

BERRYBROOK NEWS

October, 2009

Monday October 5	Lunch Bunch begins
Tuesday, October 6	Parent Discussion Group 7:00 pm
Monday, October 13	Columbus Day, No School
Saturday, October 17	BPA Fall Harvest Festival 10:00-1:00
Friday, October 23	Professional Development, No School
Wednesday, October 28	Berrybrook Board of Directors 7:00 pm

Notes from the Headmaster

I can tell already it is going to be a wonderful year. The start of school went extremely well. There are always varying degrees of separation anxiety during the first weeks of school and it is not limited to children. It is not unusual for parents to feel ambivalent about leaving their children in a new environment. At Berrybrook, we ease our way into separation by having the BPA playdates before school starts, shortened days the first two weeks of school and teacher home visits. With all of these attempts to ease separation, we find that it does not take very long for children to adjust to new environments and routines. It is barely three weeks into the school year and children are saying goodbye to parents with confidence and getting busy in their classrooms. With the first days of school behind us, teachers are focusing on two important areas; getting to know each child as an individual, and building a community in the classroom. It is important to determine the temperaments of individual children so that teachers may choose activities and approaches that are effective with each child. It is equally important to create a classroom community with its own unique chemistry. Teachers have remarked that their groups are demonstrating productivity, enthusiasm and cooperation in the classroom already. I think it is a reflection of the attention our parents give to raising their children to have our 3 and 4 year olds arrive at Berrybrook so well prepared to be part of a caring community.

It's October and the year is underway. We've created a partnership of dedicated board members, hardworking parents, compassionate teachers and capable children looking forward to a year filled with growth for each of us. At Berrybrook our goal is to savor every second, but in spite of our efforts to slow things down the year passes by quickly. Try to enjoy every minute.

Pat Keeley

2 & 3 Day Classroom News

September welcomes us all to school. For some it is a first time experience for others it is returning to a familiar setting. We are guided by the song we sing everyday at snack "Make New Friends and Keep the Old". Our growing Berrybrook community becomes stronger with each passing day.

The focus in September is getting to know each other and classroom expectations for children, teachers, parents, classmates, etc. It is a time of adjustment and trust building for all. Berrybrook's traditions of shortened days and Home Visits have proven to be a successful approach connecting school and home.

September activities (projects, stories, songs, etc.) revolve around Ocean/Sea Life and Jelly making. The Berrybrook tradition of making jelly includes picking, pressing and cooking berries finishing with each child bringing a sample jar of jelly home!

October activities include Fire Safety, Autumn & Halloween. Talking about keeping safe includes practicing an Emergency Evacuation, interactive materials in the classroom and a visit from the Fire Department. Autumn includes leaf painting and nature walks. Halloween is enjoyed in a friendly way by painting a paper bag pumpkin and carving a jack-o-lantern.

Please let us know about any questions or concerns you may have as our school year continues. We look forward to getting to know each other better.

Thank you,
2 & 3 Day teachers

4 & 5 Day Classroom News

The month of September is a time of the year when many children begin a new school experience. They are adjusting to a different environment (classroom space, teachers, classmates). Some children adapt easily while others need more time to feel comfortable. To assist with this transition from unstructured summer to a school routine, the classrooms and activities have been set up to ease the children into the new year. Home visits and the shortened days are a couple of ways which help the children become familiar with their new environment. One way to learn everyone's name is through music. At Berrybrook we sing a special song with a catchy clapping rhythm.

Hello!

Hello (name)
And how do you do?
Who's that sitting
Next to you?

Since we live near the coast we begin with activities relating to the sea. It is important to start with a topic that may be familiar to the children, thus giving them the opportunity to share their knowledge and experiences related to shells, sand, fishing, etc. The children have been very busy water coloring paper fish for our classroom display. They have also been examining and identifying various shells comparing sizes, textures, and colors as well as singing a song about a little fish.



Little Fishy

Little fishy went out to play,
Wiggled his fins and swam away.
Down he went in the water bright,
Opened his mouth and took a bite!
Mmm, Mmm,
Tastes good!

Every year, soon after school starts, children make jelly. The grapes are washed, sorted, cooked and strained with the resulting juice ready to make into jelly. Each child has a jar to take home and at times jelly will be served with snack.

