



November, 2011

Thursday, November 3	Parent Discussion Group
Thursday, November 10	Second Year Trip to Plimoth Plantation
Friday, November 11	Veteran's Day, No School
Thursday, November 17	BPA Evening at Rock, Paper, Scissors
November 23, 24, 25	Thanksgiving Break

Notes from the Headmaster

In addition to funding training, college courses and NAEYC membership, our Board of Directors provides three professional days per year dedicated to helping teachers improve their work with children. On October 24th, our first professional day this year, teachers arranged to observe in other early childhood environments. We visited a wide array of settings; Derby Academy in Hingham, Winnituxet Preschool in Halifax, South Shore Natural Science Center in Norwell, Erdman Preschool in Situate, Hop, Skip, Jump in Plymouth, Friends Academy in Dartmouth, and Bay Farm Montessori Academy, Chandler Kindergarten, and the Integrated Preschool in Duxbury. Teachers enjoy seeing different approaches used in other preschool settings and it is valuable to observe kindergarten programs that will be the next step for our students. We always return to school after these observations refreshed and full of ideas and often with a new perspective on our work. The staff is grateful to the Board and our families for supporting our professional development. Berrybrook is a place for everyone to learn. Children, parents, grandparents, siblings, babysitters, nannies, aunts, uncles, teachers and all others walking through our gate are encouraged to ask questions, share an idea or join an activity. Children in our classrooms learn by doing and are always encouraged to try something new and to *keep* trying - sometimes it is necessary to attempt things over and over before mastery. For example, many of you have seen first hand the excitement and the feeling of accomplishment when your child makes it all the way across the horizontal ladder. At Berrybrook, we call that "The Joy of Discovery." I have to admit that I never made jelly until I came to Berrybrook - or made latkes - or tapped a maple tree. I have learned so much from the Berrybrook philosophy created by Katharine Mann in 1954. I have enhanced my interactions with children by observing Berrybrook teachers and I learn something from a child every single day. Our community values and supports learning for all. Together we can make great things happen at Berrybrook.

- Pat Keeley

First Year Program News

Fall has arrived at Berrybrook! Apples, pumpkins, leaves and nature collages fill our classrooms. The aroma of apples baking was present as classes made applesauce for snack. Each of the first year classes has gone on a nature walk. The children enjoyed listening to, looking at and smelling the many natural elements present here at Berrybrook.

We began the month of October learning about fire safety. The Berrybrook fire engine was a popular item in all classrooms, and even on the playground. In the middle of October we focused on apples and the changing season. We wrapped up the month talking about pumpkins and celebrating with a Harvest Celebration. Classes scooped and carved their own pumpkins. The children enjoyed looking at what was inside the pumpkin. Some of our favorite songs were "Way Up High in the Apple Tree" and "5 Little Pumpkins".

November brings cool, crisp autumn air. Hats, gloves and jackets are appreciated, as we do go out every day. During this month we will explore woodworking in our classroom. Children will have opportunities to use real tools. As Thanksgiving approaches we will be quite busy with some traditional Berrybrook projects and songs. Classes will make their own butter and enjoy a Thanksgiving Feast.

During the month of November we will hold our first parent teacher conferences. This is a wonderful time for parents and teachers to connect without interruption. Over the past few weeks your children have been adapting to school, learning new routines and making new friends. Conferences provide an opportunity for parents and teachers to share information as we continue to learn about your children. Your child's teachers will inform

you when they begin scheduling conferences.

Parent volunteer sign up sheets have been posted on the classroom bulletin boards. We have already had some very helpful volunteers in our classrooms. If you would like to volunteer please check the sign up sheet in your child's class.

Warm wishes for a very happy Thanksgiving!



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

Welcome

Luke Utti in the 2 Day Room 3 Class
has a new sister, Jane

Congratulations to the Utti family!

When It's Thanksgiving

The kitchen's full of the nicest sounds:
Of pans and ladles stirring,
Of bubbly pots, and kettles on,
And spoons and beaters whirring.

The kitchen's full of the finest smells:
Of dinner in the making,
Of turkey on, and cranberries,
And pumpkin pies a-baking.

The kitchen gives it all away
As sure as you are living -
You never have to look at all
To know when it's Thanksgiving.

Aileen Fisher

Here Come the Holidays

Cynthia C Dunn

Just a few weeks ago, children and families were adjusting to the routines of a new school year. Having been successful, we now begin planning for the upcoming holidays. Many families will be celebrating Halloween, Thanksgiving, Chanukah, Christmas, Kwanza, and the New Year. Some families may celebrate all of them!

