



March 2024

Friday, March 15

Friday, March 15

Friday, March 29

Enrollment Contracts Due

Professional Day - no school

Good Friday - no school



Notes from the Head of School

*** Below is a reprint from 2018, a great reminder about how children are watching our every move and reaction ***

Lately I seem to be hearing and reading more about resilience. Resilience is the power or ability to bounce back from adversity, trauma, or other significant sources of stress. What people perceive as stress, as well as their reaction to the stressor, varies from person to person. Resilience is also not considered a trait that people either have or don't have, but instead it involves behaviors, thoughts, actions, and choices that can be learned and developed by anyone.

My predecessor, Mrs. Keeley, and I would often question each other in moments of being overwhelmed: "Is this a pencil or a tsunami?" Many years before, her then college-aged daughter had taken a class where they discussed that concept and how some people can overreact to what seems like small issues are you reacting as if a pencil was rolling off a desk ("Oh well"), or are you reacting as if there was a tsunami in the forecast ("Batten down the hatches, our lives are at stake!")? In moments of stress, when we might be feeling frustrated Mrs. Keeley and I would look at the other and ask which we were dealing with - a pencil or a tsunami . . . we had such a great relationship and were so comfortable with each other that after a while we would just look at each other with a small smirk and say, "Tsunami?" This often took the other person down a notch to remember that in the grand scale of things, what we were upset about really wasn't as big of a deal as we first thought.

As a mom, I try to remember that my children are always in the position to observe my actions. Sometimes they may not seem like they are paying attention to me, but then I will overhear them say something that tells me that they certainly were listening. Thankfully I haven't had too many major adversities in my life to bounce back from, but I hope that my children see my reactions to the 'pencil' problem and know that when I am faced with a 'tsunami' situation I will have the means to choose resilience. This does not mean I am a doormat and will allow others to treat me badly, it just means that I am constantly evaluating and deciding if it is worth a tsunami response. Dunkin' Donuts gave me a multigrain rather than a plain bagel? No need for a temper tantrum, in my opinion, as I am thankful that I have access to food. Someone is rude to me in a store? No need to be curt back, I will plan to smother them with kindness to perhaps turn their day around. I'm still very much working on a pencil rather than a tsunami response if someone cuts me off in traffic but then I remember - our children are always watching, even when we think they aren't.

~ Mrs. Watts



C o n g r a t u l a t i o n s
t o t h e D e m a r k i s F a m i l y !



W e l c o m e
A l e x i a D e m a r k i s
(b i g b r o t h e r A s h e r - P a o l o i s i n t h e
3 D a y R o o m 3 c l a s s)

Teacher's Notes

Dressing for “Success” in Preschool

Preschoolers are beginning to establish their own identity and one of the ways they enjoy expressing their personality and individuality is with the clothing they wear. It is important for us as adults to show appreciation for each child's individuality, as this is crucial for the development of their self-esteem. But as parents and teachers, it is also important to make sure children are dressed in a way that promotes their safety and wellbeing.

In a preschool setting the clothing and shoes that children wear each day can either add to their learning and growth or can hinder it, and at times can even be a safety concern. Clothing should fit appropriately, not too big and not too small. Preschoolers are on the move constantly, tight clothing impedes that movement. Loose clothing is a nuisance as children are pulling up pants or sleeves that are getting in their way. Gross motor skill development is a big part of the learning and growing that happens during preschool. If clothing and footwear do not fit appropriately this can really interfere with those skills developing. In the 4 and 5 day classes we have fun with skipping and galloping. When a child is wearing shoes too big for their feet they are unable to do either of these things, as the shoes keep flopping off. As educators responsible for making assessments and creating learning goals for students, at times we are unsure if they lack the skill and coordination, or is it just that the shoes are preventing them from being successful with these developmental milestones. In addition to them missing out on important activities like this, there is also the risk of these children tripping and getting injured, all because the shoes are too big.

