



November 2019

November 11
November 14

Veterans Day - no school
Plymouth Plantation field trip
4 and 5 Day classes

November 16
November 20

Berrybrook Admissions Open House
Berrybrook Board Meeting 7pm

November 27, 28, 29

Thanksgiving Break - no school



Notes from the Head of School

Last month, Berrybrook completed the NAEYC reaccreditation process. What is NAEYC you might ask? NAEYC stands for National Association for the Education of Young Children, and “is a professional membership organization that works to promote high-quality early learning for all young children, birth through age 8, by connecting early childhood practice, policy, and research”. NAEYC has a rigorous voluntary, accreditation system which helps parents identify high-quality programs. Programs are required to meet standards grouped into 10 areas:

1. Relationships with Children
2. Curriculum
3. Teaching
4. Assessment of Child Progress
5. Health
6. Staff Competencies, Preparation & Support
7. Families
8. Community Relationships
9. Physical Environment
10. Leadership and Management

For more than 30 years, NAEYC has accredited programs to set the bar for excellent programs, and I’m pretty sure Berrybrook has been accredited since NAEYC started. We go through the reaccreditation process every 5 years, and to say it’s not easy task is a giant understatement. Mrs. Piccuito and I have been living, breathing, and dreaming NAEYC for months and in mid-October we had the final step in the process - The.Reaccreditation.Visit. This visit is the culmination

of the whole process, and involves a big audit of the Program Portfolio and the Classroom Portfolio(s) that have been created for the purpose of this reaccreditation process. My Program Portfolio holds 300+ pieces of evidence of the amazing program we offer children, and the Classroom Portfolios that Mrs. Piccuito put together (3 of them!) each hold 100+ pages of evidence. Jill, our assessor, arrived bright and early on Visit Day and spent the whole day observing the classrooms, speaking with me, visiting the Nook, digesting the portfolios, and more. She's not allowed to officially give feedback, but unofficially she was so very impressed with Berrybrook - the facility, the teachers, and most importantly - the relationships we have with our students and families. Am I surprised she was so impressed? Of course not. Did I ever think we wouldn't pass with flying colors? Of course not. Did I have many sleepless nights, especially the night before Jill's visit? You betcha!

Berrybrook truly is the benchmark for early childhood programs. I know that sounds boastful, but if it means I'm super proud of Berrybrook then by all means I'll wear that title with a capital B. Berrybrook goes above and beyond, for everything. We were required to only complete one classroom portfolio, but even though it was triple the work we created three - one to showcase the Beginners, one for the 2 and 3 Day programs, and one for the 4 and 5 Day programs. Of course it was extra effort, but we knew that each of our programs is its own special, specialness and we wanted to show that off. We didn't just want to achieve the A, we strived for the A++.

This year Berrybrook is celebrating 65 years of being the gold standard for exceptional early childhood education. To have NAEYC recognize our hard work is phenomenal, but to me the prestige is seeing the growth and development of the thousands of children who have been influenced by Berrybrook through these past 65 years. Back in 1954, Berrybrook was it - the only preschool in the area. Now there are many options for families when choosing an early childhood program for little ones. While I know that each family needs to find the right fit for them, I believe that Berrybrook is the cream of the crop for all children. I don't need validation every five years because I see it and feel it each and every day.

~ Mrs. Watts

Teacher's Notes

What's the Deal with Food Allergies?

Suddenly the holidays are upon us. While they are a fun and exciting time of the year, holidays can be stressful. There are many ways in which holidays can be stressful, however, for families with children who have had food allergies, holidays are particularly stressful. I am keenly aware of this, as we discovered that my daughter was allergic to tree nuts on Christmas Eve. She ate a holiday cookie at a friend's house and broke out in hives.

My daughter was 9 years old when we discovered her food allergy. She was old enough to be actively involved in managing it. Although I knew how vigilant she was, I still worried she would accidentally ingest a nut and go into anaphylaxis. Over the years, cases of food allergies have increased significantly. We have many children who have food allergies attending Berrybrook.

I'm sure that you have read that Berrybrook is a "Nut Free school". The decision to be "Nut Free" was made many years ago in order to keep all children safe here at Berrybrook. Peanut and tree nut allergies can be very severe. In some cases just the smell of peanuts can induce an allergic reaction. For some, touching an item or surface with nut residue can cause an allergic reaction. Although these examples seem extreme, they are all too real for many families.

