



March 2020

Friday, March 20
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Professional Day - No School
Enrollment Contracts Due



Notes from the Head of School

Three years ago my March newsletter focused on technology and children. At the time, we had just gifted our newly turned 12 year old with an iPod Touch and a Technology Contract. He now has an iPhone and parents who get frustrated trying to find the balance of what the appropriate screen time is, especially as we struggle to find the appropriate boundaries regarding our own technology use.

So much has changed in those three years, and it's so hard to keep up with the technology issues with children. Times have changed, and let me also just say that the guidelines we had for our oldest have gone out the window with our youngest. Brady would occasionally use the family iPad when he was in kindergarten. Now Maya has her own, and it's mostly for her homework assessments (reading along with stories on an app).

I admit I am constantly on my phone - from checking my email and social media, to checking Waze directions and my never-ending todo app. Lots of my work tasks can, and are, accomplished while my head is buried in my phone but it's important to me to justify to my children WHY I am engrossed in my phone. But then I have to remember, it's not important to them the WHY I am distracted, only that I am. When my face is buried in a screen, they know they are not my priority at that very second. Over time, I worry what the impact on them will be if they are constantly seeing me with my head down. Don't get me wrong - I think it's important for children to know that they are not always the priority each and every time as this helps them learn patience and empathy, among other qualities - but I don't want them to think that my phone wins over them all the time.

Recently I attended the Massachusetts Association for the Education of Young Children's conference for Directors, and I signed up for a seminar on Social Media and Marketing in the Child Care Industry. I consider myself pretty tech savvy and thought I would learn just a couple of new pointers here and there. The presenter started off by saying how much technology has changed everyone's approach to absolutely everything and that "no one uses computers anymore" and "it's a generational thing". The director sitting next to me and I looked at each other and both burst out laughing at the same time saying, "HA! We're old!". Then as we listened to more about how marketing to millennials has changed, we stopped laughing. It wasn't so funny anymore that we consider ourselves old!

The bottom line - much like the latest iPhone becomes obsolete within days of being released, your family's rules and boundaries for technology and screen time need to be flexible - it should be flexible situationally, by age and developmental stage, and more - or the boundaries will be outdated quickly. As with so many other parenting issues, you have to find the best fit for your own family and your family's values. And remember - this is only one of many parenting pickles you'll face along the way.

A very poignant meme, that I try to remember when my children repeatedly see my nose buried in my phone:



~ Mrs. Watts

Teacher's Notes

The Importance of PLAY

One of my favorite things about being a preschool teacher is being able to watch the children engage in open ended play. Whether they are pretending to work in a post office in our dramatic play area, or creating a role playing scenario out on the playground. It's a gift to see the joy they derive from the play, and to be able to partake in that joy as an observer. The added benefit is that I understand the value of play, it goes so far beyond just being fun. As they play, they are building social skills, gaining gross and fine motor strength, developing problem solving and negotiating skills, strengthening their verbal communication skills, and of course using their imaginations and building on their creativity.

Last summer when my son Jack was 11, and my daughter Maya was 14, the three of us went to the beach. It was our first beach trip of the year. From the moment we arrived, Jack had no idea what to do. He seemed irritated and kept asking when we were going home. I was surprised because he had always loved the beach! But in this world of screen time, schedules, and organized activities, it was like he forgot how to play! How to just enjoy his time at the beach without me having to organize and manage his fun. What comes so naturally to preschoolers was disappearing for him. Then I got to thinking about people who criticize play at the preschool age, and I started feeling sad. Play is so fundamental for young children and it comes so naturally. To me, the importance and value of play is obvious, but there have been many times I have had to explain it, in both my personal, and professional life.

I just kept reading my book, with one eye on the kids hoping Jack would figure it out, and get up off the beach mat and stop complaining about everything. Maya invited him down to the water and before long all sorts of wonderful things started happening. They played a lifeguard game in the water, they built a sand castle, and they collected rocks to bring home. I was watching but not interfering. I was making sure they were safe but I was letting them be. I was not controlling or managing or entertaining them. They were using their imaginations and their bodies to move about the beach in play. When it was time to leave, Jack said it was the most fun summer day he had yet. When they got home they found their paints and brushes and sat for hours at the kitchen table painting their rocks. All of that came from them, it wasn't me micromanaging them and their time. They were being creative in a way I hadn't seen them be all school year. Later the rocks became an important part of our garden, and a beautiful reminder of our family beach day.

Play is important for all children, at all ages and phases. But at the early childhood stage it's the way they learn everything! To begrudge or limit young children their play

time, and make it seem frivolous or unnecessary can be downright damaging to their development.

I'm not sure how many more days of play I will get to observe with my own children as Jack will be graduating from Intermediate School, and Maya is finishing her freshman year. I will certainly miss it, but I am grateful for the continued opportunity to observe the Berrybrook children at play, to watch them learn and grow, and to marvel in all the important skills they are developing as they play.

“Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for children, play is serious learning. Play is really the work of childhood.” - Fred Rogers

~ Mrs. Kelley

Mrs. Kelley teaches in the 4 Day and 5 Day classes



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 Berrybrook Beginners!) to register. We also welcome siblings up to 7 years of age. More information can be found on the Berrybrook website or stop by the office.

