



April 2016



Wednesday, April 13

April 18-22

Wednesday, April 27

Tuesday, April 26

Friday, April 29

BPA meeting 7:00pm

Spring Break

Berrybrook Board of Directors 7:30 pm

School Pictures, 3 Day & 4 Day

School Pictures, 2 Day, 5 Day

& Beginners

Notes from the Head of School

Every child is unique. Since September, Berrybrook teachers have been getting to know each child as an individual, figuring out what approaches, activities and attitudes each child will respond to best. The reflection and thought process begins with a child's home visit, an invaluable aid to teachers seeking to identify a child's temperament, and it continues throughout the year. Teachers use trainings that will directly inform their knowledge of child development to help their understanding of each child. During our last professional development day, staff learned about non-verbal learning disabilities, which can often be overlooked in young children and misinterpreted as difficult behavior. It is so important for teachers to be aware of any issue that might impact a child's learning and social and emotional adjustment. At Berrybrook, teachers know that each child is one of a kind, having different needs and interests in the classroom. For example, some children want close physical contact with teachers and peers and others feel more comfortable having some space. There are children who like to observe for a time before trying something and others who will jump right in to every activity. Some children's "engines" run fast and others have engines that run at a slower pace. Teachers have been listening and observing to discover the intricacies of each personality in their classroom. Each team of teachers spends time before and after school to reflect, revise and create activities based on the needs of individual students. What's working? What isn't? What does a particular child need to feel comfortable at circle time or in the block area? How can we respond to and encourage a particular interest? At Berrybrook, instead of molding a child to fit into our program, our goal is to adjust our program to make it the right fit for the child. Teachers work to ensure the best possible Berrybrook experience for each student and to refine the special qualities that make each child unique.

Pat Keeley

Spring Cleaning!
Refine and Renew Your Relationships
With Your Children

Joanne LaForest

Spring is in the air! Warmer temperatures are here. According to our clocks the sun hangs high longer in the sky during the day. People have emerged from their homes, no longer kept in the isolation that cold temperatures can sometimes bring. And the time for spring cleaning has arrived!

Spring cleaning brings about a newness, a rebirth, a deep cleansing and clearing out of clutter and dust inside our homes. When we spring clean outside our lawns can breathe again and the life inside the bulbs that have begun to push up through the earth will now have the space to grow into all it was created for.

Spring is the perfect time to “clean up” our relationships as well. Habits can sometimes form within our relationships with others, especially with our children. Habits and routines, even the ways we communicate can become old and dry, almost desolate... kind of like nature as it appears in late winter as it eagerly awaits the coming of spring.

If we were to “spring clean” our relationships with our children - and did so in the same way we went about “spring cleaning” our backyards – it might look something like this:

Step 1) Gather all of the sticks and fallen branches.

The “sticks” and “branches” in your relationship with your children might be the big and obvious things you would see if you stepped back and looked at the big picture. Saying their name over and over again to get their attention can be as big as branches blocking the way for effective communication. If you hear yourself repeating their name and it's not working in getting their attention it's time to stop and try something different – they're not hearing you. To use words like, “I want to show you something important” or “I'm so glad you're here! Did you know...” could be much more effective and heard by your children without the other “sticks” no longer scattered on the ground. Or how many times do you hear yourself saying “*Don't* do this...*don't* do that”? Replacing a *don't* with a *do* would really clear out the clutter in your communication with your child. Often times children may feel that if they're not allowed to do so many things what's left that they *are* allowed to do? By providing rules in a positive light, gone would be your voice saying “How many times do I have to tell you...” because you would only have to tell them once – your focus would then switch to all you *can* do, together.

Step 2) Rake and thatch.

When we rake and thatch our yards we rid the yard of any excess dried and dead leaves and grass that no longer serve our own private earth. There is no way for the new grass to grow in spring if so much useless life is on top of it, suffocating it. The same is true in our family relationships. What excess can you rid your family of? Pull it up and weed it out! Is there too much running around resulting in wasted time and stress? Could the new season of spring result in a new family schedule of less running around to this or that and allow for more time of unstructured play outside? Would planning meals for the week make room for more time to sit down together to eat and talk rather than stressfully figuring out “what's for dinner?” Perhaps creating new (positive!) family rules that minimize time with all our technological devices would

provide more time for star gazing, field walking, playground playing, fort making, art creating, or beautiful baking ...together. Again, pull it up! Weed it out! Create space for a new beginning in your family.

Step 3) Put down new soil and plant seeds.

