



February 2018

Monday, February 19 - 23

Vacation week

Wednesday, February 28

Board Meeting 7:00



Notes from the Head of School

An article published last month in the New York Times detailed how a challenge from the Dalai Lama had a number of preschools trying to “teach something that has not always been considered an academic subject: kindness”. The article went on to detail a new ‘Kindness Curriculum’ that was helping children focus more on their emotions. It helps a preschooler recognize that when they are unkind to another person, it has more to do about them and their feelings rather than the one who they are being unkind to, and when they understand their feelings it might help them not act out against their classmates. The article goes on to explain that when a child helps to recognize feelings - even the “negative” ones - a child feels validated and will begin to understand the feeling and the implications it may have. Emotional lessons taught to younger children need to be reinforced throughout childhood in order for the lessons to have a lasting impact.

Last week we had our second Professional Development Day and coincidentally the subject was “The Impact of Emotions in the Classroom”. When I scheduled this training, it was before I had the opportunity to read the New York Times article. When our trainer, Tracy, asked how we schedule Emotion Curriculum in our classrooms, we all had blank looks on our faces. You see, for us at Berrybrook it’s not about plugging a spot into the curriculum lesson to check off the box about the emotion domain. We don’t have to schedule it because it’s always in the classroom. It is the heart and soul of Berrybrook and a part of our vision, mission, and values statements. We focus on emotions with every

interaction we have with the children, and we do that to allow children to express themselves in a safe environment. If they know they are able to feel every feeling - and not just the “good” ones - they learn how to manage difficult future situations. We may not like every single person we come into contact with on any given day, however we need to know how to interact with them in a polite and respectful manner. If children learn how to recognize their emotions now and how they make them feel, as well as how to respect others and their feelings, they will be able to get along with many different personalities in the world. As the teachers and I sometimes say.....we’re helping to shape good citizens of the world!

At Berrybrook, young children learn, are supported and are nurtured. They prepare themselves for future success, form cherished lifelong memories, and discover their own path to greater independence. (from Berrybrook’s Mission)

~ Mrs. Watts



Valentine’s Day Celebration



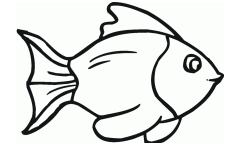
All of our classes will be celebrating Valentine’s Day by delivering cards and enjoying a special Berrybrook snack.

We ask that the children bring a valentine for each classmate. Please remember, because we have children with food allergies, valentines should not include candy.

ALL CANDY SHOULD REMAIN AT HOME.

Beginners Notes

Encouraging Self Help



The month of February marks the halfway point to the end of the Beginners year and on to the First year. This is when they start to become independent and want to do everything on their own. Think of all the tasks that we complete every day: dressing, bathing, grooming/hygiene, feeding, and using the bathroom. These are all daily living tasks. How hard can they be, right? Well for two and three year olds, our daily living tasks can be a struggle, especially when each child develops differently.

It can be faster and less messy to do things for our children, but they learn so much more from doing things for themselves. When children practice self-help skills such as feeding and dressing themselves, they are practicing using their large and small motor skills.

There are four main types of self-help skills:

- **Self Feeding**- The best way to encourage feeding skills is for them to practice feeding themselves from infancy on. Begin offering finger foods; introduce a spoon and fork and give them plenty of time to practice. Give them the tools to be successful. Consider bowls that attach to the table, child size utensils (some are weighted for stability) and small cups with handles and spouts for pouring.
- **Independent dressing and grooming**- Begin with toddlers by encouraging them to help pull socks on and off, pull up pants (avoid zippers at first) after diapering or using the toilet and have them help put arm and sleeves in. Make a visual chart for them to look at and follow as they dress. Example: First comes underwear, then pants, then shirt, then socks etc. For shoe tying strategies you can use a practice shoe at table-top level, use contrasting shoe laces (two different colors) or use wire shoes laces (they are easier to bend and stay in place).
- **Toileting**- Look for signs of readiness for using the toilet. Signs to be aware of include being able to walk, sitting down and standing independently, staying dry for at least two hours at a time while awake, and waking up dry after a nap. When using the toilet you want your child to feel safe and have a positive experience. Using a foot rest or lateral supports on the toilet can help your child feel stable and safe. Having a visual schedule using stickers can help encourage your child and my favorite is to have the child face the lid and give them dry erase markers to play and draw to distract and have a positive experience.
- **Helping with daily chores like table setting and picking up toys**- Giving toddlers responsibility for placing napkins or utensils on the table will make them feel proud

and included. Encouraging children to begin clearing their own plates when they are old enough to carry one, or to put toys away after using them will make them use skills of postural control, balance, organizational skills, and bilateral motor coordination. Some strategies to help you with these skills can be the reward system, a chore list, and labeling drawers and bins for easy clean up.

