make time for a Conference?

Conferences are an essential ingredient for quality early childhood education.

Conferences provide an opportunity for teachers and parents to discuss a child's progress, identify concerns and to set future goals.

Conferences help to identify your child as an individual with unique strengths, weaknesses and attributes.

How to make the most of a Conference

If possible, the ideal is to have both parents attend.

Parents are encouraged to prepare in advance thoughts, questions or concerns, and to bring in and/or take notes.

Teachers or parents may alert the other in advance of a topic or concern they wish to discuss.

Teachers and parents should agree on a plan to follow-up on any school/home approach discussed at the conference.

Parents may let their child know about this time for the teacher and parent to talk and follow up with the child.

Remember

Relax...parents and teachers work as a team - being open minded, respectful and honest while supporting each other for the benefit of the child.

Stay focused on the child. A child's well being and strengths are most comfortable to discuss. Conference time provides an opportunity to address any areas of concern. Through open communication a strategy can be agreed upon. Children respond best when they receive similar responses in both their school and home environments.

Preschool is a time to build life skills such as separating from parents, cooperating with teachers, sharing with peers, developing conflict resolution skills, participating appropriately in group activities, and beginning to discover oneself.

Parent/Teacher Conferences is time well spent!

Parent Discussion Group!

On Thursday, October 6, at 7:00 pm, Mrs. Delano and Mrs. O'Neil will hold the first Parent Discussion Group of the year. The discussion will focus on parent participation in Berrybrook environments and how parents can prepare themselves to be effective in the classroom. It will also be a great opportunity to learn more about the Berrybrook philosophy. During the discussion teachers will introduce some successful strategies we use with children.

Plan on coming to the first parent discussion group to learn tried and true techniques for communicating with young children!

Welcome

Berrybrook families have new additions !

Declan O'Keefe
(4 Day - Rm 1)

Lila Klaucke
(4 Day - Rm 2)

Sabina Knecht
(5 Day - Rm 2)

Congratulations!

Parents Association News

As I sit down to write this, I realize you'll be reading it after the Harvest Fest. I am sure it will be an amazing event because of the help of so many of you! A big thank you to Mrs. Keeley, Mrs. Watts, the other BPA officers, classroom parents and other volunteers who have all pulled together to make the day a success—look for more highlights and thank yous to come!

It has been great to see old friends and to meet new ones as the year gets started. The BPA is excited to be planning for some amazing enrichment activities this year based on the theme "One World." We hope to help the children learn more about different cultures and places around the world—as well as emphasize some "green" messaging.

Our in-school enrichment programs will kick-off in early November with a visit by a member of the Wampanoag Tribe and we are also hoping to start our ongoing music program with our artist-in-residence Eddie Spaghetti - stay tuned for more info.

Also in November, the BPA is planning a Berrybrook shopping night at **Rock, Paper Scissors Toy Store**, 45 Depot Street in Duxbury. 20% of the total sales will come back to the BPA to fund child and adult enrichment programs! Mark your calendar for Thursday evening November 17th. More information will be available soon.

The BPA is also starting a new monthly series of Family Fun Fridays. These casual get-togethers will give us the chance to get together socially when it fits your schedule. We hope you can make some of the events. This month join us at 2:30 on October 21st at Bog Hollow Farm for hayrides, games, a trip to the pumpkin patch, and the cranberry bog. All children go home with a pumpkin and cranberries they pick themselves. The BPA will be subsidizing the cost to keep it as low as we can for all families participating. Be on the lookout for more info and a sign-up sheet at the BPA table. So we have an accurate count please sign up by Oct. 14th. As always siblings are welcome!

We are looking forward to an amazing year. I hope you can all make it to the next BPA meeting on Wednesday, October 26th at 7 p.m. I know it is tough to get out of the house in the evening but I promise your participation will only enhance your experience at Berrybrook. If you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to contact us at berrybrookparentsassociation@gmail.com.

Allyson Frazier

P.S. Each year we ask parents to support us with \$30 in dues. We appreciate the support and checks can be placed in the basket at the BPA table!