With the yard cleared, raked and thatched and the soil in your garden turned over and mixed with new, fresh soil...the planting of seeds can begin! What seeds can you plant in the garden of your family? How about the seeds of love? Joy? Time? By choosing to plant these seeds, the growth and strength in what will bloom could be life changing. Imagine, also, if you "spring cleaned" other relationships in your life? Step back and look at the whole "yard" and "garden" of certain relationships – how you communicate, perceptions you have, ideas of another that you have yet to consider – what could begin to grow if you clear away the sticks and the branches, rake away the old habits and beliefs, turn over the soil and plant new seeds....can you imagine what that new, beautiful, colorful, glorious garden would look like?

Beginners News

Spring is here and we are looking forward to warmer weather, more outside play time, and a classroom full of fun filled activities. Our projects this month will focus on the changes spring brings us like rainbows, sprouting seeds, the returning sounds of frogs and birds, and blooming flowers and trees. Our housekeeping area will also be changing into a grocery store complete with food, grocery carts, and cash registers. This arrangement will enable children to practice conflict resolution skills when deciding on roles to have, how to take turns with certain props, and how to work together to map out the direction of their play. Teachers are nearby to model words needed for practice. The grocery store is a favorite with our students every year.

We made it to the big playground last month and it was a big success. As the weather continues to improve we will be spending more time outside exploring our playground equipment, blowing bubbles and taking nature walks to look for changing signs of spring. Our beginners are growing and changing as well. They

are becoming more self confident, developing friendships, and learning the art of cooperation.

There are still spots available on our classroom volunteer sheet if you'd like to be a part of our daily routine. We would love to have you! Thank you for continued support and for sharing your children with us.
Happy Spring!

Mrs. Piccuito, Mrs. Rosen, Mrs. Fosdick and Mrs. LaForest

Save the Date!

**3 and 4 Day Classes will have
School Pictures taken
on Tuesday April 26, 2016.**

**2 Day, 5 Day and Beginners will
have School Pictures taken
on Friday, April 29.**

First Year Program News

In March, First Year students had another relaxing yoga session with Miss Kim - thank you, BPA! We also had a visit with some very talented Irish Step Dancers from Maureen Haley Studios. The children really enjoyed watching the dancers and learning a few steps!

Also last month, we talked about birds and their characteristics, and the children painted blown eggs. Thank you to all of the parents who brought in eggs, it is not always the easiest task! We'd like to thank families for the time they put into carrying on a beautiful Berrybrook tradition. The cold and damp weather did not interfere with our egg hunts and the children really enjoyed the special snacks they created for their celebrations.

Spring has arrived, and children are busy exploring the natural beauty this time of year has to offer. First Year classes will be learning about frogs, turtles and fish. They will be painting and crafting vibrant flowers and rainbows. As the temperature warms up, classrooms will be able to take more frequent nature walks and learn about the weather. In the middle of the month, the BPA has arranged a visit from Soule Homestead. Children will be able to see bunnies and chickens up close, and learn more about what activities happen on a farm.

At the end of the month, children will have their school pictures taken. Be prepared for a big change from the September photos we have posted in the classrooms!

Sincerely,
First Year Teachers
Mrs. Barlow, Mrs. Capasso,
Mrs. Delano, Mrs. Dunn
Mrs. McDonough and Mrs. Savoy



**The Berrybrook
Summer
Nature Program
still has some
openings!**

Weeks 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7 have spaces available. Registration is now open to local families not enrolled at Berrybrook.

Information is in the office!

Second Year Program News

March was very busy with many Berrybrook traditions. Because the weather conditions were good for tree tapping, and the Easter holiday came so early this year, we had maple syrup, Irish bread and Wacky cake all in a few weeks!

The tapping of the maple tree has been happening at Berrybrook for many years. Mrs. Delano and Mrs. O'Neil demonstrate the process. Using a special drill that belongs to Mrs. O'Neil, they drill into the tree and magically, the sap pours out immediately. The children have the opportunity to sample the sap by catching a drop on their finger. Once the sap bucket is full it is brought into school and placed on the stove to boil. In the classroom, books about the maple syrup process are read at group time.

The Irish Bread came next along with a troupe of Irish step dancers who performed for us in the multipurpose room. The children were enthralled by the dancers in their striking costumes. They also learned a few simple steps to join in the dancing.

The "Wacky Cake" recipe is delicious and it has been made at Berrybrook for many years to celebrate spring. The children help to make the chocolate cake in the classroom and then on the day of the celebration, the teachers cut the cake in such a way, that it turns into a cake that looks just like a bunny!

