

April 2023

April 7

April 17 - 21

Good Friday - no school

Spring vacation week



Notes from the Head of School

*** Below is a reprint from February 2020, but it's a great reminder about how children perceive their world ***

Have you ever stopped to kneel down on your floor, and look up to see what the world looks like from a child's view? Think about it - as adults, the average height is roughly 67 inches where the average height for a 4 year old is just a little over 3 feet. That's a huge difference to a child! As silly as it sounds, when I switch from my beloved clogs that I wear almost every day to a flat shoe, the two inch difference throws me off - I feel much, much shorter! So to a child, that difference in perspective from their world to how an adult views the world is huge. That's why you will see that often, a Berrybrook teacher will bend down to a child's level when speaking to them - one of the main reasons being that a child doesn't feel threatened or inferior when speaking with the adult. It's also to help reinforce how important eye contact is while talking, and it is easier to be achieved when at similar levels.

You also probably have noticed how 'literal' children are this age. I remember when my boys were young and I was trying to get them to pose for our family Christmas card. They were laying on their bellies in front of the Christmas tree and I thought it would be cute for them to lean in and have their noses lightly touching each other with the glowing lights in the background. I said to them, "Okay, now touch noses!" and without missing a beat they both took their pointer fingers and jabbed their brother's nose. Both of them. At the exact same time. It's not like one saw what the other was doing and followed suit. Nope,

they both interpreted the message in the literal sense and of course that shot made the family Christmas card. Each December I display the cards from prior years and each year I chuckle with my husband when I put that framed card on the shelf and each time I look at him and say, “Literal much?” which is now one of our many family jokes.

This is also one of the reasons why I know to take a pause when one of my children would tell me a story about a peer. Occasionally one of them in the younger years would come home and say, “Sally hit me” or something along those lines. Upon some careful questioning it would be determined that Sally in fact did not hit my child, but she accidentally ‘flew’ a Lego creation near my child, which “hit” my child’s creation - so in my child’s eyes Sally hit him. We may hear these comments on car rides almost daily, and as parents it can be hurtful to hear as we are immediately going into PPM: Parent Protect Mode. How many times have we gone from 0 - 60 in response to a story our child has told us? A particular hurtful story to hear from your child is that, “Johnny isn’t my friend anymore”. As a parent you go right to the extreme thinking that your child now has no friends in class, how can that happen, and will they ever have friends again?? In reality, it could just mean that Johnny didn’t want to paint at the easel today when your child wanted to, and Johnny played somewhere else that day. For a child, that means they are no longer friends because they are so literal. Chances are your child will report that they are best friends the very next day when they both choose the swings together. The Berrybrook teachers live this every day, and it’s a sign of growth in managing the ins and outs of friendships, which will serve children throughout their whole lives.

February is the month of love and hearts, but our children are working through the nuances of friends, friendship boundaries, and more every day. If a friend chooses to spend time with another classmate one day, does that mean they no longer want to be friends with them? What does “love” mean to a preschooler? Can I love my mom the same as I love chocolate, or the slide? I love all those, but in the same way? As an adult we probably wish we had the same level of problems that children have, correct? Bills, family dynamics, and other adult issues have nothing on sandbox play and painting, am I right? But again, a child’s perspective shows us that their issues are just as important as our adult issues and we need to respect that. It’s a fine line between not dismissing our child’s concerns and focusing too much on them. It’s another life lesson for both adults and children that will help everyone in many different aspects of our daily lives and we are all learning and working on it each and every day.

~ Mrs. Watts

Teacher's Notes

Bon Appetit!

As a Lunch Bunch teacher and someone who has always loved doing food related activities with children, I decided to write my article on food in the preschool classroom.

Snack time is beneficial to your children in so many more ways than just nutritionally. Oftentimes, snack can be the highlight of the day. It might start with the children being excited for whatever food choices are available that day, but more importantly it is an unstructured time, where conversation just flows between the children and between the children and the teacher. Children are authentically themselves, at the snack table. They are at ease and relaxed as they feel that sense of community that comes from sharing a meal with others. Like family meal times, eating together and having discussions about food helps in the development of healthy eating habits.

There are an array of skills that are expanded upon during a meal time in the classroom. Both gross motor and fine motor skills are used. Children pull out their chairs and sit down. They use their core strength to sit upright for the whole snack or lunch time. Some children find this difficult even at the pre-K level. They may need reminders to stay seated or to push in closer to the table. We discuss at Berrybrook how important safety is, and we teach the children that sitting is the safe way to eat. Some families may allow their children to eat as they walk through the house or while they are watching television, so for many children being asked to sit for the entirety of a meal time is difficult for them at first. We stay consistent with our expectations, and the children soon enough are able to remain seated. They are very happy and comfortable to sit and chat with friends while enjoying their snack or their lunch.