Arrival & Dismissal

Please remember the front door will be locked 15 minutes after arrival time. Any families arriving late may ring the doorbell and Mrs. Watts or Mrs. Keeley will let you in. Thank you to parents for waiting until 9:00 in the morning and 1:00 in the afternoon to enter the classroom. Teachers need every minute to prepare for the children. Likewise, thank you for arriving on time for dismissal. Children worry if parents are late. If you have an emergency, please call the office so we can let your child and teachers know you are on your way. Please remember our safety rules:

- **Drive Slowly.**
- **Supervise children after signing out.**
- **Latch the gate behind you.**
- **Hold hands in the parking lot.**
- **Children must never be left unattended in cars.**

A helpful Berrybrook tradition has been for parents to meet another parent with younger children in the lot. One parent can watch younger children in the cars, while the other parent walks Berrybrook students to or from school. Please remember anytime you have an emergency or need help at arrival or dismissal, you may call the office and we will assist you!



Settling In - by Joanne Laforest

They say it takes twenty-one days to form a habit. Thanks to a gradual process of half class visiting days, shortened sessions and now full schedule, children at Berrybrook are beginning to adjust to their daily routine in fewer days than twenty-one. How parents and children say good-bye may be similar to or different from others but once everyone washes their hands and begins their day it can be observed that everyone is settling in. Settling in to the routine of the day. Settling in by knowing where things belong in their classroom. Settling in to their play which is their day's work.

Although comfort in routine is apparent, children still participate in their own way depending on personality, temperament and learning style. Often displayed in the First Year Classes, children may observe the happenings in the classroom first before playing. Some may listen at Circle Time before one day singing. Others may watch movement activities before one day joining in. Similar for the Second Year Classes, children may observe others in play while staying in the comfort of a familiar friendship. Some may study the personalities and nuances of their teachers. Others practice new ways of doing the familiar such as Snack Time where they grow in greater ways of responsibility and independence.

First and Second Year Classes may differ in age and development, however in both programs the familiar song "Hello, My Name Is..." is sung, the question "What is your name?" is asked, and students may accidentally call Mrs. Dunn, Mrs. Capasso or Mrs. O'Neil, Mrs. Neal. All this occurs as we learn, grow and ... settle in.

Berrybrook Board of Directors

Dear Berrybrook Families,

Summer is over and it's back to school. My kids didn't say that -I did. The Board, along with students faculty and staff of Berrybrook have enjoyed a wonderful Summer break and now we are all back at it. Our Board meets monthly throughout the school year, usually on the first or second Wednesday of the Month. The schedule, meeting minutes and my mailbox are always available in the office. Our meetings start at 7:30 and the first 15 minutes are open to public comment. Check your Parent Handbook for our Board members, you may be seeing a few of them everyday at drop off and pick up. We always welcome parent participation in any form, whether volunteering in the classroom, working with the BPA or serving the school on the Board of Directors. I would like to thank our current Board members in advance for another year of valuable volunteer service.

The Board's work includes providing support to the headmaster, teachers and families of Berrybrook in a relevant and meaningful way. We are currently developing a strategic plan for the future to better serve our students, families and community in the years going forward. The items that will be addressed in the strategic plan include revised and expanded policies and procedures for the Board, expanding the programs offered at Berrybrook and we will also have a long term plan for the property and buildings, including some improvements to the playground, nature classroom and trails.

This falls marks the 57th anniversary of the founding of Berrybrook School by Mrs. Katharine B. Mann. In 1954 she created a vision for a new nursery school and embraced the then new concepts of early childhood education and developed a preschool program that endures today. I look forward to a very special school year.

Sincerely,
Christopher DeOrsay
President, Berrybrook School Board of Directors

"Say Hello to Mrs. Keeley!"

I enjoy arrival time. I think it is important to greet every child who comes to Berrybrook each day and it gives me the opportunity to meet and to get to know the entire family, including younger and older siblings. Saying hello to everyone is a favorite aspect of my job, and I am not offended in the least if a child does not say, "Hello Mrs. Keeley" in return. I notice many parents encouraging their child to return my greeting, but please know that I understand that some children, especially our first year students may not feel ready to return a greeting just yet. I know from experience that soon, children will feel very comfortable giving me a hello at arrival and a goodbye at the gate. It is such a thrill for me the first time a child says, "Hi Mrs. Keeley!" spontaneously. Berrybrook teachers model and encourage polite behavior and we know through working with your children, that parents do the same at home. So, feel free to encourage your children to "Say Hello to Mrs. Keeley" but please know that I do not consider it a requirement!

- Mrs. K