Thank you to all parents for your contributions of blown eggs. The teachers know that the process takes time and energy and we appreciate your participation in this Berrybrook tradition. The children work very hard painting the eggs as a special gift for their families.

In April, the Second Year curriculum will continue with activities geared to signs of spring. It is a time of awakening and we will be watching for changes in wildlife, trees, and plants, including two of the very first signs of spring - forsythia and pussy willow.

Spring is coming,
Spring is coming,
How do you think I know?
I saw a pussy willow
And that is how I know.

At this time of year, kindergarten is a topic on everyone's mind. Families will be registering for public and private schools in their communities. Some children might be concerned about attending kindergarten next year. Emotions may vary and teachers will be supportive to each child's need. Spring is a season of growth and change, and this is true of the children. Looking at photos of the children taken last September, we can see now how the children have grown physically, and listening to how they interact with

each other in our classrooms, we can observe how much they have matured socially and emotionally. It is a pleasure to watch. Thank you for sharing your children with us.

The Second Year Teachers -
Mrs. Caddle, Mrs. Fosdick,
Mrs. LaForest, Miss McNulty,
Mrs. O'Neil, Mrs. Neal, Mrs. Piccuito
and Mrs. Rosen and Mrs. Richardson

Wacky Cake

Sift together in large bowl:

1 1/2 cups flour
3/4 tsp salt
1 tsp baking soda
1 cup sugar
3 TBS cocoa

Add;

1 tbs vinegar
5 tbs cooking oil
1 tsp vanilla
1 cup water

Mix together all ingredients. Pour into 8" round cake pan. Bake at 350 for 20 minutes or until cake springs to touch. Allow cake to cool.

Cut and position cake into shape of a bunny. Cover with whip cream topping and decorate. (Pink paper ears, jelly bean eyes and nose)



KINDNESS

By Katie Szczesny, Berrybrook Board Member,
Mom to Berrybrook alumnae Kyle (9) and Sam (8)

kindness (noun) the quality of being friendly, generous, and considerate

I don't know about you, but when I think about Berrybrook, one of the first words that comes to mind is kindness. Whether it's Mrs. Keeley greeting you with a smile at the gate, or your child's teacher looking in their eyes with genuine interest during a story or comment from your child - Berrybrook exudes kindness. The children learn to be kind to their friends, their teachers, and all of nature and its animals as well. These are some of the best lessons we can begin teach our children at 3, 4, and 5 years old and hope that they stick with them through the rest of their years into adulthood.

Berrybrook is truly a special place. I believe that children and their families are lucky enough to leave with gifts that last a lifetime – and by gifts I don't mean those daily paintings, the paper bag stuffed pumpkins, and painted eggs (though these are all cherished, and still displayed annually at our house!). I mean the gift of having teachers that care deeply, the blessing of all the close friendships developed, and the knowledge that your child has been given the skills to be kind, friendly, and caring.

My son Sam has developed a love for sea turtles (both he and Kyle love all ocean animals, especially turtles and sharks). This year for his 8th birthday, Sam decided that instead of accepting gifts from his friends and family he would ask for donations to an aquarium in Florida that was working to save sea turtles injured by cold ocean temperatures. He and Kyle both took money from their piggy banks and thanks to the generosity of friends and family, a sizable donation was sent. I could not have been prouder. The aquarium was so thankful and I do believe both my kids understood that being generous and kind to others is rewarding in so many ways.

As the saying goes, time flies when you're having fun. The years my children spent at Berrybrook seem so long ago, but I do know that they carry Berrybrook values and lessons with them to this day. I am grateful to have been part of the Board of Directors for so long. I hope that you and your families enjoy the remainder of the school year and all the future years you have at Berrybrook!

Below are 13 children's books that encourage kindness towards others (from BuzzFeed):

- 1) *We All Sing With The Same Voice* by J. Philip Miller and Sheppard M. Greene
- 2) *Have You Filled A Bucket Today? A Guide To Daily Happiness For Kids* by Carol McCloud
- 3) *A Sick Day For Amos McGee* by Philip C. Stead and Erin E. Stead
- 4) *Each Kindness* by Jacqueline Woodson
- 5) *Last Stop On Market Street* by Matt de la Pena
- 6) *Those Shoes* by Maribeth Boelts
- 7) *Horton Hears A Who* by Dr. Seuss
- 8) *Enemy Pie* by Derek Munson
- 9) *Ordinary Mary's Extraordinary Deed* by Emily Pearson, Fumi Kosaka
- 10) *The Invisible Boy* by Trudy Ludwig
- 11) *The Three Questions* by Jon J Muth
- 12) *Rude Cakes* by Rowboat Watkins
- 13) *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein

<http://www.buzzfeed.com/emeynardie/13-childrens-books-that-encourage-kindness-toward-26paw>

Parents Association News

Spring is here! Hopefully some warm weather is headed our way too! It is time to pack lunches and enjoy extended time on the playground!