Apples are another fruit that we will be studying. Our activities will include; painting, cooking, tasting, singing, an apple survey and a special story.

October is Fire Safety month at Berrybrook. We will be discussing fire safety through books, art projects and dramatic play. Reading "The Fire Cat," starring "Pickles," is a long time Berrybrook tradition. The children will practice the classroom's fire emergency plan each month so that they are comfortable and knowledgeable about this procedure.

As we approach the end of the month, the children will be making decorations for the classroom as well as learning some facts about pumpkins, bats and spiders. At circle time the children will be learning songs about Halloween, listening to non-scary stories, and participating in a play. We will also have many discussions about "pretend and real." Hopefully this will help make Halloween an enjoyable and memorable experience for everyone.

To celebrate Halloween at Berrybrook, the children will be making individual pizzas for our holiday group snack that day. The 4-day celebration will be Thursday, October 29th and the 5-Day celebration will be Friday, October 30th. We are asking that Halloween costumes remain at home for this celebration.

PUMPKINS

Pick-a-pick-a-pumpkin from the pile.
We can give him eyes
And a great big smile.
Pick-a-pick-a-pumpkin round and clean.
Then we'll be ready for Halloween.
Halloween, Halloween,
Then we'll be ready for Halloween.

Thank you,
4 & 5 Day teachers

This month, each class will be carving a large pumpkin. If you would like to donate a pumpkin to your child's class, please talk to your child's teacher. Thank you!

Fire Safety

Berrybrook fire drills started in September and will continue during the year. During our drills, teachers discuss the necessity of being able to get all children out of the school in case of an emergency. Children are reminded that we all stay together and that teachers will make sure that no one is left behind because we check all areas, including the bathroom. Once outside, children gather along the fence on the playground and teachers take attendance. It is a good idea for families to talk about fire safety at home too, and to agree on a safe meeting place.

Transitions

by Joanne LaForest

September. It brings to mind the idea of starting over, new beginnings, looking back on the past and planning ahead...transitioning from one year to the next. The word "transition" is defined in the dictionary as "1. a passage from one state, stage, subject or place to another : change" and "2. an abrupt change in energy state or level" (www.m-webster.com/dictionary). The two definitions are intriguing. The first referring to "a passage" the second "an abrupt change". Both definitions are fitting to us all, almost every day.

Transitioning to the new school year could be referred to as "a passage from one state, stage, subject or place to another. As families begin the school year, some may not even be able to begin to imagine how their child will grow and change in the months ahead. But it will happen. It always does. Change is constant.

The second definition, referring to an abrupt change, represents many occurrences throughout a child's day. Interrupting their play at home to go to Berrybrook in the morning, clean up time at school, leaving the playground to go home and have lunch are just some of the abrupt changes children experience. To show respect for a child's hard work and joy in what they are doing, it is most important to forewarn them of a change. Daily routines provide expectation of the changes so that a reminder is usually all that is needed for a successful transition to the next activity. For example, a child knowing that he or she can expect some quiet play time, a bath and a great book from Mom or Dad every night before going to bed will probably transition easier to bed time than if the routine were different each night or it was abruptly announced "Time for bed!" while they were building with their Lego's in the living room. Respectful words such as "Soon it will be time to go to the grocery store. Would you like to play for a few more minutes or are you ready to go now?" can help prepare a child for transitioning to the next activity and give him or her the power to choose how they will transition. This may need to be followed up with "It is time to get in the car now. Should we do it very loudly or very softly?" There will be times, however, after providing much respect and opportunities for choice that a child may be unable to choose and demand he or she won't be moving on to what needs to happen next. It is respectful for a parent to say to their child, "I see you are unable to choose how you will be getting in the car. We need to go to the grocery store now. Maybe next time you'll be able to choose." Transitions can always be handled respectfully, even when met with disagreement.

I believe that everyone appreciates respect when it is necessary to "switch gears". My children appreciate that when I wake up in the morning I need (need!) my morning cup of coffee to transition into the day...to change into Mom...to change into Mrs. LaForest. I most appreciate when someone says to me, "When you're finished with what you're doing could you help me with something?" I think it's fair to say that our children appreciate it also. Whether becoming age four after being three for so long or moving from breakfast to brushing their teeth, I think respect for what they are working on, in that very moment, is what our children most deserve.

