

BERRYBROOK NEWS

October, 2008

Wed & Thur, October 1 & 2
Thursday, October 2

BPA meeting 9:15 am
BPA meeting 4:00 pm

Tuesday, October 7

Parent Discussion Group 7:00 pm

Monday, October 13

Columbus Day, No School

Saturday, October 18

BPA Fall Harvest Festival 10:00–1:00

Wednesday, October 22

Berrybrook Board of Directors 7:00 pm

Friday, October 24

Professional Development, No School

Notes from the Headmaster

COLORS

My skin is kind of sort of brownish
Pinkish yellowish white.
My eyes are greyish blueish green,
But I'm told they look orange in the night.
My hair is reddish blondish brown,
But it's silver when it's wet.
And all the colors I am inside
Have not been invented yet.

- *Shel Siverstein*

Every child is unique. Over the last few weeks, Berrybrook teachers have been getting to know each child as an individual, figuring out what approaches, activities and attitudes each child will respond to best. At Berrybrook, teachers know that each child is one of a kind, having different needs and interests in the classroom. For example, some children want close physical contact with teachers and peers and others feel more comfortable having some space. There are children who like to observe for a time before trying something and others who will jump right in to every activity. Some children's "engines" run fast and others have engines that run at a slower pace. During the last few weeks teachers have been listening and observing to discover

the intricacies of each personality in their classroom. Teachers spend time before and after school to reflect, revise and create activities based on the needs of individual students. What's working? What isn't? What does a particular child need to feel comfortable at circle time or in the block area? The reflection and thought process does not stop at Berrybrook. The September home visits with children are an invaluable aid to teachers seeking to identify a child's temperament and teachers report that some of their best insights occur to them at home - in the morning, or at bedtime, or on the way to work. At Berrybrook, instead of molding a child to fit into our program, our goal is to adjust our program to make it the right fit for the child. Finding that key to unlock each child's natural curiosity and wonder is a challenge but when it does happen, it is tremendously rewarding for teachers.

New-to-Berrybrook parents should know that teachers are eager to get to know them also. In 1954 Katherine Mann, our founder, started Berrybrook intending it to be a "family" school and it remains so in 2008. Along with wanting children to be comfortable, we also want parents to feel comfortable. For many Berrybrook parents this is their second, third or even fourth child attending. So, they already have supportive relationships with teachers and other parents. Thanks to caring teachers and supportive alumni parents, new families should soon be feeling right at home. Teachers want to hear any questions or concerns and I am positive that any Berrybrook parent would be happy to lend a helping hand. Parent Discussion Groups, the parent resource library, the parents association, and Berrybrook staff are also available resources.

Early in September all parents brought home a beautiful shingle with a collage of sea shells lovingly created by their Berrybrook student. The fact that the children are all bringing home a similar project might create the impression among parents that all of our students will have an identical Berrybrook experience. In reality, the reverse is true. Teachers will encourage all of the unique "colors" inside each child - and all the colors not invented yet - to ensure the best possible Berrybrook experience for each one and refine the special qualities that make each child unique.

Pat Keeley

Classroom Calendars

Each month, teaching teams meet to discuss what activities will be appropriate for their particular group and post calendars by the cubbies to let parents know what activities will be included during the month. Parents should know however, that activities listed for each day may be changed from time to time for a variety of reasons. Teachers, as their first priority, must plan each day based on the needs of the children. It is not uncommon to

reschedule an activity because another approach is more appropriate for the group. As a general rule, all activities happen during the month, but the curriculum remains fluid to meet the needs of the children. That is also why teachers refrain from sending home calendars. We would not want to disappoint children who are expecting an activity that has been rescheduled. In addition, we want to accentuate the joy of discovery children experience when they reach their own conclusions about what is going to happen in their classrooms each day.

Classroom News

Berrybrook curriculum for September was planned to assist in school adjustment and to introduce the children to class routines and expectations with a focus on getting acquainted. During September, simple activities were planned. For example, children explored summer memories, made seashell collages, created watercolor fish and experimented mixing colors and finding out what two colors when mixed make purple (red & blue!).

