



January 2024

Tuesday, January 2

2024-2025 Enrollment Begins

Saturday, January 6

Berrybrook Open House 10am-12pm

Monday, January 15

Martin L. King Jr. Day - No School



Notes from the Head of School

With the holidays behind us, we look forward to a clean slate of the New Year. For some, it's the resolution of more healthy eating but for me in the financial aftermath of the holidays, I always feel the need to clean up my spending habits. I also feel the need to reorganize and set up a bunch of new storage system solutions, but then I have to chuckle because those elaborate setups cost money!

The change of year also begins the enrollment cycle for the next academic year. In some ways it seems strange that the students started only a few months ago, and we're planning for their future about nine months away. However, there's a lot of work that goes into the next academic year long before the enrollment materials are available. At this point, the Board of Directors have sent out two surveys this fall regarding programming in order to assess families' needs and wishes. Change happens slowly at Berrybrook, and these surveys are the first step in the thoughtful approach we all take. Our founder, Katharine Mann, wanted a place for all children to discover, play, and learn and she set a high standard for early childhood education. I sound like a broken record, but for her to set up this wonderful school (way before there was a focus on early childhood education and being a small businessWOMAN in the 1950s) is just so amazing. Mrs. Mann knew that she wanted Berrybrook to be here forever and so she took those important steps to ensure that. Approximately ten

years after our school's founding, she placed legal responsibility for Berrybrook's welfare in the hands of the Board of Directors which includes overseeing the trust she created. This trust subsidizes everyone's tuition in that our operating budget is not strictly supported by tuition, as with the majority of preschools. This Trust support allows the Board to set tuition a bit lower than what the true cost of tuition which considers the low student-to-teacher ratio, competitive staff salaries, plentiful resources, and much more that Berrybrook is so very proud of. In a dollar-approach, without the support of the Trust the annual cost of the 5 Day program which is about \$9,500 next year would be closer to \$11,000. What's not so easily measurable is the impact that the Trust has on the children, to me most importantly the lower class ratio. The state of Massachusetts sets the ratio at one teacher for every ten preschoolers. At Berrybrook, we keep it at one teacher for around every six children (and sometimes the ratio is even less!). This allows for the teachers to really know each and every child, which the positive impact on these young personalities cannot be easily seen or measured like a line item in the budget.

Thank you for your continued support of Berrybrook, and heartfelt thanks to Mrs. Mann for having the calling for founding our "special piece of heaven, where children go to learn" that continues into our seventieth year!

Here's to a happy and healthy 2024 ~ Mrs. Watts



Thank You !!!

We would like to thank all the families for their generosity this holiday season.

All the notes, goodies, and gifts were very much appreciated.

Mrs. Piccuito and Mrs. Watts

Teacher's Notes

Happy New Year Berrybrook Families! As parents of young children you witness the bittersweet passage of time, cherish each moment of innocence, and wonder at the transformation that at times seems to happen overnight. The growth and development that takes place during the preschool years is staggering, and at the heart of it all is PLAY.

"Play is the work of childhood." Jean Piaget

For young children, play is practice for life in a social world. Babies and toddlers learn about themselves and other people through imitation play, shared vocalizations and finger play, and games like peek-a-boo. When a child enters preschool-age, play takes on nuance and complexity as children begin to play within a group, and eventually, with each other.

"In play, a child is above his average age, above his daily behavior; in play it is as though he were a head taller than himself." Lev Vygotsky

In each age group Berrybrook students are discovering facets of emotion and learning how to relate to other people through play. Berrybrook Beginners mostly engage in parallel play; playing and exploring alongside their classmates with limited social interaction. They may appear to be "in the zone" as they are working to master the task at hand, perhaps not even noticing or acknowledging their classmates. As children build confidence, language skills and independence, their play becomes more social with a desire to interact with their peers. 3-day and 2-day children will begin to initiate play with their peers and make friends with their classmates. This propensity to play together opens up a world of social play; children will learn skills of reciprocity, collaboration, and self-regulation as they navigate balancing the needs of others with their own. 4-day and 5-day students, emerging with more complex social-emotional skills, are now able to play cooperatively with their friends. Cooperative play demands an understanding of and appreciation for other points of view and fosters the ability to compromise and feel empathy for others. Myriad Berrybrook friendships through the years have been formed within these precious moments of play.

Each stage and type of play offers young children opportunities to reach with their thinking and learn about themselves and other people. Play provides a safe space for them to take risks, make mistakes, and practice the social and emotional aspects of life. These Berrybrook years mark a truly special time in your child's life as he/she is blossoming before your very eyes - through each stage, learning, and of course, playing.

~Mrs. McLaughlin

Mrs. McLaughlin teaches in the 3 Day Room 3 and the Beginners classes

Parents Association Notes

Happy New Year everyone! We hope you all enjoyed some time off with your friends and family! The Holiday Singalong was such a special way to end the year, and we'd like to thank our amazing student performers as well as the Berrybrook staff for putting on a great show.

We had another successful Family Fun Friday at the Gardens Aglow event at the Heritage Museum and Gardens. We hope everyone loved the beautiful light displays throughout the gardens, the festive decor, and the fun activities for all. We are looking forward to our next Family Fun Friday, which will be held on **Friday, January 12th** at Pottery Playce in Pembroke.

We are extremely grateful for your support with the Bethesda House Giving Tree. Together, we were able to support the 8 mothers and their children currently living at the House.

On a final note, we greatly appreciate your continued support and participation in the BPA. Because of your generosity, the BPA dues that many of you submitted at the beginning of the year are going towards some fun and exciting enrichment programs coming up in the new year! Please know that it's never too late to contribute to the funds that support these activities. The suggested contribution per family is \$40 and can be sent via Venmo to the @BerrybrookParentsAssociation account.

Alex Casamassima and Stephanie McGarry, Co-Presidents
berrybrookparentsassociation@gmail.com

Berrybrook would like to thank everyone who donated to the Kingston Animal Shelter. The animals are more comfortable and content this winter because of your generosity.



From The Board of Directors

When winter comes, I often find myself reflecting on the magical moments that defined my kids' days at Berrybrook, now somehow four unbelievable years ago. The classrooms, playground and the Nook not only served as a canvas for exploration but also became the backdrop for cherished traditions that have become a special part of our family...quite literally sometimes, when we even had our family photos taken there! After the sparkle and songs of the holiday break, the winter sang its own quiet song at Berrybrook. The colder months can be long but our school fostered a joy and curiosity that today continue to bind our family to the beauty of the season.

Berrybrook winter fun and learning instilled in my kids a deep appreciation for the magic of nature that persists still today. I'm always grateful for the sweet memories and the valuable lessons that our Berrybrook teachers and community have provided. They have created a foundation for a lifelong connection with nature and a sense of wonder that will accompany my children into the future.

~ ***Beth Marois***

Berrybrook Board of Directors



Congratulations to Ms. Ellsworth and
her family on the birth of their
daughter August!!





Colder weather is here...

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.

Beyond a formal cancellation, we urge parents to use their best judgment about driving young children to school in inclement weather.

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 outdoors in January. 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.

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