Berrybrook Birthdays

Every student at Berrybrook will have their own special "Berrybrook Birthday" even if their birthday is in June, July or August. The celebration includes choosing a special birthday snack for the class to have together, making a special birthday crown, and having parents come to class for all or part of the day.

For three and four year olds, birthdays are a very big deal. Family birthday celebrations that take place at home are often a hot topic in the classroom and they can sometimes lead to hurt feelings. When these discussions do come up in class, teachers remind children that their family birthday parties should be discussed at home.

We appreciate parents being sensitive to this issue. To avoid any disappointment, we ask that birthday party invitations be extended outside of school. All classes have a list of addresses and phone numbers for families available to parents. Children love to get a card in the mail or a special phone call.
Thank you for your cooperation.

Arrival & Dismissal

Starting on Monday, October 5, 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 your cooperation in the parking lot. There can be a lot of traffic at dismissal on

Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays with three classes going home. Parents should remind children that at Berrybrook we hold hands in the parking lot. The combination of large cars and small children requires all of our careful attention.

Please remember our parking lot rules:

Drive Slowly.

Turn engines off.

Bring siblings with you.

Supervise your children after signing out.

Hold hands in the parking lot.

Lock the gate behind you.

Children must never be left unattended in cars.

If you have younger children in the car, try the buddy system! Make an arrangement to meet another parent with younger children in the lot at arrival and dismissal and park next to each other. One parent can watch younger children in the cars, while the other parent walks Berrybrook students to or from school. Please remember that anytime you are you have an emergency or need help at arrival or dismissal, you may call the office and we will assist you.

Families are welcome to take advantage of our playground by staying to play with friends after school. We ask that you sign your child out and empty your child's cubby as soon as you arrive.
Thank you!

Berrybrook Parent Discussion Group

At Berrybrook, there are many ways for parents to participate in our program. Depending on the needs of each group, parents may share a special talent, create classroom materials at home, accompany children on field trips, or help out in the classroom. The younger children in the 2 and 3 Day classes appreciate an extra pair of hands almost any day, and teachers will post a sign up sheet for parents to volunteer. The children in the 4 and 5 Day classes are more independent, and are very capable of doing things themselves. Teachers in those classes are more likely to ask parents to participate in a special project.

On Tuesday, October 6, at 7:00 pm, Mrs. Delano, Mrs. La Forest 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. For example:

Foster Independent Thinking

Always ask children open ended questions rather than directing them:

“What do you need to put on to keep your clothes clean?” rather than *“Put on a smock.”*

What do you need to put on your paper so we'll know who it belongs to?” rather than *“Write your name.”*

Give Plenty of Time to Respond

Always give children plenty of time to respond to your question. Just because you may respond quickly in a situation doesn't mean everybody does. Some of us need more time to process our thoughts and give an answer.

Use a Quiet Voice

Yelling at children is ineffective. Yes, it may bring results the first time, but your success rate is short lived. In other words “you may win the battle, but you will lose the war” and along with it the children's respect for you. Speak to children in an appropriate manner. Get down on their level and make eye contact. Use a quiet voice. Children will listen when they know you only speak when you have something important to say.

Avoid Using the Words Don't and No

Instead of saying, *“Don't run!”* say, *“Running is for outside”.*

Instead of saying, *“Don't write on the wall!”* say, *“Crayons are for writing on paper.”*

Instead of saying, *“Don't stand on the chair!”* say, *“The chair is for sitting on.”*

We find the phrases and techniques that are so effective at Berrybrook work at home as well. So, plan on coming to the first parent discussion group to learn tried and true techniques for communicating with young children.

Berrybrook Parent Association News

Fall is in the air, school has begun, and new and returning families have enjoyed their first days at Berrybrook. Welcome!