Like every year, some days were spent making jelly - sorting, boiling, smooching, grapes to get lots of juice. This year, volunteers were able to use our new "teaching" kitchen to turn the juice into jelly on the stove. Thank you so much to those hard workers! We hope families will enjoy the jelly sent home.

Some September songs were:

"Hello, (classmate), How do you do?
Who's that sitting next to you?"

"Open Them, Shut Them"

"If You're Happy and You Know It"

"Make New Friends"

"Take Me Out to the Ballgame"

As we move into October, children are starting to feel more comfortable. Each day, teachers prepare the environment based on a child's natural curiosity and desire to learn. The goal is to promote independence, concentration and

creativity. During October children will be learning about fire safety.

Experiences include dramatic play with lots of fire fighting equipment, and a visit with the Duxbury Fire Department.

Berrybrook fire drills started in September and will continue during the year. During our drills, teachers discuss the necessity of being able to get all children out of the school in case of an emergency. Children are reminded that we all stay together and that teachers will make sure that no one is left behind because we check all areas, even the bathroom. Once outside, children gather along the fence on the playground and teachers take attendance. It is a good idea for families to talk about fire safety at home and to agree on a safe a meeting place.

Along with other fall activities, Halloween will be celebrated in October. There will be Halloween songs and stories, a Jack-o-lantern and a special snack. Halloween can be overwhelming for some children, and that is why at Berrybrook, we ask that costumes remain at home. A Halloween notice with more details will be in cubbies later this month.

This month, each class will be carving a large pumpkin. If you would like to donate a pumpkin to your child's class, please talk to your child's teacher. Thank you!

Transitions

by Joanne LaForest

September. It brings to mind the idea of starting over, new beginnings, looking back on the past and planning ahead...transitioning from one year to the next. The word "transition" is defined in the dictionary as "1. a passage from one state, stage, subject or place to another : change" and "2. an abrupt change in energy state or level" (www.m-webster.com/dictionary). The two definitions are intriguing. The first referring to "a passage" the second "an abrupt change". Both definitions are fitting to us all, almost every day.

Transitioning to the new school year could be referred to as "a passage from one state, stage, subject or place to another. As families begin the school year, some may not even be able to begin to imagine how their child will grow and change in the months ahead. But it will happen. It always does. Change is constant.

The second definition, referring to an abrupt change, represents many occurrences throughout a child's day. Interrupting their play at home to go to Berrybrook in the morning, clean up time at school, leaving the playground to go home and have lunch are just some of the abrupt changes children experience. To show respect for a child's hard work and joy in what they are doing, it is most important to forewarn them of a change. Daily routines provide expectation of the changes so that a reminder is usually all that is needed for a successful transition to the next activity. For example, a child knowing that he or she can expect some quiet play time, a bath and a great book from Mom or Dad every night before going to bed will probably transition easier to bed time than if the routine were different each night or it was abruptly announced "Time for bed!" while they were building with their Lego's in the living room. Respectful words such as "Soon it will be time to go to the grocery store. Would you like to play for a few more minutes or are you ready to go now?" can help prepare a child for transitioning to the next activity and give him or her the power to choose how they will transition. This may need to be followed up with "It is time to get in the car now. Should we do it very loudly or very softly?" There will be times, however, after providing much respect and opportunities for choice that a child may be unable to choose and demand he or she won't be moving on to what needs to happen next. It is respectful for a parent to say to their child, "I see you are unable to choose how you will be getting in the car. We need to go to the grocery store now. Maybe next time you'll be able to choose." Transitions can always be handled respectfully, even when met with disagreement.

I believe that everyone appreciates respect when it is necessary to "switch gears". My children appreciate that when I wake up in the morning I need (need!) my morning cup of coffee to transition into the day...to change into Mom...to change into Mrs. LaForest. I most appreciate when someone says to me, "When you're finished with what you're doing could you help me with something?" I think it's fair to say that our children appreciate it also. Whether becoming age four after being three for so long or moving from breakfast to brushing their teeth, I think respect for what they are working on, in that very moment, is what our children most deserve.