In addition to peanut and tree nut allergies, there are many other food allergies that we deal with. Teachers work with families to ensure that their child will be safe at Berrybrook, no matter what the allergy is. For an example, if a child is allergic to eggs, no egg products will be served in his or her class. We have many allergy friendly snacks to choose from. For baking projects we can use egg replacer.

So what can families can do to help keep Berrybrook safe for everyone? We ask that if you are enjoying a snack or lunch on the playground, please check all items, as peanuts, peanut butter and tree nuts are not allowed. Make sure your child sits at a picnic table while eating and dispose of the food particles and wrappers. Please do not share food with another child unless you have asked the child's parent or caretaker. If your child has eaten peanut butter before coming to school, please be sure that his or her teeth are brushed and hands are washed. Lastly, candy, especially holiday versions, is often manufactured in plants which also process nuts. For everyone's safety, it is best to enjoy these treats at home. These simple habits will help ensure the safety of everyone at Berrybrook. Furthermore, you will be teaching your children how to be considerate of others.

As a parent of a child with food allergies, I always appreciated another parent asking me about safe foods my daughter could have at their house. Dealing with a food allergy can be isolating. When others reach out it makes a world of difference. We are so fortunate to have such caring families at Berrybrook. Thank you all for helping to keep our school safe for everyone.

~ *Mrs. Capasso*

Mrs.Capasso teaches in the 2 Day and the 3 Day Room 1 classes

Parents Association Notes

Thank you all for supporting this year's Harvest Festival. It was wonderful to see so many families and what a beautiful day it was! A huge thank you to everyone who volunteered their time or donated a themed basket, silent auction item, refreshments, and decorations! We continue to be impressed with the generosity and support of our families and local businesses. All of the proceeds from the Harvest Festival will support future enrichment and subsidize Family Fun Fridays.

October's Family Fun Friday at Sauchuk Farm had a great turnout! Thank you to all who attended and thanks to our enrichment coordinators for making the event happen! Our next Friday event is planned for November 15th. The Claychick party bus will be at the school to make special cookie plates with the children. If you are interested, please register directly on the Claychick website under the Berrybrook private event at <https://www.claychick.com/events>. December's Family Fun Friday is a trip to the Heritage Museums and Gardens in Sandwich to see their holiday light display. Be on the look out for more details as we get closer!

As the holiday season approaches, Berrybrook School will continue to support initiatives that impact the community. Presently, Berrybrook is collecting candy for the troops. There is a donation bucket in the office through Friday, November 8th for those who would like to donate - and maybe move some of that halloween candy out of the house! Final details are being put together for holiday donations of children's toys to Plymouth Area Coalition as well.

New Berrybrook apparel was launched at the Harvest Festival! Be sure to check out the cart next to the BPA table. If you are looking for a different size or color just let us know. The sherpa blankets are exceptionally soft and perfect for the coming cold weather!

Thank you for your support and participation! For any questions please email the BPA.

Diana Stewart and Jess Bisceglia - *Co-Presidents* berrybrookparentsassociation@gmail.com

The Beginners teachers are requesting that their students please wear mittens as opposed to gloves. It is much quicker to get everyone ready for outside fun!

From The Board of Directors

I'd like to tell you about my crazy weekend. This year, our family was not able to attend the Berrybrook Harvest Festival (which is always such an amazing event that brings our school community together). With some bad luck, this year's Harvest Festival fell on my sister-in-law's wedding weekend in Denver, Colorado. Having to be a bridesmaid (while also being a mother-of-three) can be stressful enough. Having to do so out-of-state with a 9-week old infant in tow brought me to the edge of insanity. But it was the wisdom of a child that kept me grounded.

We all experience the everyday pressures of these early fall routines – chauffeuring everyone to school, after school sports, doctor appointments, grocery shopping, parent/teacher conferences – you name it, it's on the to-do list. I'm fairly certain my blood type these days is venti iced mocha. Pile on to that a cross-country trip of 60 hours that includes packing and bringing multiple large suitcases, a garment bag full of wrinkled dresses, a stroller, a car seat, a car seat base (which needs to be a carry-on), and a week-long stomach bug that wiped out my entire family, and you have the ingredients for a pretty taxing and extraordinary couple of days.

Shoot... I almost forgot to mention the BOMB CYCLONE. Mother Nature decided, the hilarious comedienne that she is, that "fall" wasn't just an homage to the leaves... but massive tree trunks and power lines as well. So around 2 AM on the morning we were putting our final travel arrangements in place... gusts of 90 mile per hour winds took down some neighborhood oaks along with a good deal of Eversource wires. Fast forward a few chilly and frantic hours and I'm packing five bags by candlelight.