Self-help skills are worth the time and effort that are needed to let a child become more independent. The secret to success is to give children age appropriate experiences and provide the appropriate supports to help children gain confidence in their abilities. We can offer opportunities for children to develop self-help skills throughout every day and give them ample time to work on these important tasks.

Remember that adults are important role models in learning all of the skills necessary to navigate daily life; children learn a great deal from watching all of us.

~Mrs . Connell

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



.....FYI.....

***Berrybrook artwork is being featured at the
Duxbury Free Library during the month of February.
The display, "Winter Wonderland", is comprised of several classes.
So if your family happens to visit the library, be sure to check it out!***



First Year Notes

Emergent Writing

At first glance, First Year art projects may appear as just that – art. While that is true and all daily art projects become your child’s “work” demonstrating their creativity with glue and paint, there is also the opportunity for meaningful learning about letters. In addition to all their “work”- block building, puzzle making, dramatic play, water table exploration, play dough creating and problem solving with others – the daily art project provides children with an opportunity to understand that “letters together make words, which identify something” ...in a way that is developmentally appropriate to their age and understanding.

One art project we recently provided to extend learning about animals and the responsibilities of a veterinarian included the written name on the paper animal shape with which children chose to create. Before beginning the project, at group time we discussed how sometimes we see our own names on art project supplies to find which items belong to us. “These letters are different”, we explained. “Instead of the letters in OUR names, these letters belong to each animal.” We then asked, as we pointed to CAT on the paper cat shape, “If these letters C–A–T belong to this animal, what do you think these letter say?” “CAT!” they exclaim! We then did the same with DOG, BIRD, and BUNNY.

When the children traveled over to the project table that day they would choose their animal and proudly “read” its name! We would also ask that ever-so-familiar question, “Now, how will we know this CAT belongs to you?” and they would immediately answer “Write my name!” and follow with writing the shape of the letters they know, practicing writing their letters as we write the letters for them to see near their project, and discussing the characteristics of each of their letters (straight, curvy, up and down, across, etc.) The meaningful result of all this work? Pride, confidence, independence, and UNDERSTANDING of the power of letters and words ...and names!

How can you include this meaningful work at home? “Read” with your child the items on your grocery list! Better yet, write it out together and let them write their own items on there – it’s ok if you don’t recognize the letters, they know just what it says! Point out signs and words all around them in their environment so you demonstrate how all those words tell YOU something important also – what direction to go, how to be safe while driving on the road, whether a store is “open” or “closed”, or which letters spell out their favorite character in a book! Most importantly, make it meaningful. Make it natural. There is no rush to learning letters nor learning how to write them. It unfolds naturally and when they are ready, it BLOOMS ...keep planting the seeds.

Oh! Want to know the really fun part to the paper animal project? Covering each animal shape with lots of band aids! Why? Not just to make the animals feel better but

do you know how tricky it is to open a bandaid? To take it out of the wrapper? To peel off the back and stick it onto paper? Guess what? Those skills are strengthening your child's fine motor capabilities so that when they are ready to write all those letters, they will be able to do!

Amazing!

Happy writing! There is lots of learning going on this month! Valentine's Day brings thoughts of love for all to share and many opportunities for the class to talk about feelings. At this point in the school year, the children are very comfortable at school. They know their routine, their teachers, their classmates, and what is expected of them. The children dive into deeper levels of learning, exploring, play and social interaction. It is a very exciting time of the school year for everyone to see!

~ Mrs. LaForest

Mrs. LaForest teaches in the Beginners, 3 Day Room 3 and 4 Day Room 2 classes

2 and 3 Day Classes



Duxbury Post Office Field Trip ***56 Depot Street***

Remember to save the date, and meet your teachers there at 9 a.m.

3 Day Room 3: Tuesday, February 6

3 Day Room 1: Wednesday, February 7

2 Day Room 1: Friday, February 9



Second Year Notes

February may be the shortest month of the year but it's long on love and Berrybrook is a loving place to be. It's a place where everyone loves to learn. Regardless of size or age we are all teachers here learning from each other. This is how it has always been and this is how it will always be. . . it's the Berrybrook way of life.

In February, children learn about groundhogs, musical instruments, Presidents, and the Post Office, but most of all they learn about "love of family". The thought and effort that goes into making Valentine gifts for family is immeasurable. I would like to share with you a glimpse into the past and how a Valentine tradition came into being. In 1990, Robin Fox joined the Berrybrook staff. On Valentine's Day, instead of a card, Robin gave a heart pin to each of the teachers. It was made from red mat board cut into the shape of a heart and decorated with an assortment of buttons. Needless to say, the next year the children made heart pins for their Mothers. A tradition was born. Although there have been minute changes in the heart pin since those long ago days, the tradition goes on. I would love to tell you more about this gift, but then it wouldn't be a surprise, would it? The children would love to give you a detailed explanation about it themselves. Just ask them. Sit right down, shut off your cell phone, look straight into their eyes and listen to each and every precious word that comes out of their mouth. You will be fulfilling their need to be listened to by giving them the gift of time. It's a win/win situation and all in the name of LOVE!

HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY

It is important that each Valentine your child brings to school has the recipient's name on it printed in uppercase letters. The children will be mailing these Valentines to classmates by placing them in decorated boxes with each child's name on it. This is a learning opportunity which helps the children learn letter recognition, develop matching skills, and learn what classmates' names look like on paper. Thank you in advance for helping your child write the names on the valentines.

When you send a Valentine
That's the time for fun.
Stick it underneath the door
Ring the bell and run, run, run
Ring the bell and run.

NOTE: Robin Fox is the person who started the Summer Program at Berrybrook and after she left Berrybrook she was instrumental in facilitating the after school program in the Duxbury School system.

~Mrs. O'Neil

Mrs. O'Neil teaches in the 5 Day class

Parents Association Notes

Winter is in full swing and we are all surviving the typical New England winter weather pattern. We have broken from some of the frigid weather and enjoyed some milder temperatures which have provided the students the opportunity to play in snow and explore the Berrybrook Nook in a whole new way.

Enrichment

Yoga is officially underway for the entire school. It is amazing to see the smiles on the first year students when they see Miss Kim in the big room and learn that she is there to teach them. The Beginners and First year students are just beginning their yoga journey, but the Second year students are now proficient at many yoga poses. The Second year students will continue to learn how yoga is beneficial to their bodies. Make sure to ask your child about their yoga experience. Some upcoming enrichment activities include our annual visit from the dental hygienist and Soule Homestead.

Family Fun Fridays

Thank you to all the families who attended our Family Fun Friday event at South Shore Natural Science Center. It was a fun event and it is always nice to venture to places around the South Shore.

The signup for our next event, Rosalita's Puppets, on February 9th at 1:30, is located at the BPA table. This event will be held at Berrybrook and the cost is \$7 per child. Payments can be left in the box on the BPA table or by Venmo. Come enjoy an interactive story time with friends!

As always, thank you to those who have already paid their BPA dues! If you have yet to do so, it's not too late! We ask for a \$30 contribution per family, which goes directly toward student enrichment in and out of the classroom. Forms are available at the BPA table for contributions. A big thank you to our Berrybrook families for your continued support and participation! Please let us know if you have any questions, comments, or concerns. You can email us at berrybrookparentsassociation@gmail.com.

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

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!!

From The Board of Directors

My daughter Natalie still talks about the day I brought in my yiayia's *tiropita* recipe and taught her 4-day class to grate and crumble the cheeses, combine the ingredients, and fold phyllo dough into little triangular packets brushed with melted butter. Natalie loved being my special helper, since she and I had made a similar recipe, *spanikopita*, before, and she knew the method for working with phyllo. She was so proud to share with her teachers and her classmates.

I loved having my children at Berrybrook because this school was a wonderful partner in teaching my children culture. Beyond meeting their basic needs, mothering is teaching my children the culture of our family, our community, and our larger world. A culture of kindness, respect, and exploration. And also about the culture in which we pick berries and make something out of them. Kids learn that hard work and fun can go hand in hand. These lessons are more important than ever in a time where we can pop nearly anything out of a box or a microwave.

Berrybrook is teaching our children to value the work of creating culture, be it food or holiday decorations. The work of creating, caring, and nourishing is undervalued in the modern world, but not at this wonderful school. As our children continue to progress, they will carry with them the lessons they learned here.

Now ages 9 and 6, my kids openly reminisce about their time at Berrybrook. During school vacations, I relish the chance to bring my kids back into a Berrybrook way of being. Free play, art supplies, legos, and (my favorite part) cooking traditions. I am so grateful for the way Berrybrook continues to bring boys and girls into the kitchen where they connect what their small hands can do to create the tastes and smells of homemade food.

Michelle Hatfield
Board of Directors



Snow Cancellation Reminder

Berrybrook will cancel school if Duxbury Public Schools are closed due to weather emergencies. Please watch 7NEWS (NBC) for cancellation notices.

MID YEAR CHECK IN

It is hard to believe that we have passed the halfway point in our school year! If there are any concerns or questions that you have about your child, please let a teacher know. Conferences will be beginning soon, but the teachers are happy to meet in the next few weeks if you would like a chance to sit and speak with them.



Welcome!

Congratulations to the Luzitano family in the Beginners Class. They have a new addition, baby Harry Francis!

Congratulations to the Dinneen family in the 3 Day Room 3 class. They have welcomed a new baby sister, Heidi!



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 a Berrybrook Beginner!) to register.

We also welcome children up to 7 years of age.

All current families will receive complete information about the program and registration process during the week of February 26, 2018.