Berrybrook Birthdays

Every student at Berrybrook will have their own special "Berrybrook Birthday" even if their birthday is in June, July or August. The celebration includes choosing a special birthday snack for the class to have together, making a special birthday crown, and having parents come to class for all or part of the day.

For three and four year olds, birthdays are a very big deal. Family birthday celebrations that take place at home are often a hot topic in the classroom and they can sometimes lead to hurt feelings. When these discussions do come up in class, teachers remind children that their family birthday parties should be discussed at home.

We appreciate parents being sensitive to this issue. To avoid any disappointment, we ask that birthday party invitations be extended outside of school. All classes have a list of addresses and phone numbers for families available to parents. Children love to get a card in the mail or a special phone call.
Thank you for your cooperation.

Arrival & Dismissal

Thank you to parents for your patience and flexibility in the parking lot. There can be a lot of traffic at dismissal on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays with three classes going home. Some staff will be parking in other areas to free up as many spaces as possible for parents. With carpools and lunch bunch starting and the flow of pick up getting into its rhythm, things are getting smoother every day. The lot was

designed to accommodate everyone, and with a little planning it will.

Please remember our parking lot rules:

Drive Slowly.

Turn engines off.

Bring siblings with you.

Supervise your children after signing out.

Hold hands in the parking lot.

Lock the gate behind you.

Children must never be left unattended in cars.

If you have younger children in the car, try the buddy system! Make an arrangement to meet another parent with younger children in the lot at arrival and dismissal and park next to each other. One parent can watch younger children in the cars, while the other parent walks Berrybrook students to or from school.

Please remember that anytime you are you have an emergency or need help at arrival or dismissal, you may call the office and we will assist you.

Families are welcome to take advantage of our playground by staying to play with friends after school. We ask that you sign your child out and empty your child's cubby as soon as you arrive. We want to be sure children have all of their belongings and creations to take home.
Thank you.

Berrybrook Parent Discussion Group

At Berrybrook, there are many ways for parents to participate in our program. Depending on the needs of each group, parents may share a special talent, create classroom materials at home, accompany children on field trips, or help out in the classroom. The younger children in the 2 and 3 Day classes appreciate an extra pair of hands almost any day, and teachers will post a sign up sheet for parents to volunteer. The children in the 4 and 5 Day classes are more independent, and are very capable of doing things themselves. Teachers in those classes are more likely to ask parents to participate in a special project.

On Tuesday, October 7, at 7:00 pm, Mrs. Delano, Mrs. La Forest and Mrs. O'Neil will hold the first Parent Discussion Group of the year. The discussion that evening will focus on parent participation in Berrybrook environments and how parents can prepare themselves to be effective in the classroom. It will also be a great opportunity to learn more about the Berrybrook philosophy. During the discussion teachers will introduce some successful strategies we use with children. For example:

Foster Independent Thinking

Always ask children open ended questions rather than directing them:

"What do you need to put on to keep your clothes clean?" rather than *"Put on a smock."*

What do you need to put on your paper so we'll know who it belongs to?" rather than *"Write your name."*

Give Plenty of Time to Respond

Always give children plenty of time to respond to your question. Just because you may respond quickly in a situation doesn't mean everybody does. Some of us need more time to process our thoughts and give an answer.

Use a Quiet Voice

Yelling at children is ineffective. Yes, it may bring results the first time, but your success rate is short lived. In other words "you may win the battle, but you will lose the war" and along with it the children's respect for you. Speak to children in an appropriate manner. Get down on their level and make eye contact. Use a quiet voice. Children will listen when they know you only speak when you have something important to say.

Avoid Using the Words Don't and No

Instead of saying, *"Don't run!"* say, *"Running is for outside".*

Instead of saying, *"Don't write on the wall!"* say, *"Crayons are for writing on paper."*

Instead of saying, *"Don't stand on the chair!"* say, *"The chair is for sitting on."*

We find the phrases and techniques that are so effective at Berrybrook work at home as well. So plan on coming to the first parent discussion group to learn tried and true techniques for communicating with young children!