Meanwhile, my six year old and four year old boys were being six and four year old boys (wrestling, jumping on furniture, fighting over crayons, leaving shoes and toys and empty juice boxes in the middle of the floor – because if there's one thing I enjoy more than packing in the dark... it's packing in the dark amidst an obstacle course).

I laugh about all this now – after we successfully made it to the Rocky Mountains and back with a newborn (who may or may not have screamed throughout the entirety of my sister-in-law's ceremony) – but in the days and hours leading up to that flight, I cried and paced and pulled my hair out more than I have in a long, long time. And I did not do a good job hiding my stress in front of my impressionable young sons. And, perhaps, my children experienced two storms that week: one outside the house, blowing our trashcans down the road, and one inside the house with a mom and dad who momentarily forgot that six-year-olds and four-year-olds tussle and perform couch acrobatics and argue over the blue crayon, and leave their dinosaur backpack in the middle of floor (despite being told five thousand times to hang it on the hall tree hook).

In the middle of that "inside" storm, my six year old became quiet, contemplative. And then finally said, "Mommy, it's okay. I get stressed too sometimes." And we talked about what stress looks like and sounds like to a first-grader. We talked about recess and school work and friends who sometimes aren't friend-like. And stress was perfectly described as being tired and angry and sad. So we asked him how he handles his elementary school stresses. And he told us he takes a deep breath and thinks of his favorite things and soon, he can't remember what made him tired and angry and sad in the first place.

So we had a crazy week leading up to a fairly hectic and, at times, harrowing trip (the wedding was beautiful, but not without its own hiccups and broken steamers and bouts of altitude sickness which could make for a whole other story for another time). But it was made a lot more bearable and endurable with advice from a very savvy, albeit

mischievous, six-year old therapist who reminded me to breathe and think about my favorite things. And the fall is FULL of them.

Here's hoping the rest of it is a mellow and comforting homage to leaves (and leaves alone!)

Laura Picard
Berrybrook Board of Directors

Berrybrook Open House
Admissions 2020-2021

Saturday, November 16, 2019
10 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Spread the Word!!!



Berrybrook would like to welcome

John DeVito!!!!

(big brother Vinny is in 5 Day and big brother Dominic is in 2 Day)



Colder weather is on its way.....

As the weather changes, be sure to dress children appropriately for outdoor play including the Nook. Now is a good time to locate all hats, mittens, gloves, and warm jackets that will be necessary as we head into November. Once the snow flies, children should bring snow pants and snow boots with them every day. Children are welcome to keep slippers, sneakers, or crocs at school to make sure they are comfortable in the classroom.

Please remember to label all clothing with your child's name.



Snow Days/School Cancellation



It is our policy to cancel classes whenever Duxbury Public Schools are closed due to weather emergencies. Families should watch Channel 7, WHDH for a school cancellation at Berrybrook. Every attempt at notification will be made through email messages, text messages, phone calls via OneCallNow and/or social media.

In the event Duxbury Public Schools require a one hour delay, Berrybrook will have the usual 9 am arrival time.

In the event Duxbury Public Schools require a two hour delay, the AM session, as well as Lunch Bunch, will be cancelled.

A Season of Giving

Kingston Animal Shelter Donations

The month of November, as everyone knows, is traditionally the start of the holiday season. Here at Berrybrook, it is the time of year that teachers share yet another meaningful tradition with the introduction of a Berrybrook Community Service Project started many years ago by Mrs. O'Neil who has recently retired. Families may bring in donations of supplies needed to benefit the Kingston Animal Shelter. To receive these donations, boxes will be decorated by the children in each class with cut-out pictures of dogs, cats, and other animals. These boxes will be placed in the lobby along with "Pennies For The Pound" jars. There will be class discussions about "what is an animal shelter?", "adoption of pets", and "being respectful of all living things." It is important for children to develop empathy and practice kindness. Taking care of pets and other animals is a meaningful way for children to develop these traits. Any and all donations will be appreciated by the animals and the shelter. Thank you for your help!

Some of the items needed are:

Dry cat and dog food (grain free)

Baby food (ground turkey/chicken)

Cat litter

Paper towels

Tall kitchen trash bags

HE laundry detergent

Ziplock bags (quart and gallon size)

Canned Pure Pumpkin

Flea & tick medicine

Small area rugs

Dog treats

Bleach

6 ft. leashes

Kitten Milk Replacement