While getting together with family near and far conjures up feelings of comfort and joy, we know all too well the stress that accompanies these occasions. Combine the excitement of visiting relatives, or the long anticipated trip to get there, and extended bedtimes and all the yummy food, and you may find young children are behaving very differently. Some may be extra clingy, more quiet and reserved. Others may ramp up their activity levels along with their voices and forget their manners. Some children may become very impulsive, while others simply cannot entertain the idea of another kiss from great aunties.

We parents can help our children during this time by remembering something very important. Simple is often better. Children see and experience things with a much simpler view of the world. Over scheduling parties and activities is something we all struggle to balance. While we may feel pressure to accept every invitation for young children, because they may feel left out, it is important to remember children can become overstimulated if too many activities are packed into a short period of time. This can lead to crankiness, and the inability to “roll with the punches”. Their demands increase, and contrary behaviors often dissolve into tears or tantrums.

When planning events, try to schedule in some unstructured time to give children an opportunity to make their own choices. Quiet games or activities give children a chance to decelerate, and find their own center. This can also allow us all time to center ourselves. During trips to unfamiliar homes, pre-planning some details can be helpful. Bringing along familiar foods and a couple of favorite toys can help comfort children. Sticking as close as possible to sleep and play schedules will help as well.

Above all, children will find comfort and joy in being with those they love. They will remember the closeness and snuggles. They are not always wowed by the extravagant. More often than not, it is the memory of story read by grandma, or baking cookies with the cousins that they will treasure.

Simple Gifts

Joseph Brackett Jr. (1848)

'Tis the gift to be simple,
'tis the gift to be free,
'Tis the gift to come down
where we ought to be,
And when we find ourselves
in the place just right,
'Twill be in the valley
of love and delight.

*(Mrs. Dunn teaches in our 3 Day - Room 1
and 2 Day - Room 2 Classes.)*

Second Year Program News

The 4 and 5-Day children were very busy throughout October learning about the fall season, apples, pumpkins and fire safety. As they created decorations for their Halloween celebration, the teachers took the opportunity to extend their learning. For example, the children did marble painted spider webs which sparked some interest in learning about real spiders. Did you know spiders have eight legs and that not all webs are built the same? After creating a Berrybrook bat the children learned that bats fly at night, hang upside down and eat lots of mosquitoes. The teachers at Berrybrook extend learning whenever possible in a variety of ways.

Since Halloween can be scary for some children, the classes had many discussions about real and pretend. There are some good books available to help children understand this concept. One book that has been read at Berrybrook for many years is *Humbug Witch*, by Lorna Balian. This story explores the issues of masks and costumes. *The Little Old Lady Who Wasn't Afraid Of Anything*, by Linda Williams is another book that is read reinforcing real and pretend in a fun way. A follow-up activity for the children was creating puppets and acting out this pretend story about a scarecrow trying to scare the little old lady.

Another interesting activity that gives the children a chance to ask questions and think about what is real and what is pretend is the visits from the Bones' family. This has become a tradition here at Berrybrook under the direction of Mrs. O'Neil. Ask your children if they met anyone from the Bones' family and you may be surprised with their answer.

How do you do Mr. Bones?

How do you do?

How are you Mr. Bones?

How are you?

How's the man in the moon and the witch on her broom?

How do you do Mr. Bones?

How do you do?

October ended with a Halloween celebration. The children enjoyed a delicious and nutritious piece of homemade pizza for snack which they made themselves. They felt very proud of this accomplishment and they discovered that it tasted good too.



You may be wondering why the children put the classroom jack-o'-lantern in a special place outdoors. After the children have learned about the life cycle of a pumpkin using all of their senses; touching, seeing, smelling, listening to stories, and tasting a delicious pumpkin treat, we read *Mousekin's Golden House*, by Edna Miller. It is a story of the seasons changing from autumn to winter and a mouse finding a home in a jack o'lantern. It is with great anticipation that the children find a particular spot outside of Berrybrook in hopes that Mousekin will move in. As they watch for Mousekin they will continue to observe the changes as the jack-o'-lantern decays and returns to the earth. So if you see jack o'lanterns around the Berrybrook property, please remind the children to look with their eyes because these jack o'lanterns are an important part of an on-going science experiment.

JACK O' LANTERN

Jack O' Lantern,
Jack O' Lantern,
You are such a funny sight.
Sitting there in the window
Looking out at the night.

Once you were a yellow pumpkin,
Growing on a sturdy vine.
Now you are my
Jack O' Lantern.
Let your golden light shine.

