

May 2024

*Tuesday, May 7	3 Day and 4 Day Class Pictures
*Wednesday, May 8	5 Day Class Pictures
*Thursday, May 9	2 Day and Beginners Class Pictures
Monday, May 27	Memorial Day - no school

***Rain dates will be scheduled as needed**



Notes from the Head of School

Thank you to our families who either came into school or had a Zoom parent/teacher conference during these last weeks. We always enjoy these meetings! One question/concern that arose in a few conferences was that of bullying, so I thought what I wrote back in April 2019 still rings true.

Can preschoolers be victims of peer bullying?

Can preschoolers BE bullies?

Those questions and many others were answered at our staff Professional Development day last month. The short answer to those questions is no, which I think is very comforting. Bullying involves the planned approach to get a desired outcome. Preschoolers are unable to meet the definition of a bully, because at that age they are developmentally impulsive; their behavior is mostly “all over the place” and there is no planning to deliberately one-up their classmate.

If preschoolers cannot developmentally be a bully, then how do we reduce the possibility of them becoming bullies or being bullied in the future? The simple answer is kindness. It is teaching and modeling for children from an early age how to act and treat others with kindness. How do you teach kindness, especially in a world that seems to be encouraging others to be the best at everything, potentially at the

expense of others? As I write this, the Operation Varsity Blue scandal has been on the news all week, where celebrities and others cheated or paid officials to get ahead and guarantee admission for their children into prestigious colleges. It's so discouraging when things like this happen, because what is it teaching their daughters and sons . . . that they and their accomplishments are not good enough to meet their parents' standards? That they don't measure up to their parents' expectations? That at an adult age, they cannot navigate the next step in life and that they need to be rescued? Years ago a Board of Director member joked that Berrybrook should have the tagline "We grow good people". Basically, it's what Dr. Phil says when giving parenting advice to his guests: parents are not raising children, they are raising adults. Every interaction is with the end goal in mind of raising productive members of society - bringing me back to kindness. We need to start early, because if we are modeling for children how to undercut others to get ahead, the future of this world seems bleak and depressing to me. Circling back to Operation Varsity Blues - what's going to happen when no one is there to rescue these college students? How are they going to be productive members of society?

Can a kind person also be someone who doesn't become a doormat for others? Of course! Being kind doesn't mean you lose your backbone. It means standing up for yourself in a way that doesn't hurt or insult others, again something we should be teaching and modeling for children early on. Think back to when you may have been in the dating world. If someone approached you and offered to take you out to dinner or buy you a drink, you could very kindly respond with a "No thank you, I'm not interested" rather than "That's a hard NO; I wouldn't go out with you if you were the very last person on earth! How dare you think I would spend time with you!" Think about which response YOU would rather receive, and help spread kindness with that in mind. Let's all have the mantra to help "grow good people"! The world will be a better place for all!

~ Mrs. Watts

Teacher's Notes

My family and I tackled some spring cleaning this week. The weather has, finally, turned hopeful. I see bright sunny skies, the sun is setting later, birds are chirping, children's happy voices are heard throughout our neighborhood. It feels like a new beginning. With every season, and year that my children grow older, we have the always evolving conversation about 'play.' What does play mean? The idea was so much simpler when I had two toddlers; their imaginations endless, everything outside was a project, a playground, something new. Now, with an almost ten and eight year old, the play conversation is different. Outside influences, friends, electronics, homework, sports schedules - all play a factor when it comes to 'play.' It's so easy to let my son watch a show on the iPad or let my daughter watch cooking shows endlessly; it helps me get my 'to-do' list checked off. Like most parents, I need many reminders to just 'let go,' of what needs to be done and be in the present moment.