Over the next several months you will find various ways to get involved in the Berrybrook community. Please mark your calendar for the Harvest Festival scheduled for **Saturday, October 17th from 10-1pm**. There will be live entertainment, a hayride, face painting, crafts, food, and more! Planning has already begun and we would like to thank the parents that came to the first BPA meeting. We were able to recruit many volunteers to ensure that this day will be a successful one! We are still in need of more help! Please check out the list of still needed volunteers for the Harvest Festival at the BPA table.

We are in need of high school students who would be willing to decorate faces during the event. Please email Kelly Innello at kinnello@comcast.net if you know of a student who would be interested in face painting. They will receive community service hours for assisting us. A notice will be placed in your child's cubby shortly to sign up for the Harvest Festival. The Harvest Festival will be \$8 per family if you sign up in advance or \$10 at the gate on the day of the event.

At our next BPA meeting, we will begin planning the student enrichment programs, parent programs, community outreach, and fundraising. Thanks to Martha Dennison and Madeleine Sampson for agreeing to help organize the enrichment programs. Also, thanks to Brooke Lovett, Karen Gallagher, and

Fleur Pang for volunteering to help with our community service efforts this year!

Thanks to all the parents who have already paid the BPA dues. Although this is not mandatory, the dues help to fund the various enrichment programs. The dues this year are \$30 and should be made payable to the Berrybrook Parent Association. Please note that this is a one time fee for the entire school year! You can drop the dues off at the BPA table!

Our next BPA meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, November 10th at 7:00pm**. Please join us to find about upcoming events and how you might get involved. We hope you will come and share your ideas with us!

We are looking forward to seeing you at the Harvest Festival, the next BPA meeting, and all other upcoming events!!

Jane Redman, President
Devon Kohler, Vice-President
Stacy Watts, Treasurer
Trisha Stravin, Secretary



Hurt No Living Thing

Hurt no living thing;
Ladybird, nor butterfly,
Nor moth with dusty wing,
Nor cricket chirping cheerily,
Nor grasshopper so light of leap,
Nor dancing gnat, nor beetle fat,
Nor harmless worms that creep

Christina G. Rosetti

Throughout the year, teachers work with children to build respect for living things. "Living things" include themselves, their classmates, other people, and all plants and animals. We encourage children to use words when settling differences, and to be thoughtful and kind to each other. Teachers make sure even insects in the classroom are carefully released to the outdoors. Outside, worms and other creatures can be observed, but should be left right where they are. Trees and bushes are also living things, so you would never pull on their branches, berries or leaves. We appreciate parents reinforcing these lessons to **"Hurt No Living Thing."**

Welcome

The Berrybrook community welcomed many new members recently –

Ryder Berry
(Craig, Vanessa, Hudson & Griffin)
(4 Day-Rm 2)

Mia Bizzozero
(Scott, Becky, Christopher, Nicky)
(3 Day-Rm 1)

Holly Monroe
(Derek, Sherry, Ethan)
(Board of Directors)

Gus Mazanec
(Matt, Kerri, Ben, Sam Max)
(3 Day-Rm 3)

Daniel Gallagher
(Tom, Mary, Elizabeth, T.J.)
(3 Day-Rm 1 & 5 Day)

Congratulations!

Overcoming Stressful Times

(This information is from an October 07 Berrybrook News article by Mark Longsjo. It's very helpful this time of year - Mrs. Keeley)

We all have our share of anxieties, especially as they relate to return-to-school issues. Our children's feelings are no different, yet they do have their own ways of displaying them. Anxiety about separation, performance, and socialization is normal, and parents have been finding ways to deal with it for years and years. I understand that each child's transition is his or her own, but sometimes general guidelines can be helpful. I have found one resource to be particularly helpful in reminding me of things I can do as a parent to help my children overcome stressful times. The following ideas are from the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP).

Let your children know you care. Reinforce the ability to cope. Children absorb their parents' anxiety, so model optimism and confidence for your child. Let your child know that it is natural to be a little nervous anytime you start something new but that your child will be just fine once he or she becomes familiar with classmates, the teacher, and school routine.

Do not overreact. If the first few days are a little rough, try not to over react. Young children in particular may experience separation anxiety or shyness initially but teachers are trained to help them adjust. If you drop them off, try not to linger. Reassure them that you love them, will think of them during the day, and will be back.