November is also a busy month for the 4 and 5-Day children. On Election Day, while adults are voting at the polls, the children will be voting for crackers... by secret ballot no less... round or square? Years ago on Election Day we were explaining to the children about choosing a president. After we finished the discussion a child spoke up and said, "Just think, a cracker for president!"

Another tradition at Berrybrook is our trip to Plimoth Plantation which will be on Thursday, November 10th - rain or shine. All second year children with their chaperones will meet at the Plantation at 9:00 AM. We will begin our tour with a short movie and then everyone is free to walk through the exhibits on their own. Please feel free to stay in the exhibits for as long as you wish. Remember to wear warm clothing and comfortable shoes. This trip is mostly walking and because of its location by the ocean, can be very cold. There are a couple of gift shops on the property and a small restaurant in the main building.

Before our visit we will have group discussions at Berrybrook with the children to help them understand that the people in the village are only pretending to be Pilgrims and will answer questions as though it is the year 1627. We also explain that the people in the Wompanoag homesite may actually be

decendents of the Wompanoag tribe (Native People) and will answer questions in the present.

At Plimoth Plantation the children will have the opportunity to experience a glimpse of life in 1627. They will learn through exploration about the Pilgrims' and Native Peoples' homes and visually observe the various period garments. They may also see some daily activities occurring such as scarping out a "mishoon" (canoe), building a new home, pottery making, woodworking, and/or preparations for a mid-day meal. This visit helps children to begin to understand and appreciate our local history.

When we return to Berrybrook we will participate in activities which will help summarize all that was learned. The children will be creating their own individual dioramas displaying both the Pilgrims' and Wompanoag tribes' lifestyles. This project will take many days to complete and one that the children feel very proud of.

Throughout November, we will be talking about family traditions and being thankful. We will be preparing for our "Feast" including another tradition at Berrybrook – freshly made butter. The children will chant these words as they shake the cream into butter.

Shake, shake, shake the cream,
Shake and make it flutter.
Shake, shake, shake the cream,
And turn it into butter.

We wish everyone a Happy
Thanksgiving!

The Second Year Teachers,

Miss Bent, Mrs. Caddle,
Mrs. Fosdick, Mrs. LaForest,
Mrs. Neal, Mrs. O'Neil,
Mrs. Piccuito and Mrs. Swan



Parents Association News

I am always so amazed at Berrybrook and with each event I grow to love this place even more—last month's Harvest Fest, CPR training and Bog Hollow visits were all very different and each a tremendous success. Thanks to all who were involved and supported the events. I hope you find this month's (long!) update helpful, and as always please let me know if you have comments, suggestions, or areas where you would like to become more involved.

Enrichment!

We are busy planning some tremendous enrichment activities for the year. Be on the lookout for special one-time events, as well on-going music and yoga classes. Once the year's calendar is confirmed it will be on display at the BPA table. To kick things off, the children will be visited this week by a member of the Mashpee Wompanoag and Narragansett Tribe to learn more about native people and their culture and traditions. Eddie Spaghetti (Ed Sorentino from the South Shore Conservatory), our artist-in-residence will start his year-long programming at the end of the month.

Shopping Night at Rock, Paper, Scissors - Thursday, November 17th!

Please mark your calendar and plan to join the BPA for a night of shopping at Duxbury's newest toy store on November 17th from 7-9 pm. The store will be open to Berrybrook parents and friends only for the night to help you get a jump on your holiday shopping, with free gift wrapping and food from Depot Street Market and refreshments to enjoy. Best of all 20% of sales will come back to the BPA to help support enrichment and special Berrybrook needs. Look for an evite and flyer with all the details!

Family Fun Friday - November 18th!

Thanks to all the families that participated in our 1st Family Fun Friday at Bog Hollow. It was a beautiful day for pumpkin and cranberry picking and the children and parents all enjoyed themselves. November's plan is to meet on Friday, the 18th of November for a fall play-date at the Berrybrook playground with hot chocolate and a seasonal craft. Hope to see you all there!

Festival of Trees!

We are so happy that we will be able to participate for another year in the Festival of Trees at Plimoth Plantation in support of Cranberry Hospice. Thanks to Volta Oil with the help of the Garrett Family for sponsoring Berrybrook's involvement! The event features trees decorated by area organizations on display and open to the public on December 2 through 4. This year our tree theme is inspired by the book *The Great Kapok Tree* by Lynne Cherry—a story of the rainforest and the need to preserve it. The children will be working with the teachers to make what are sure to be creative animal ornaments. I hope you get a chance to visit the Festival of Trees. After the Festival, volunteers will place the ornaments on a tree and display it in the multi-purpose room!