BPA News

Welcome to all new and returning families! The coming months at Berrybrook offer many exciting opportunities to get involved with and enjoy the Berrybrook community. Remember to mark your calendar for Berrybrook's annual Fall Harvest Festival scheduled for October 18th from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. This event is sponsored by the Berrybrook Parent's Association and helps raise funds to support enrichment programs and special events for the children of Berrybrook School. Some highlights of the festival include a live band, hayrides, face painting, crafts, games, and refreshments. Hot dogs, chowder and other treats will be available for purchase. We extend a special thank you to Foodies for donating the chowder! Admission is \$7 per family in advance and \$10 at the door. For advance purchase, please fill out the slip attached to the festival flyer. Checks should be made payable to Berrybrook Parent's Association and placed in the box on the BPA table.

For your convenience, we are combining our BPA meetings with special social hours to accommodate the various class schedules. Hope you will be able to join us at one of the three meetings: coffee socials on Wednesday, Oct 1st and Thursday, October 2nd at 9:15 am and a pizza party on October 2, 2008 at 4:00 pm. These gatherings will offer a great opportunity to meet other Berrybrook parents (and children are welcome), and to sign up for activities, if you wish to help out (hint, hint). This meeting will primarily focus on planning the festival. The Chair people for the Festival are: Decorating – Mollie O'Hara, Crafts – Tammy Kirk, Games – Anne Watts, Food – Stephanie

Handfield, and Clean Up – Carly Wee. We are also still looking for companies or individuals to sponsor the hayride. This is wonderful tradition which provides a wonderful view of the Berrybrook grounds and celebrates autumn. Please contact us if you are interested in being a sponsor! Also, we are hoping to get families to volunteer to pop popcorn and donate cider for this event.

Also, in October, we will be begin planning our classroom children's enrichment programs, parents' enrichment programs, fundraising efforts, community outreach, and the first educational communitywide event. We look forward to providing other new, exciting initiatives including: a Family Directory, Story Times, a Children's Tea Party, a night time event, and a BPA sponsored library. We hope you will get involved and help with these offerings to make this year in our new schoolhouse an unforgettable one!

Thank you again to all the families who have already made donations for BPA dues. In addition to the Harvest Festival, the BPA has traditionally collected dues to enhance the learning experience for the children and parents. This year the suggested donation is \$25; however, any amount is greatly appreciated. Dues can be left in the basket on the BPA table. Also, stop by and view our bulletin board for updates and a 'Calendar for the Year' to be posted in the coming weeks. The BPA officers are always available for questions and ideas by email or phone.

Thanks,

Tammy Kirk, BPA President

Office Update

Thank you for your patience regarding all the back-to-school forms. It may seem like a lot of time-consuming paperwork and redundant questions, but all this paperwork is necessary! We are required by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) to have certain information on file for each and every child. We work hard to keep your children safe but just in case, we need to have emergency numbers should we need to get a hold of you as soon as possible. Also, it is a good idea to have one or two 'back-up' people listed on your Authorization and Consent form who have permission to pick up your child – say for example, you get a flat tire on your way to Berrybrook it would be easier for your child to have a classmate's parent be able to sign them out so that they can play while you are on your way to pick up your child rather than have them wait for you and worry. This year, I am finding many of the physical forms have been missing immunizations. Again, I am required by the Mass. Department of Public Health to fill out an annual survey regarding the immunizations of the children who attend Berrybrook. We have 77 children attending Berrybrook, and the state requires children to have 7 different immunizations, 4 recommended vaccines, and a lead test.....that's a lot of vaccines to keep track of! **Many of the vaccines have to be given at a certain age or they cannot be "counted" and some immunizations count only if a child has had 3 or more of a certain vaccine.** Many doctors' offices moved to a computerized system within the past year, and some of the vaccines required for children were mistakenly left off the new forms. Please bear with me as we

go through each and every physical form. If you have any questions regarding this paperwork, or about any of the immunizations we are required to keep track of please don't hesitate to stop by the office or call me at 781-585-2307.