Fine motor skills are used in 4 and 5 Day classes when they pour water from the pitcher into their cup. The younger children are practicing their pincer grasp when picking up small snacks like goldfish. Self-care skills are a huge part of our meal times. Children independently wash their hands both before and after eating. They feed themselves, sometimes using utensils depending on what the foods are. If there is a spill, children will clean it up themselves with paper towels, and some teacher direction if necessary. They are responsible for cleaning up after they eat, by dumping water in the sink and carefully disposing of snack materials into the trash. We strive to encourage in our students a growing sense of capability.

The free flowing conversations contribute to children's language development. Social skills are also being fine tuned. Some days children may sit next to a dear friend. Other days they may be sitting next to a child they rarely interact with. The snack table is a

wonderful place to strengthen already blossoming friendships as well as a comfortable place to make connections with new friends. It could be as simple as a child saying, “I love bananas, and I eat them for breakfast every day.” Boom! This may spark a wonderful conversation with a more introverted classmate who now feels comfortable to say, “I love bananas too.” We also encourage eye contact. We ask children who may be looking down at their food and talking, to look instead at the classmate they are speaking to. As adults we know the power that sharing a meal has over our ability to engage and connect with others. Eating can be an incredibly social activity.

Eating alongside peers may even encourage a child to try a food they have never eaten before. If they see their friends eating and enjoying it, they are probably more likely to taste it at the snack table than they would be if mom and dad were encouraging them to try it. I have seen this happen countless times! The surprise and excitement when the child discovers that they actually like the novel food is a beautiful thing to witness.

Acceptance and understanding are other attributes that can be developed at the preschool snack table. Many times the conversation will turn to the topic of food allergies. There are children who are very verbal about their allergies and enjoy talking about them with their classmates. We will also have children who may not have had any exposure to someone with a food allergy, but they will feel comfortable asking the teacher and/or the child about what an allergy is.

At Berrybrook we also have some long standing traditions of doing food activities with the children. In the 4 and 5 Day classes for example, the children make their own mini pizzas for Halloween. We offer a variety of toppings and you would be very surprised to know that many children who “only eat cheese pizza” decide to use the colorful toppings on their pizza because they look appealing and because making pizza is fun! And yes, they will then eat their creation, beaming with pride knowing they made it themselves. Exposing children to new foods is so important, even if they aren’t ready to try them just yet. The exposure takes the strangeness and novelty of the food item away and normalizes it. Chances are the child will try it eventually.

As if all of this wasn’t enough, there is one more benefit I want to mention when it comes to eating together at the preschool level - table manners! It is not uncommon these days to hear someone say, manners are disappearing with the younger generations. Social media and Covid are often blamed. This may or may not be true. I can only comment on what I see at school. The teachers at Berrybrook are incredibly careful and conscientious when it comes to role modeling good manners for your children and table manners are no exception. At Lunch Bunch the teachers eat their lunches with the children. At snack time there is always a teacher by or at the table.

We encourage kind words of gratitude such as “please” and “thank you”. We show children how and when to use their napkins. We focus on the children who are eating, both for safety and for the sake of being in the moment with them. There are no distractions at our Berrybrook meal times like there might be at home, no telephones, or televisions. Sitting down at home all together for family meal times is the best way to teach your child table manners. They will watch you demonstrating the appropriate way to eat at the table and they will be happy to have your undivided attention as you enjoy a meal together. Meal time is a beautiful opportunity to connect with your child. The same type of relaxed free flowing conversation that happens at our snack and lunch tables will happen at your dinner table too. In a world of fast food, eating meals on the go while rushing from activity to activity, or eating in front of the television, something is being lost. So much can be gained by sharing a meal together, and putting a pause on everything else. As you enjoy the taste of the food, and the fellowship and conversation with your family, you are also promoting good nutrition, table manners, self-care and social skills. Ask your child to help set the table and to help to clean up. This makes them feel invested and gives them a purpose which fosters independence. Eating together is not only pleasurable, but it is beneficial to us in so many ways!

“Good manners reflect something from inside – an innate sense of consideration for others and respect for self.” – Emily Post

~ Mrs. Bonner

Mrs. Bonner teaches the 5 Day morning class



PARENT ASSOCIATION NOTES

Spring is here and we're ready to mingle! We're finalizing the details for our first Moms Night Out the first week in May and would love to see you there. Keep an eye out for a separate email from the BPA to sign up.