Footwear has been an issue for as long as I've been teaching. Children like certain shoes for very specific reasons. Sneakers two sizes too big may have their favorite superhero on them and so they love the shoes so much, and that is understandable, but it doesn't make those particular shoes appropriate or safe for school. Fancy dress up shoes with slippery soles or even little heels are incredibly dangerous even when simply walking around inside the classroom. Flip flops are always a poor choice, anything open toed is very hazardous. Many children wear crocs these days, and while the toes are covered, they are still not a safe shoe for running, jumping, or climbing. Crocs should be considered more like a slipper, not a shoe for an active preschooler. Another thing to keep in mind is children's feet are growing, all the while they are developing balance and control, so it is crucial for them to wear safe, solid, slip resistant shoes to keep those feet happy, healthy and blister free! Shoes should offer both support for their growing feet as well as protection. Well-fitting sneakers worn with socks are usually the best footwear for preschool children.

Clothing for preschoolers can also be a way for them to develop their self-help skills and independence depending on the clothing they wear. Comfortable, well fitting pants with elastic waists are best for children to move in, and for them to be able to pull them up and down without assistance. Clothing with tiny fashion buttons or snaps prevents children from being independent and forces them to rely on help from an adult. Think

about their clothing from their perspective and their capabilities. Function over style is where it's at.

Weather plays a role in everyone's clothing choices. It's no different for preschool children. In between seasons when temperatures are tricky and can fluctuate throughout the day, we recommend layers. Children are really good at feeling their own body temperature and knowing when to layer up or layer down. This is another good way to empower them to make choices, while at the same time giving them what they need to keep them safe and comfortable throughout the day. On a rainy day, rain boots are fantastic for outside, but maybe not so great to wear in a warm classroom. Sending in an alternative pair of shoes would be great for indoor gross motor and dancing activities, as well as for letting those cute little feet breathe. On warm sunny days, sending your child to school with a sun hat is very appropriate, and hats are always a great way to express individuality. Let them choose the pattern when you are buying the hat so they feel invested and connected to it.

Choices are important at this age, but preschool children still need guidance. If my daughter Maya had her way at four years old, she would have worn her Dorothy dress and ruby slippers to school every day. I gave her options of other dresses paired with leggings for her to choose from, and we left the Dorothy dress waiting for her on her bed, and yes she would change into it as soon as she got home. And the dresses!!! Maya refused to wear pants and was all about dresses. She couldn't stand the feeling of jeans, she called them "hard and cold". I respected this and made sure she had plenty of "soft and warm" leggings to wear under her comfortable dresses. She was being validated, her preferences mattered, but at the same time she was still dressed safely and appropriately.

Ideally children should be choosing their own outfits each school day. This builds confidence and is good decision making practice. Choosing an outfit from everything in their wardrobe is overwhelming, unrealistic and most likely what would get chosen would not be appropriate for school. The best way to help a child in making this choice is by the parent selecting two or three options for outfits ahead of time, all of which are safe and appropriate for school and the weather. Allow the child to choose one of the options. The child feels empowered by making a choice and the parent knows no matter what the choice is, it will be a good one for health and safety.

Fundamentally, children cannot learn or develop new skills if their basic needs are not being met. One of those needs is their clothing, to be clothed in a way that keeps them safe, protected, comfortable, and able to participate in all the experiences available to them. And when it's an outfit they have "chosen" for themselves, there is also a sense of pride and confidence that we see as soon as they walk into the classroom ready to start their day.

~ *Mrs. Bonner*

Mrs. Bonner teaches in the 5 Day and 4 Day Room 1 classes

Parents Association Notes

We hope everyone had a wonderful February vacation! The BPA has been busy this year coordinating enrichment opportunities, organizing Family Fun Fridays, and thinking ahead to events and activities for the spring - including a Berrybrook Moms' Night Out! We want to make this event work for as many people as possible, so we created a survey to better understand your schedules. If you're interested in attending, please take a moment to provide some feedback in this brief [survey](#). We look forward to connecting with you!