Parents Association Notes

Welcome to March, Berrybrook families! February vacation is now behind us and with all of these warm days, we are hoping that spring is near. March is turning out to be a very busy month for BPA programming.

Enrichment Update

March will bring quite a few enrichment activities to the children sponsored by the BPA. Yoga will continue for all classes this month with Kim Spires. To help celebrate St. Patrick's Day, the Haley School of Irish Dance will be sending dancers to demonstrate their skills the week leading into St. Patrick's Day.

We were also fortunate to have Claire Reilly visit us as well. Mrs. Reilly is a Community Dental Health Educator from Dentistry for Children in Weymouth. Mrs. Reilly has visited Berrybrook for many years and is wonderful with the children. She presents great information about dental health in a developmentally appropriate way.

Be sure to ask your children to share their thoughts about these fun visits!

Family Fun Friday

Our next Family Fun Friday will take place on March 20th, at Kidz Planet in Norwell. Join us for playtime, fun, and pizza! Sign up via Venmo or with a check at the BPA table.

Save the Date Spring Fling

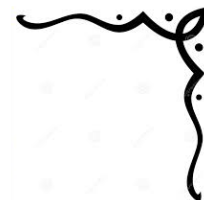
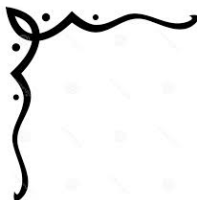
Each year the BPA sponsors a casual end of year celebration for all the families. Please save the date for this special event on Thursday, May 14th from 4 - 5:30 p.m. with a rain date of Tuesday, May 19th. Be on the lookout for additional details regarding this fun afternoon!

BPA Dues

The BPA has been very busy this year and we would like to thank all of the families who have paid their BPA dues. We could not plan these fun events for our children and families without your help. It is not too late for your family to support our work! All donations are very much appreciated. We suggest \$30 per family, but all amounts are welcome. Please don't hesitate to reach out to any members of the BPA if you have any questions, comments, new ideas or concerns.

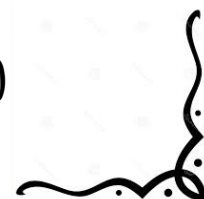
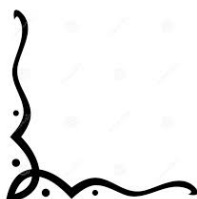
Thanks,

Diana Stewart and Jess Bisceglia Co-Presidents



**CONGRATULATIONS
TO THE COHEN FAMILY!!**

**Welcome Ryleigh Cohen
(Big brother Brady is in the 5 Day Class)**



From The Board of Directors The Inverse Power of Praise

“Good Job!”

A phrase we hear nearly everywhere we go; at the playground, sports events, the grocery store, birthday parties...

It is also a phrase you will never hear at Berrybrook.

Six years ago when my oldest was just starting at Berrybrook, I found a handout* in her cubby. It said at the top “Here are some words you can substitute for good job”. It offered other, more specific ways of recognizing our children without unwarranted praise. The handout was a paradigm shift for me. I had grown up hearing these words at each turn. From parents and teachers to coaches and friends. I had never thought to question their intent, or lack thereof. Was this phrase really that harmful? I decided to spend a few days with the awareness of this fresh in my mind; as you may have guessed I said it almost all the time to all three kids, seemingly at everything. “Mom look at my drawing!” Good Job! “Mom I just used the bathroom.” Good Job! “Mom I ate one bite and fed the rest to the cat.” Good job!..Wait, what?! Have we all had this moment? The moment where we are thinking of a million things at once and not fully present with our children? Of course, we’re human mothers and fathers. Upon personal inventory, I realized this phrase had become my default.

I hung this handout on my fridge, hoping it would inspire me to crowd out all of my ‘good jobs!’ with some of the more observational approaches given by the school. Friends, it is hard!!! Six years later and I still catch myself saying it frequently. All I can strive for is more awareness and to be more present. I love that Berrybrook teachers strive for this, while shaping our young children’s minds. It sends such a beautiful message to them; YOU matter. I’m listening. I care.

I recently read a parenting book called Nurture Shock. The first chapter is titled “The inverse power of praise”. I was immediately reminded of my favorite handout on the fridge! If you are interested in more of the psychology behind this theory, the first chapter goes into more detail. To sum it up, the author discusses how praising abilities can discourage efforts and has scientific studies to back this up. In one glaring study, children who were told “you’re smart” were statistically less likely to take chances and put in future efforts, mainly out of fear of underperforming. While this isn’t what was on the handout, it struck me as not too dissimilar to the general message it conveyed. If a child hears they are doing a ‘good job’ at each turn, wouldn’t it water down the meaning? It was fun to come across this idea from a different source.

So, are we all doing a ‘good job’ as parents? Let’s try a different approach with ourselves and others this week.

I’ll start.

We are being thoughtful, patient and kind.

Keep going!

* This handout is available in the office

~ *Sarah Murray*
Board of Directors