Mrs. Watts



Hurt No Living Thing

Hurt no living thing;
Ladybird, nor butterfly,
Nor moth with dusty wing,
Nor cricket chirping cheerily,
Nor grasshopper so light of leap,
Nor dancing gnat, nor beetle fat,
Nor harmless worms that creep

Christina G. Rosetti

Throughout the year, teachers work with children to build respect for living things. "Living things" include themselves, their classmates, other people, and all plants and animals. We encourage children to use words when settling differences, and to be thoughtful and kind to each other. Teachers make sure even insects in the classroom are carefully released to the outdoors. Outside, worms and other creatures can be observed, but should be left right where they are. Trees and bushes are also living things, so you would never pull on their branches, berries or leaves. We appreciate parents reinforcing these lessons to "Hurt No Living Thing."

Overcoming Stressful Times

(This information is from an October 07 Berrybrook News article by Mark Longsjo. It's very helpful this time of year - Mrs. Keeley)

We all have our share of anxieties, especially as they relate to return-to-school issues. Our children's feelings are no different, yet they do have their own ways of displaying them. Anxiety about separation, performance, and socialization is normal, and parents have been finding ways to deal with it for years and years. I understand that each child's transition is his or her own, but sometimes general guidelines can be helpful. I have found one resource to be particularly helpful in reminding me of things I can do as a parent to help my children overcome stressful times. The following ideas are from the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP).

Let your children know you care.

Reinforce the ability to cope. Children absorb their parents' anxiety, so model optimism and confidence for your child. Let your child know that it is natural to be a little nervous anytime you start something new but that your child will be just fine once he or she becomes familiar with classmates, the teacher, and school routine.

Do not overreact. If the first few days are a little rough, try not to over react. Young children in particular may experience separation anxiety or shyness initially but teachers are trained to help them adjust. If you drop them off, try not to linger. Reassure them that you love them, will think of them during the day, and will be back.

Reinforce your child's ability to cope. Give your child a few strategies to

manage the situation on his or her own. But encourage your child to tell you or the teacher if the problem persists.

Arrange play dates. Try to arrange get-togethers with some of your child's classmates during the first few weeks of school to help your child re-establish positive social relationships with peers.

Plan to volunteer in the classroom. If possible, plan to volunteer in the classroom at least periodically throughout the year. Doing so helps your child understand that school and family life are linked and that you care about the learning experience. Being in the classroom is also a good way to develop a relationship with your child's teachers and classmates, and to get firsthand exposure to the classroom environment and routine.

Resources:

Clark, L. (1996). *SOS: Help for parents* (2nd ed.). Berkley, CA: Parents' Press. ISBN: 0935111204.

Dawson, M. P. (2004). Homework: A guide for parents. In A. Canter, L. Paige, M. Roth, I. Romero, & S. Carroll (Eds.), *Helping children at home and school II: Handouts for families and educators*. Bethesda, MD: National Association of School Psychologists.

Rimm, S. (1996). *Dr. Sylvia Rimm's smart parenting: How to raise a happy, achieving child*. New York: Crown. ASIN: 0517700638.

Websites:

National Association of School Psychologists – www.nasponline.org
Parent Information Center – www.parentinformationcenter.org

Berrybrook Board of Directors

Berrybrook School had its first Open House in the new schoolhouse last Saturday. It was a beautiful day with bright sunshine and bright smiles – everyone enjoying the new school, each other, and the refreshments! As one of the guests, Vcevy Strekalovsky – the architect for this project, was taking a picture, I was reminded of the many steps taken by so many people to get to this blue-ribbon snapshot: the past board members who guided the School with competence and passion for the past 50+ years and allowed for the seed of a new schoolhouse to be a possibility; the committees of volunteers who grew the seed and saw this project through; and the many professionals from inside and outside the Berrybrook community that literally and figuratively raised the walls, ran the power lines, and hooked up the heat. There were so many people involved in so many ways, and without every contribution, Berrybrook would not have the world-class environment or the limitless future it has today.

