

December 2023

Wednesday, December 13	3 Day Classes Holiday Sing-Alongs
Thursday, December 14	4 Day Classes Holiday Sing-Alongs
Friday, December 15	Beginners, 2 Day and 5 Day Holiday Sing-Alongs
December 18 - January 1	Holiday Break
Tuesday, January 2	2024-2025 Enrollment begins



Notes from the Head of School

'Tis the season for holiday traditions, gift giving, joyous celebrating, and sensuous smells.....coupled with jammed schedules, never ending todo lists, overtired children, and gluttonous eating. The yin and yang of the holidays gets me every year. It's the most joyous time of year right? Then why does it also seem that most people's stress level is sky-high during the season?

My family celebrates the holidays of Thanksgiving and Christmas, and it's no surprise each year that Thanksgiving falls on the fourth Thursday in November and Christmas on December 25. It's the same each calendar year, but yet each year the holidays "sneak up" on me and I feel that I am constantly behind or lacking something. More so I get a feeling of FOMO, that I should be doing more, whether for my children or others. Our expectations for our children seem to get skewed as well. We know they lose their patience quickly, yet why are we even more annoyed when the line at Target is super long and they react to that no differently than any other time of the year and melt down easily.

Why is the season of so much joy so stressful for many? On the surface, our senses are on overload with different sights, smells, and sounds along with less fresh air time due to changes in temperature and early sunsets. Our routines seem to go out the window, and children thrive on consistency so it's no surprise when they (over)react to the change in routines. The demands on children increase as well; just think of the lyrics to "Santa Claus Is Coming to Town".

*You better watch out, you better not cry;
 You better not pout, I'm telling you why;
 Santa Claus is coming to town.*

*He's making a list, he's checking it twice,
He's gonna find out who's naughty or nice,
Santa Claus is coming to town.*

*He sees you when you're sleeping, and he knows when you're awake,
He knows if you've been bad or good, so be good for goodness sake.*

So in other words if you celebrate Christmas you better behave because of external expectations, or the stranger who is stalking you at night will be judging you and deciding if you get anything on Christmas morning. The children may also be seeing and visiting with relatives they may only see a few times a year and may be expected to dole out affection which they are not comfortable with.

So what to do during this time? Try to stick to your usual routine as much as possible but allow wiggle room when possible. Pick and choose your battles and also allow for negotiation there as well, keeping in mind the stages of child development. At the holidays, we spend time with family members or friends who may have different views on parenting. Try to not let other people's stress and expectations affect you, and be an advocate for your child. With that in mind, remember that children have a sixth sense and can sniff out adult stress and emotional upheaval, so if you know Aunt Sally sets you off regarding child rearing, maybe you can say "No thank you" to the several family commitments, and only attend a "have-to event". Finally, make sure you take time for yourself, and although easier typed than done: let go of perfection! In this era of Pinterest and Etsy, it's common to feel that others are doing everything so much better than you are. Trust me, the kids won't remember that the bows are tied perfectly on the gifts but they will remember those little traditions that your family have done throughout the years that you don't even realize have become traditions. For my family, for some reason years ago we had Taco Bell on Christmas Eve and now that's what we do - the jokes we have made or heard from others about this peculiar tradition is comical, but without a doubt a few days before Christmas Eve Mass my kids will confirm "We're getting Taco Bell, right?" I can't imagine the uproar if we didn't uphold this tradition!

Enjoy the holidays ~ Mrs. Watts



Teacher's Notes

The Joy Of Singing & Learning With Your Children



Happy December to all our families! A month filled with *singing* and so much more! Singing holiday carols in the car together, hearing songs while shopping, singing and listening to music at home as we make dinner, and so on; songs are all around us!

Throughout the school year we have been singing new as well as familiar songs. During the month of December we will be singing holiday songs - some new and some old favorites. When we sing new songs with our class, the children fully enjoy learning the new words and the dance movements that go along with each one. As they hear a favorite, it is equally exciting to watch their smiles grow, to see them get ready for the silly parts, and hear them let out giggles. These are ways your children are learning individually but also together as a group through song. They are learning rhythm by tapping their feet or clapping to the unique beats. Language and communication skills are strengthened when they sound out rhyming words and remember the order that words are sung and focus on singing with a soft, quiet voice or a higher, louder voice. Gross motor skills are engaged as they dance along. The children gain confidence, listening skills and learn how to react and join along as a group.