Enrichment

We are expecting a visit from the dental hygienist this month. Dentistry for Children will be visiting the classes to teach them about proper dental hygiene in a fun and engaging way. We also have Jesse Stiglich returning this month to engage the 4 and 5 day students in a fun drumming class!

Family Fun Fridays

The children had a blast letting out their energy at Strive! Here is some information about their next 6 week Kids Session that begins Tuesday, March 5th. The class runs similar to how the event did on the 9th! They run a dynamic warm up, show movements and do a quick workout, play games and complete an obstacle course. The age range is 3-7 (3 & 4 year olds caretaker must be present) and the class runs from 4:15-5 PM. Their goal is to encourage health and wellness in a fun and exciting way! First class is free if anyone is interested in coming to try before signing up! Register [here](#) if interested.

We're looking forward to our next FFF in March with Big Ryan's Tall Tales at Berrybrook! If you are interested in joining the waitlist please email Michelle Crowley at berrybrookparentsassociation@gmail.com

April & May Family Fun Fridays:

We anticipate that our last two Family Fun Fridays of the year will be quite popular. We want to give ample time for families to plan ahead for these fun events, so **please keep your eyes out for an email next week that will provide details about the upcoming events/registration details.**

Help Support Your Child's Enrichment Program

As always, thank you to those who have already paid their BPA dues! If you have yet to do so, it's not too late! A big thank you to our Berrybrook families for your continued support and participation! Please let us know if you have any questions, comments, or concerns. You can email us at berrybrookparentsassociation@gmail.com.

Alex Casamassima and Stephanie McGarry
BPA Co-Presidents

From The Board of Directors

If you are anything like me, you are counting down the days to March 19th. Our family watched with excitement last month as Punxsutawney Phil saw his shadow and predicted an early spring.

We are looking forward to seeing daffodils peaking through the dirt and being woken up by chirping birds through our windows. As nature blooms around us, our children are doing the same.

The somewhat nervous little boy I dropped off for his first day of preschool last fall has quietly sprouted into a confident, determined, and cheerful member of the 3 Day class. His sense of curiosity and understanding of the importance of friendship has been carefully nurtured by his Berrybrook teachers, and he is blossoming with strong roots and new strengths.

As we welcome the official start of spring this month, I hope we will all take the time to appreciate how much our children have developed since beginning their Berrybrook journey. After all, "It's not about what it is, it's about what it can become." – Dr. Seuss.

~ Katie Parker
Board of Directors





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 their 7th birthday. More information can be found on the Berrybrook website or stop by the office.



**PLEASE LIMIT CELLPHONE USE
TO EMERGENCY CALLS ONLY,
ESPECIALLY AT ARRIVAL AND
DISMISSAL TIMES.**



HOSTED BY
MONTESSORI SCHOOLS OF MASSACHUSETTS
NEW VIRTUAL PROGRAM APRIL 3 & 10

RESPONSIVE PARENTING IN STRESSFUL TIMES

Supporting Children with Issues of
Attention, Intensity, & Mood



SPRING 2024 WORKSHOP

All behavior tells a story. Family counselor and learning specialist, Lynne Reeves Griffin RN MEd believes children behave well when they can—and that skills to cope with how they're hard-wired can be taught. If your children struggle with attention, feel worried or anxious, or have meltdowns and tantrums that drain energy from your days, this two part workshop outlines a sensible approach you can use right away to support your precious children and add more harmony to family life.

With a blend of information-sharing and candid discussion, parents leave Lynne's programs with practical strategies to implement immediately, as well as discussion points to keep responsive parenting going.

"Lynne Griffin is able to create an experience for parents that is safe for any kind of question, and her advice is always developmentally appropriate and thought provoking. Lynne is a key leader in education."

— Nina Dickerman, Harvard University

SUBSCRIBE TO [FAMILY DRAMA](#)

[Click To Register](#)

PROGRAM AT A GLANCE

- A Virtual Workshop
- Wednesdays April 3 & 10 | 2024
- At 6:30 PM
- \$55.00
- Includes Handouts
- Nonrefundable | Nontransferable



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