Reinforce your child's ability to cope. Give your child a few strategies to manage the situation on his or her own. But encourage your child to tell you or the teacher if the problem persists.

Arrange play dates. Try to arrange get-togethers with some of your child's classmates during the first few weeks of school to help your child re-establish positive social relationships with peers.

Resources:

Clark, L. (1996). *SOS: Help for parents* (2nd ed.). Berkley, CA: Parents' Press. ISBN: 0935111204.

Dawson, M. P. (2004). Homework: A guide for parents. In A. Canter, L. Paige, M. Roth, I. Romero, & S. Carroll (Eds.), *Helping children at home and school II: Handouts for families and educators*. Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.

Rimm, S. (1996). *Dr. Sylvia Rimm's smart parenting: How to raise a happy, achieving child*. New York: Crown. ASIN: 0517700638.

Websites:

National Association of School Psychologists – www.nasponline.org
Parent Information Center – www.parentinformationcenter.org

Berrybrook Board of Directors

The Berrybrook School Board of Directors is comprised of volunteers – 14 this year – and we are responsible for the governing and oversight of the School and its activities. Most of us are past, present, or future parents of Berrybrook students, and our appreciation of the School and the staff is one reason we volunteer our time. We also all have an interest in early childhood education – even if it is not specific to our vocations – and we strive as a board to make Berrybrook School the best early childhood education program it can be. We meet every last Wednesday of the month (unless otherwise scheduled), and we invite communication of all kinds from the Berrybrook community. If you have questions, comments, or suggestions, please know that you can attend the beginning of our monthly board meetings (7pm), or you can leave us written correspondence at the school, or you can email us. Contact information is available with Mrs. Keeley and Mrs. Watts at the School.

I am very pleased to introduce our three new members this year. Michael Stravin, Derek Monroe, and Carol Gibbon have joined our Board of Directors, and their experience with finance, information technology, and academics and school administration will build on the strengths and experience of our returning members. I am very proud to represent this fine group of people, and we look forward to working with Mrs. Keeley and the staff to make this another very special year at Berrybrook.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I welcome all of you to Berrybrook School, and remind you that the Board is available to you.

Mark Longsjo President, Berrybrook Board of Directors

When Your Child Comes Home Messy... (Excerpt from *Early Childhood News*)

Red Paint in the hair? Blue Paint on the jeans? Sand in the shoes? Jelly on the favorite shirt? White socks look brown? Sleeves a little damp?

Your Child Probably ...

- Worked with a friend
- Solved a problem
- Created a masterpiece
- Negotiated a difference
- Learned a new skill
- Had a great time
- Developed new language skills

Your Child Probably Didn't ...

- Feel Lonely
- Become bored
- Do repetitive tasks that are too babyish
- Do worksheet tasks that are too easy
- Do sit-down work that is discouraging

You Probably ...

- Paid good money for those clothes
- Will have some trouble getting the paint out
- Are concerned that the teacher isn't paying attention to your child

The Teacher Probably ...

- Was aware of your child's needs and interests
- Spent time planning a challenging activity for the children
- Encouraged the children to try new things
- Provided smocks for the children
- Was worried that you might be concerned

Classroom Calendars

Each month, teaching teams meet to discuss what activities will be appropriate for their particular group and post calendars by the cubbies to let parents know what activities will be included during the month. Parents should know however, that activities listed for each day may be changed from time to time for a variety of reasons. Teachers, as their first priority, must plan each day based on the needs of the children. It is not uncommon to reschedule an activity because another approach is more appropriate for the group. As a general rule, all activities happen during the month, but the curriculum remains fluid to meet the needs of the children. That is also why teachers refrain from sending home calendars. We would not want to disappoint children who are expecting an activity that has been rescheduled. In addition, we want to accentuate the joy of discovery children experience when they reach their own conclusions about what is going to happen in their classrooms each day.

Tuition Payments

Tuition payment #3 is now due. Payment #1 was made over the summer and the second payment was due on September 1st.

Monthly tuition is:

2 Day	\$ 222.00
3 Day	\$ 325.00
4 Day	\$ 404.00
5 Day	\$ 476.00

If you have any questions, please feel free to call Mrs. Watts at 781-585-2307 or email her at swatts@berrybrookschoo.org