Enrichment

April is always a busy month. Miss Kim will return the second week in April to continue the student's yoga exploration. After April vacation, school pictures will happen and the staff from Soule Homestead will make their annual visit on the 27th and 28th. During Soule Homestead's visit, students will learn about farm animals and participate in an exciting craft. If you are ever looking for something to do Soule Homestead offers some great family events. They are celebrating Earth Day on May 2nd with sheep shearing and sheep dog demonstrations. The farm is located in Middleborough.

Family Fun Fridays

Family Fun Fridays are still going strong thanks to our enthusiastic enrichment coordinators! This month they have secured two time slots, on April 8th at the newly opened Mix It Up Kitchen! This great new cooking school, in Hall's Corner will offer an hour cooking class for the Berrybrook students at a special rate of \$15.00. Two drop-off sessions of 1:00-2:00 or 2:30-3:30 will be provided. The students will be making Apple Oatmeal Cookies. While the treats are baking, the cooking teacher will have a food-related story time and snack for the children. Mix It Up Kitchen ask that parents with preschool children that may not feel comfortable with drop-off, for those parents to please stay in their small waiting room or in the shopping area. Due to space in the kitchen, each session will have a maximum of 12 students. A sign-up sheet will be provided at the Berrybrook Parent Association table. Please leave the \$15 in the BPA box and check off paid on the sign- up sheet. Students will need to be signed up and paid for by April 1st to attend class.

Spring Fling

Please save-the-date for the spring fling on Wednesday, May 18th from 4-6 p.m. with a rain date of Thursday, May 19th. The spring fling is an annual event that helps us celebrate the year as a community. **We will be planning for the Spring Fling at our next meeting, April 13 at 7:00pm. Join us!**

The BPA Facebook Page

The Berrybrook Parents Association Facebook group page is now up and running! The BPA Facebook page is a closed group so only members that are added can see what is posted. During the process of creating the BPA page, we thought long and hard about the appropriate privacy settings for the group. After much consideration, we have decided for the safety and security of the students that only parents and guardians of current students will be approved on the page. Please feel free to share any information we post with caregivers. As this is our first attempt at a social media page, we welcome feedback and will make necessary changes as we utilize the group page more consistently. As always, we will continue to distribute information via the BPA email. Thank you for your understanding as we try this new platform.

BPA Officers 2016-2017

We are thrilled to welcome some new officers to the BPA for the 2016-2017 school year! We can always use additional members so if you are interested please message us. Your commitment can be as little or as much as you like. New faces bring new fresh ideas!

As always thank you to those that have already paid their BPA dues! Each contribution provides great school enrichment and subsidizes many of our Family Fun Friday events. If you have yet to do contribute it is not too late.

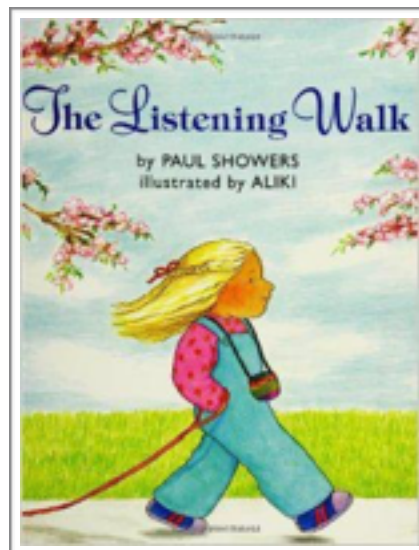
If you have any questions, concerns or feedback email us at berrybrookparentsassociation@gmail.com

Thank you!

Jill Cooney & Danielle MacKinnon Co-Presidents

And here is an idea from Kim Spires, our Berrybrook Children's Yoga Instructor

Try a Mindful Exercise with your children!
Read *The Listening Walk* by Paul Showers and then
Go on a Listening Walk!



You can watch and listen to the story here:
[youtube.com/watch?v=uCs66HaouFU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uCs66HaouFU)

You don't have to go far, there are sounds everywhere.
Just take a moment and listen with your children.
How many different sounds can you hear right now?

Inspire Peace in your home or classroom!
Learn more at my Inspire Peace Workshop
for parents and teachers at inspirekidsyoga.com