Four years ago, when the pandemic began, I was home with a six and four year old for what we thought was a 'two week' break until the world went back to normal. Full disclosure, most people in my life would call me a 'type A' personality. Organized, structured, and my least favorite - slightly controlling. My babies napped at the same time everyday. I tried all the right foods and toys, read all the articles as to what was important for each stage they were going through in life. I wasn't very flexible. Those first two weeks in March 2020, I panicked, for so many reasons like everyone else, but mostly as to the structure of my children's day-to-day. What would they do ALL day without school/preschool, home all day...with me. So I did what I always did, I brought out the teacher in me: made charts, schedules, a whole school day for my kids for those two weeks. I took a deep breath. I could manage the unknown. The only glitch in my planning, and of course the reality of that year, was I didn't plan for pure, unplanned fun. I didn't plan for lack of control everyday. I didn't let go of my own 'to-do' list to be a kid with my kids, to play with them, to watch them discover the world however they wanted.

As a parent and now a preschool teacher, I've seen how play is essential to every child. Children learn how to adapt to different situations, they learn to problem solve, how to express themselves, how to make friends and follow rules. Play creates joy, it triggers imagination, it stimulates the brain and body. It's more than watching my children cover themselves in dirt; it's pretending they're on a scavenger hunt, discovering new fossils, finding bugs, being explorers. Play takes on a huge role in children's physical and mental health. Play helps social, emotional, and cognitive skills develop. In short, letting children play caters to the positive growth of the whole child.

The most important lesson of 2020 that has changed me as a mother was to let go, to be more present. I did try the structured schedule for those first weeks, and then quickly threw it out the window. I went outside in the rain and stomped in puddles with my kids. We made it up to 200 in our hopscotch game (learning to count too)! We hiked

in places we never would have known about. We went on adventures, walks, built forts, we ran through sprinklers. We created disasters in our home pulling out ALL the toys and papers. We baked, we froze toys in ice and pretended we were excavators. We played and played and played. I saw the world through my children's eyes. They didn't know anything significant was going on in the world; they felt safe and I learned to play again.

With this new season, be kind to yourself. I know not every day can be all about play, but try to be present with your children..more. Turning off the television for a quick walk and a game of 'I spy,' could change everyone's day. These days, I also need more reminders to be present, but when my children ask to throw the ball around, bake cookies, go for a hike, I try my hardest to be in the moment with them. My to-do list will forever be there.

~ **Emily Larose**

Mrs. Larose teaches the 5 Day class



Parents Association Notes

We hope everyone enjoyed April vacation week! We have a few more fun events planned before the end of the year, and we hope you can join us!

Moms Night Out

Moms Night Out is back! We'll be creating our own spring bouquets over wine and charcuterie at The Root in Scituate on Wednesday, May 15th from 6-8pm. Please bring your favorite bottle of wine to share!

Family Fun Fridays

Thank you to all who joined us this past Friday at Duxbury Bay Maritime School! This was our first time hosting a FFF there and I think the children had an amazing time. It was great to see them participate in the hands-on activities and explore the inflatable whale "Delilah."

We are so excited to be bringing back our annual ice cream cruise for our last Family Fun Friday of the year! The cruises are booked for **Friday, May 31st**. You can still register [here](#). Please email Michelle at berrybrookparentsassociation@gmail.com to be added to a waitlist if needed.

Alex Casamassima and Stephanie McGarry
BPA Co-Presidents



Berrybrook Welcomes

William "Tripp" Patterson

(Big brother Archie is in 3 Day Room 3)



The Board of Directors

I can always count on the month of May to bring the more consistent sunshine and warmth that I crave all winter long. The rain and cold we seemed to be plagued with at the beginning of spring is also finally through (I hope). My son reminds me each time I complain, “The flowers need the rain to grow, Mom. The rain is good”. That’s absolutely the reminder I need when I find myself wishing away the days and weeks, dreaming of “better days” ahead come summertime.

The reminder of the importance of the rain, and the importance of **today**, is particularly important for me this year, as it is my youngest’s final school year at Berrybrook. Suddenly, I am wishing for time to slow down and for **today** to last a little bit longer, whatever it is that today brings. Berrybrook is the place where, when my son first walked through the door, I watched his spirits brighten and his love for friendship and learning explode. So much warmth, friendship, and personal growth has come from our time at Berrybrook these last couple of years and it is something that I will always be grateful for. It won’t actually be too difficult to find something to appreciate on each chilly or cloudy day this spring, because for now, most of them are Berrybrook days; and that is something to smile about.

Bethany DeCollibus
Berrybrook Board of Directors