Singing is an early step to becoming a future reader. You learn words, you sound them out while singing along, you sing about something and learn what you are singing. As a parent, you can form a conversation with your child about a song the same as you would after reading a story. Talking about the words used in the song, asking what they think the song is about, sounding words out together, etc... This is why singing and listening to songs with your child at an early age will help prepare them for reading. Think of all the new words they will hear and learn while singing a song in the early years that will help them develop their vocabulary when it's their time to learn to read. There are so many opportunities for you and your child to learn by simply discovering the joy of singing.

Sing along with your child to one of our class favorites and ask them to teach you the movements.

We're going to Kentucky

We're going to Kentucky,

We're going to the fair,

To see the Senoritas

*with flowers in their hair.
Shake it baby, shake it.
Shake it if you can.
Shake it like a milkshake,
And do the best you can.
Rhumba to the bottom,
Rhumba to the top.
Then turn around
And turn around
Until it's time to
STOP!*

Happy Holidays!

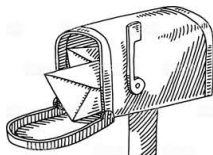
~ Mrs. Knight

Mrs. Knight teaches in the 4 Day Room 2 class

It's that time already!!

2024-2025 ENROLLMENT INFORMATION

**will be mailed out at the end of December. Please be on the look out for
Berrybrook mail and let the office know if there are younger siblings
(who will be 3 by next December 1st) who need an additional application.**



Parent Association Notes

We hope all of you and your families had a happy Thanksgiving! We've been very thankful to our Berrybrook families for all of the continued support and participation over this past month. The students provided the Duxbury Senior Center with some beautiful placemats and cards to contribute to their Veterans Day and "Friendsgiving" celebrations. Shout out to Molly Buchanan and Sara Alton for coordinating these special crafts. We'd also like to extend a thank you to our families who helped us collect **83.1 pounds** of candy to ship to the troops! Congrats to the Souza family for submitting the winning guess (75 lbs!) and winning a free FFF admission in 2024.

As we kick off this busy time of year, there are a lot of activities and traditions planned at Berrybrook this month for everyone to look forward to.

Holiday Giving Tree

Thank you for all of your generous donations to our clothing drive for the Bethesda House! It was a huge success, and we are excited to continue our partnership with Bethesda House this holiday season by purchasing gift cards to help provide household goods that are crucial to running a home for new mothers and their babies. The Bethesda House relies on donations for everything from diapers to maternity clothes to toilet paper, and they are in need of gift cards to places like Amazon and Target to purchase these necessary items. Alternatively, you can shop their Amazon wishlist [here](#) and have items shipped directly to the home. Please stop by the giving tree this month and take a look at how you can help support the Bethesda House this holiday season!

Family Fun Fridays

The children had so much fun at Tumblefun last month enjoying the bounce house, trampolines, balance beams, and climbing structures! Our next Family Fun Friday event will take place at Heritage Gardens in Sandwich on December 1st. Gardens Aglow is a festive celebration of lights that has become a treasured holiday tradition, and we're looking forward to seeing those who can join us!

If you have any questions about these events, please reach out to Michelle Crowley at Michelle.Megnia@gmail.com.

Holiday Gifts

As a reminder, the BPA co-presidents and classroom parents are collecting optional contributions for Berrybrook staff holiday gifts. If you would like to participate, we ask that you send all contributions by the end of this week so that the BPA elves have time to shop. If you have any questions, or do not know who your class parent is, please reach out!

If you would like to purchase Berrybrook apparel in time for the holidays, submit an order [here](#). Place your order by December 5th to receive your gear before winter break starts!

Best Wishes and Happy Holidays!

Alex Casamassima and Stephanie McGarry, Co-Presidents

berrybrookparentsassociation@gmail.com

From The Board of Directors

Happy December to the Berrybrook families! As we enter the Hectic Season – sorry, meant to write “Holiday Season” – we will all become the very best versions of ourselves and the very worst versions of ourselves. Especially as stress creeps down the chimney in the form of shopping, baking, cleaning, wrapping, traveling, card writing, decorating, and socializing, on top of the usual everyday stresses of rearing preschool-aged children.

One of my family’s favorite holiday traditions is getting cozy on the couch with some classic movies: “It’s a Wonderful Life”, “Christmas Vacation”, “Elf”, “The Grinch”, “A Christmas Story”, “Die Hard”. (Note: my husband proofread this and added in the last one to see if any of the dads read the newsletter).