There are many people who have volunteered on a committee, worked on a specific project, and carved out time to help this project along. All of this was necessary to get to today, and every bit of it is appreciated. There is a group of people, however, that stand out in my mind. These are the individuals who came together as a unit and carried the spirit of Berrybrook through the trials of this process. They were here every day. They were committed to the children. They brought Berrybrook into temporary classrooms. They allayed parents' anxieties. They supported one another. They stayed. They watched the construction of the new building. They have carried the Berrybrook spirit (and plenty of boxes!) into the new schoolhouse. They have represented everything about Berrybrook that makes it the special place we know and love. Here's to the teachers! This is an incredible group of people of which I have the utmost respect. Please join me in thanking them for their dedication to Berrybrook and their unique ability as a group to balance the importance of one day and one child with the vision of the future and generations of children to come.

I was talking with my 7-year-old daughter, Emma, after the Open House. She is lucky enough to call herself a Berrybrooker, and I often turn to her for expert advice on the subject. The conversation went back and forth and was filled with positive comments. As the conversation went on, I noticed the difference in our perspectives. I mentioned how I like the different angles in the classrooms; she mentioned how she liked playing with the sand table and the blocks. I mentioned how I like the bright multi-purpose room; she mentioned how she liked that one of her best friends from Berrybrook (who accompanied her that day) did not have to worry about her allergies there. I mentioned how I like the view of the field; she mentioned how she liked seeing the pictures of the smiling faces of this year's Berrybrookers. I think I was finally understanding her perspective, so I thought I would join her. I mentioned how much I like the teachers; she looked up at me then with those eyes that in one glance remind me of her pure innocence and simplicity and she said, "Yes, Dad, it's Berrybrook."

Thank you, Emma. Thank you, teachers.

Many people have contributed to make the Open House last weekend a reality, and Berrybrook is forever thankful. The walls are up, the power is on, and the heat works; but, Berrybrook is strong, electric, and warm thanks to a very special group of people – the teachers. - Miss Bent, Mrs. Caddle, Mrs. Capasso, Mrs. Delano, Mrs. Dunn, Mrs. Fosdick, Mrs. Keeley, Mrs. La Forest, Mrs. Neal, Mrs. O'Neil, Mrs. Piccuito, Mrs. Pisani, and Mrs. Watts

Mark Longsjo President, Berrybrook Board of Directors

*When Your Child Comes Home
Messy...*
(Excerpt from Early Childhood News)

Red Paint in the hair? Blue Paint on the jeans? Sand in the shoes? Jelly on the favorite shirt? White socks look brown? Sleeves a little damp?

Your Child Probably ...

- Worked with a friend
- Solved a problem
- Created a masterpiece
- Negotiated a difference
- Learned a new skill
- Had a great time
- Developed new language skills

Your Child Probably Didn't ...

- Feel Lonely
- Become bored
- Do repetitive tasks that are too babyish
- Do worksheet tasks that are too easy
- Do sit-down work that is discouraging

You Probably ...

- Paid good money for those clothes
- Will have some trouble getting the paint out
- Are concerned that the teacher isn't paying attention to your child

The Teacher Probably ...

- Was aware of your child's needs and interests
- Spent time planning a challenging activity for the children
- Encouraged the children to try new things
- Provided smocks for the children
- Was worried that you might be concerned

Welcome

The Berrybrook community welcomed many new members recently –

Emma Rene Drollett
(Craig, Jennifer, Charlie & Maddie)
(4 Day)

Livvy Rian Frost
(Chad, Laura Grey & Noah)
(4 Day)

Jameson Henry Watts
(Keith, Stacy & Brady)
(3 Day - 3)
(& the office!)

Congratulations!

Animal Care

It is important not to feed anything at all to the sheep. The sheep belong to Mrs. O'Neil and she feeds them daily. The sheep always appreciate attention and kind words

Thank you.

Tuition Payments

Tuition payment #3 is now due. Payment #1 was made over the summer and the second payment was due on September 1st.

Monthly tuition is:

2 Day	\$ 209.00
3 Day	\$ 307.00
4 Day	\$ 381.00
5 Day	\$ 449.00

If you have any questions, please feel free to call 781-585-2307 or email me at berrybrookbilling@comcast.net