BPA Dues!

We are excited that about 30% of families have already supported the BPA through dues this year. It's still not too late to increase that number! Each year we ask parents to support us with \$30.00 in dues. We appreciate donations in any amount and checks can be placed in the basket at the BPA table!

Holiday Charity!

Each year the BPA sponsors a community service event at Berrybrook to celebrate the holidays. This year we hope to help engage the children more in the purpose of the activity by making a meaningful connection. Be on the lookout for more details about a giving center we will have in December where children and families that are able and willing can select requested gifts for area families and children in need.

Berrybrook Cookbooks!

This year we are kicking off the first Berrybrook cookbook. Be on the look-out for more information from your classroom parents, but the basics: we will be asking each of you to submit your favorite recipes which we will compile into a Berrybrook recipe book. Book sales will happen in late winter and will support memory books and enrichment!

Start thinking about those recipes that impress friends, or the ones your kids will always eat, including allergy friendly treats, and family specialties. Think about how your kids will love to see their names in print – I can see my daughter looking up “*Lucy’s Mexican Mix-Up*” now - and how can she *not* eat her own recipe?

Wow, that is a lot of stuff! Happy November and see you at school soon.

Allyson

berrybrookparentsassociation@gmail.com



Join us for

Parent Discussion Group

The focus of our first Parent Discussion Group was “Participation in the Berrybrook Environment.” We talked about the many ways teachers need help and how volunteers can fill this need. If you were unable to attend the evening, copies of the handouts are available on a table in the entry way. Please help yourself and thank you for your interest.

Our next Parent Discussion Group will be held on Thursday, the 3rd of November, at 7:00 pm. The topic will be “Curriculum in your Child’s Classroom.” This is an opportunity to view samples of Children’s work and to gain insight into the effort put forth by the children to complete these tasks.

We will discuss:

- Why particular activities are chosen
- What skills are involved in completing these projects
- Development of fine motor skills
- Building self esteem through gaining confidence in new found abilities
- The importance of prepositions in young children’s learning
- Open ended projects - the no-fail approach

Come! learn what goes on behind the scenes, how class surveys are conducted, and key phrases used by teachers to encourage children to try something new. “Curriculum in your Child’s Classroom” is a first time offering. We hope you will be able to attend.

Mrs. LaForest, Mrs, Delano,
and Mrs. O’Neil

The ‘Best Holidays Ever’

By Kerry Rubin, Berrybrook Board of Directors

The holidays are coming! We are well into the school year. Family life is in full swing and we are busy with our schedules. On top of the normal responsibilities, there are seasonal activities to plan. Thanksgiving feasts. Family visits. Holiday decorating. Gift shopping, and the ever dreaded . . . holiday card photo. During the fall of most years these are my thoughts. I make a huge list and add my holiday aspirations. Like many of you, I am always thinking about what’s next and what I need to get done. While I do play with my children a lot, even when I’m with them I’m often thinking about The List.

But this holiday season is going to be different. I recently had a little wake up call. It was a school night, and the kids and I had a casual social gathering. I was baking cookies, and my preschooler had fallen asleep on the couch. My middle child was bouncing around (he is always bouncing around) – wanting to start an elaborate paint and glitter project – the kind there is never a good time for. I was racing to finish the cookies, telling him that there wasn’t time for paint and glitter, and, sorry, he couldn’t help with the cookies this time, but maybe we could do an art project later (realizing as I said this that it would be too late). I finished the cookies, pried my preschooler out of his cozy nap, and ran about the house (in full sweat) collecting coats, shouting at people to “Go to the bathroom! Get dressed! Put the coat back on! Where are your shoes? Get in the car!” All the while, my oldest child who just got home wanted to relax and talk about his day. “Sorry, honey, there’s no time to talk about your day right now” I heard myself say, “We are in a hurry so we can go and have fun.” WHAT? There’s no time to talk about the day?! What is wrong with me? My son actually *wants* to talk about his day. How lucky am I? How important was this event anyway? Did we really need to be on time? How perfectly homemade did the cookies need to be? Here was a chance to relate to my children, to enjoy them, to be present.

Young children exist in the moment. Adults frequently do not. A University of Washington psychologist explained “[w]e don’t only live in the present. It is characteristic of human beings that we engage in mental time-travel. We have present and future selves. Sometimes the needs and desires of the present self conflict with those of the future self.” But this is not the case for young children. In fact, psychological studies have shown that preschool age children do not have much capability to comprehend the future at all.¹ We need to be aware of this as parents. It suggests we need to live in the present more and not focus quite as much on the future or the past.