Enrichment

In April, Miss Kim will continue with the student's yoga exploration. Jesse Stiglich is also returning this month to continue his music lessons with the kids! The BPA is always researching and seeking new enrichment opportunities for the children. As mentioned before, these programs would not be possible without the help of our wonderful families. Thank you all so much for your continued support throughout the year!

Family Fun Fridays

Thank you to everyone who joined us for Scoops Lacrosse at the Duxplex! We hope these events give you all a chance to try out different activities available for the children in our community. Due to April vacation, we will not be holding a Family Fun Friday this month. However, we have a lot of fun lined up for the spring! In May, we will be visiting JEM Equestrian for an afternoon at the farm. Our June Family Fun Friday will be spent coasting Plymouth Harbor aboard our annual ice cream cruise! Be on the lookout for the upcoming sign up emails for these popular events.

Stephanie McGarry and Alex Cassamassima
BPA Co-Presidents

From The Board of Directors

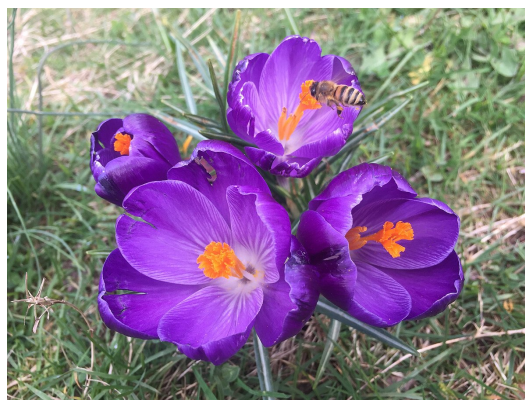
My crocuses are out. My son asked me if they were my favorite flower and I immediately said no, because I think of them as easy to plant and familiar. But after a second, I realized how wrong I was to dismiss the crocus. That mighty flower shows up every year to remind an entire population that spring is here! And even with climate change, and its' perhaps early appearance, I find deep comfort in it.

My son knew about crocuses from Berrybrook, which is fitting. I think they must be in the Nook, but I'm not sure. He might also know them from the classic children's book *The Runaway Bunny*, in which the little bunny becomes a crocus in a hidden garden. I often think about how the Mother Bunny becomes a gardener to find her boy among the crocuses. Even as my children grow up and we test our independence, I always want them to feel the safety of home.

And I continue to test my own tether to my children. Last spring, I planned a trip overseas for my 40th birthday with two of my cousins. A trip of a lifetime. But I was profoundly anxious because Covid restrictions still meant I had to have documentation of being Covid-free to re-enter the US. I was so worried I would get stuck away from my family. Because I had recently had Covid, I went to a local healthcare provider for the proper medical note, and was assigned to a woman...who was another Berrybrook mom! She was wonderfully understanding of my anxiety, and took extra care to make sure her note would allow me to travel and re-enter the US to reunite with my children without problem (it worked). It reminded me, again, that Berrybrook and its community are our home, and they will help bring us home to our children, or the crocuses in our garden, year after year.

~ Lucy Weilbrenner

Board Member



duxbury's all-sports tag sale

SUPER EQUIPMENT.
SUPER PRICES.
SUPER CAUSE!



crossroads The proceeds of this year's event will benefit Crossroads.

featuring:

**baseball
golf
hockey
lacrosse
skiing
snowboarding
also:
bicycles*
lifejackets
parkas
and MORE.**

DONATE.

Please check your closets and garages for used equipment and gently-used clothing to donate.

DROP-OFF.

Drop off your items on Thursday, May 4 from 9am–noon and Friday, May 5 from 9am–noon and 6pm–7pm at the Duxbury Senior Center parking lot.

Look for a Waterfront Realty Group truck with "Tag Sale" sign on it. Call or text Selden Tearse at 781-864-9599 with any questions.

JOIN US.

Saturday, May 6, 2023
8am–11am
Duxbury Senior Center

Cash, checks & major credit cards accepted.

*bicycles were a huge success last year—bring one and buy another!

may 6 2023

The All-Sports Tag Sale to benefit Crossroads, will take place on Saturday, May 6th at the Duxbury Senior Center with all proceeds going to Crossroads, the camp and year-round program for at-risk youth located in West Duxbury.

Please consider donating to the All-Sports Tag Sale ANY and ALL types of sports equipment and gently-used sports clothing. Check your closets now for used equipment that you would like to donate. Drop-off is at the Senior Center parking lot on Thursday, May 4 from 9 am – noon & Friday, May 5 from 9 am – noon and 6 – 7 pm.

Then join us on Saturday, May 6th, from 8 -11 am at the Duxbury Senior Center to get some great equipment at fantastic prices and help send a deserving kid to camp.