Our very favorite family holiday movie is “Home Alone” which is as hilarious as it is heartwarming. It gives my three elementary-aged children as many chuckles and guffaws as it gave me when I was their age, watching Kevin McCallister knock the gold teeth out of the mouths of dimwitted house burglars. Spoiler warning is in effect.

As a child, I experienced a gamut of emotions. I was exhilarated with each slip, fall, and burn. I was stirred at the reunion between Old Man Marley and his estranged granddaughter. But most of all I was terrified for Kevin that his huge family flew to Paris and left him all by himself to fend off prowlers. And assuredly sad when he creeps down the attic stairs, in a quiet, empty house, believing that he “made his family disappear.”

As an adult, prepping my house for the holidays, tying shoelaces (constantly), cooking different meals for picky eaters, having to be three places at once as the chauffeur, cleaning up sticky mystery spills, fielding a hundred questions and requests while trying to use the restroom ... I rewatched “Home Alone” last week and it unearthed some unexpected sympathies. While I almost always put myself in Mrs. McCallister’s shoes (hellbent on traversing the Atlantic Ocean to ensure her child was not, in fact, home alone), a fanciful bliss overcame me as I put myself in Kevin’s slippers and thought about how unexpected and refreshing it would be to creep down my stairs... to a quiet, empty house.

Now... for those of you starting to pull away... let me be as clear as a crystal ornament with new fish hooks (because you can’t use old ones covered in fish guts). Yes, of course I would trade all the watches, earrings, pocket translators, and cash in the world to traverse the Atlantic Ocean for my children, even driving in the back of a U-Haul with Gus Polinski – Polka King of the Midwest – and the Kenosha Kickers. BUT... who among us doesn’t fantasize about finding a moment of peace, free from the pandemonium of celebrations, momentarily unattended, enjoying your very own cheese pizza.

The opening scene of that movie with a house full of people running in and out of rooms and up and down the stairs is the perfect depiction of the chaos of the holidays. And the tumult is certainly all worth it when we create long lasting core memories and traditions that will forever shape our precious little angels (with or without filthy souls). But for the enjoyment of your holidays, for your sanity, for your inner peace, and for the strength you’ll need to pull it all together to create the magic – don’t shy away from finding a quiet moment or two to enjoy the serenity - the calm before the storm.

(And perhaps your very own cheese pizza)

Have a Wonderfully Loud and Loving Holiday Season!

Laura Picard

Berrybrook Board of Directors



Colder weather is on its way...

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 9am arrival time. **

***In the event Duxbury Public Schools require a two hour delay, the AM session 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 into December. Once the snow flies, children should bring snow pants and snow boots. Children are welcome to change into 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.

FROM ONE OF OUR ENRICHMENT PROGRAM FAVORITES:

PRESCHOOL PERCUSSION

January 10–April 3, 2024

\$240 for 12 classes

Ages 3–5
Mondays
2:30–3

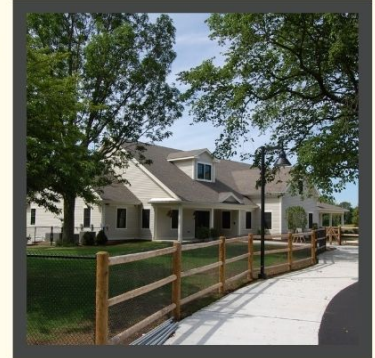


Berrybrook Preschool Open House

Saturday, January 6
10 am - 12 noon



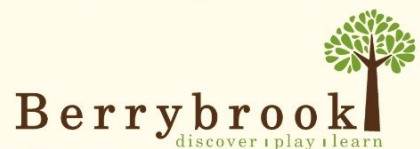
- Founded in 1954 and celebrating 70 years in business!
- For children 2.9 - 5 years of age
- 2, 3, 4 and 5 Day Programs
- Tuition Assistance Available
- Accredited by NAEYC
(National Association for the Education of Young Children)



Berrybrook's mission is to provide an opportunity for children to express themselves creatively and develop individuality and independence through play.

The 5600 sq. ft. school is situated on 27 acres of land including "The Nook at Berrybrook". Our unique, certified outdoor classroom engages children to explore nature and develop connections to the natural world.

If you are unable to attend the Open House, please call for a private tour.



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www.berrybrookschool.org