I don’t mean to be unrealistic. There are things we need to do as responsible adults (including making time for ourselves), and it’s important for our children to learn this over time. But, it seems too often (particularly, this time of year) that it’s *not* a good time for involved art projects or puzzles and games, because there is always something to do, somewhere to go, presents to buy, holiday cards to write, or calls to return, not to mention the temptations of social media. Moreover, even when I am playing with my

¹ Atance, Cristina M. “Future Thinking In Young Children.” *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 17 (2008): 295-98. Available at http://www.sciencessociales.uottawa.ca/ccll/eng/documents/5Futurethinkinginyoungchildren_000.pdf.

children, I am not really living the moment. I'm thinking ahead to what I need to do next, my iPhone within reach. And, if I am honest with myself, I know that a lot of what I spend my time on does not *have* to be done that moment, and may not need to be done perfectly (or at all, for that matter). I know I'll never look back in life and remember how many holiday cards I sent, the mums I planted, who was doing what on Facebook, or how fast I returned calls, but I will remember special moments with my children, particularly when I've relaxed enough to enjoy them. After all, these are the moments that truly make the holidays special.

Taking this to heart, I sat on the floor with my children the other day and played 'puzzle factory' (we take turns doing all of our puzzles assembly-line style and when the last person is done, lay them out all over the floor). Just the four of us. There were bills to pay, errands to run and the phone rang three times, but we sat on the floor and let the calls go to voicemail. The kids told me later that night that it had been the "best day ever" and I was "the best mommy" – because we did puzzles together. No fancy toys or elaborate play dates. Just time together. Not that we haven't played like that a million times before – we have – but perhaps they sensed that I was really there for them. Perhaps they sensed my presence. And, particularly in a family with lots of activities and three children, this is important.

So, this year I have decided to tone down my holiday preparations. I'm settling for a little more chaos. I may not even send holiday cards. I know I might feel some anxiety, but I need to remember that I'm not going to win any prizes for having the most holiday-ready (let alone the most organized) house. In fact, the kids won't miss a thing. This holiday season, I'm going to be present. I'm going to try to live more in the moment, because that's what my children understand, what I will enjoy most, and what we are all going to remember. These are going to be the 'best holidays ever'!

From the Lunch Bunch Teachers

Thank you to parents for carefully packing lunches that are safe for everyone. We appreciate your cooperation, understanding and your attention to ingredient labels.



Thank You

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 that impact our interactions with children and families. These meetings are scheduled from 4:00-6:00 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 beautiful and delicious refreshments for us.

Thank you very much!

Separating, Settling, Surveying

Joanne LaForest

In September children separated. In October they settled in. Now that it is November everyone is, as they say, "surveying the land". I like to compare First and Second Year Classes as First Year students are beginning to "look up" and Second Year students are "looking around". This means children are looking up from activities to see who is there or looking around from those close to them to who is across the room working on something interesting. Typical of First Year students, play is often side by side (parallel play) moving to cooperative play with a substantial amount of independent play mixed in. The materials and activities are the commonality among peers where children observe group happenings such as "**We** sang that song yesterday," "**We** made applesauce", "**We** played on that playground!" Whereas the Second Year students observe commonalities among each other, often noticing another friend having the same shoes or hair color. "**He and I** both like firefighters" or "**She** does gymnastics with **me**" is often heard in the classroom. Physical and personality characteristics of teachers are more noticeable by children in the Second Year Classes where they will often discuss how teachers do things the same or differently from one another. Through all of this, each child begins to understand their relationship to each other within their group.

It is helpful for parents and families to understand these types of happenings in their child's class. First Year families will find that asking questions about "**What** was in the water table?" "**What** did you make for snack today?" "**What** playground did you go to?" will elicit more of a response and then conversation. Second Year families may want to focus on "**Who** did you sit next to at Circle Time?" "**Which teacher** sang songs with you today?" "**Who** worked with you at the Project Table?"

The growth and development of each child throughout the course of the school year is exciting to witness. Each month there is a new leap taken toward the evolvment of every child's heart, mind and soul. I wonder what next month will bring!

(Mrs. LaForest teaches in our 3 Day - Room 3 and 4 Day Room 1 Classes.)



Dear Parents,

As the weather changes be sure to dress children appropriately for outdoor play. Hats, mittens or gloves, and warm jackets will be necessary as we head into November.

As always, it is a good idea to label all clothing. Once the snow flies, children should bring snow pants, and snow boots. Children are welcome to keep slippers, sneakers or crocs at school to make sure they are comfortable in the classroom.

Thank you!