



## October 2012

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| <b>Wednesday, October 3</b>  | <b>Parent Discussion Group 7:00pm</b>          |
| <b>Saturday, October 6</b>   | <b>BPA Harvest Festival 10:00-1:00</b>         |
| <b>Monday, October 8</b>     | <b>Columbus Day, No School</b>                 |
| <b>Wednesday, October 17</b> | <b>BPA meeting 7:00 pm</b>                     |
| <b>Wednesday, October 24</b> | <b>Berrybrook Board meeting 7:30 pm</b>        |
| <b>Monday, October 29</b>    | <b>Professional Development Day, No School</b> |

### Notes From the Head of School

One of my favorite children's books is *The Runaway Bunny* by Margaret Wise Brown. I remember reading it to my own girls when they were very young. The interaction between the bunny who has ideas about running away and the parent who is determined to find the bunny every time, always reassured my daughters. At the end of the story, the bunny says he is going to become a little boy and run into a house. "*If you become a little boy and run into a house,*" said the mother bunny, "*I will become your mother and catch you in my arms and hug you.*" My daughters were always delighted to be reminded that they were my little bunnies, and I was always going to be there, no matter what. This knowledge helped us during times when we were apart, like starting preschool, or going away to college (ouch!). We could manage the separation because we knew our relationship wasn't going to change just because we were apart.

Growth often means giving something up to gain something, like giving up the special years spent with your infant and toddler to send your child to preschool. It is normal for children and parents to feel emotional and even shed a few tears. It is ironic that the emotional connections that urge parents to keep a child close are the same feelings that help a child move toward independence. When children have secure connections with parents and care givers they will have the confidence to try new things, take risks and develop into capable human beings. As our school year unfolds, children will continue to work at this most important task of childhood. Berrybrook teachers look forward to working with children so well prepared to become part of a community outside of their families. At Berrybrook, we often say that we prepare children for life. We are off to a good start.

- Pat Keeley

## First Year Program News

First year students are off to a great start. We are getting to know each other, learning our names, and becoming familiar with our class routines. As children become more familiar with classmates and teachers saying goodbye at arrival time is more comfortable and children are completely at ease with our healthy hand washing routines.

Group snack is a routine that involves many steps - washing hands yet again, selecting a seat at one of the tables, choosing snack, drinking from a cup without spilling, clearing the table, putting napkins and cups in the wastebasket and pushing chairs in when finished. That is quite a lot to remember and children are doing very well managing this task. We look forward to learning about how to go about composting any left over snack items.

As school began, you may have noticed ocean themed projects in cubbies. We hope all families enjoyed the yummy homemade jelly children made at the end of September. The children were very proud to prepare this delicious treat. Lots of work goes into sorting, mashing and squishing the grapes and measuring all of the ingredients!

Berrybrook emergency evacuation drills started in September and will continue during the year. During our drills, teachers discuss the necessity of being able to get all children and teachers out of the school in case of an emergency. It is a good idea for families to talk about safety at home too, and to agree on a safe meeting place. This month, children will have a visit from the Duxbury Fire Department and explore fire safety.

Also In October, we plan to take a nature walk on the school property, and we will be discussing the changing of the seasons. Nature projects will be part of our days. Of course we will be learning songs, hearing stories and playing games around these topics. October wraps up with a friendly celebration for Halloween. We will carve a class pumpkin and make a special snack in school.

There is so much going on in our first year classrooms. Your child should be able to tell you more about all of our activities. Giving children time to think about their day is often helpful in gaining more insight. Wait a while to see if your child brings up things about school. Children may be so happy to see parents at pick up time that they are unable to remember details. Often, children will begin to share at more quiet times: while riding home in the car, at lunchtime or even before bed.

If you would like to ask questions about your child's day, ask direct questions. You could ask, "Who did you sit next to at snack today?", or "what was in the water table today?" Asking a question such as "what did you do at school today?" is too vague for young children. They need guidance to focus in on the school day. (This goes for children even as they enter elementary school)

The first year teachers are excited to be off to such a great start. We look forward to learning together!



Mrs. Barlow,  
Mrs. Capasso, Mrs. Delano,  
Mrs. Dunn, Mrs. LaForest,  
and Mrs. Piccuito

## Walk With Me

by Cynthia C. Dunn



We carry our babies in the womb; we carry them in our arms; we carry them in slings and back packs. Eventually, our little ones are ready to take their first steps. Instinctively, we bend down with outstretched arms encouraging them to walk to us and praising them for their amazing efforts. They are willing to try, willing to take the risk because they know that we are there to catch them, to scoop them up into the security of our loving arms. And when they fall, we greet their tearstained faces with compassion and support, letting them know that everything will be all right. It is indeed a joyful and memorable moment as we watch our child walk alone for the first time. It is a milestone in their development, For us, it is just the beginning of one of the many challenges we face as parents: finding the balance to keep our arms outstretched in unconditional, loving support and simultaneously allowing our child to walk alone.

The transition from toddler to preschooler is an exciting time. Developmentally, children are learning about themselves. They venture beyond the safety of our arms to explore their world and they begin to recognize their independence. They are now seeing themselves as their own person, separate from their parents. This emerging consciousness began in late infancy. They are independent beings who can do things on their own. And they relish this independence! It's a thrilling, action-packed and tumultuous time. It's a time of great change.

For parents, the preschool years are a time of change and adjustment as well. We relish the memories of those quiet moments when we sat and cuddled our little bundle and rocked away peacefully. We must now shift gears to help our child feel secure in their emerging independence. Not an easy task!

It's a proud day when our children start school for the first time. With this new

adventure, we can expect a range of emotions from gleefulness to sadness and anxiety. For many children, this will be their first real separation from home and it is not unusual over the next several weeks to see tears and even fearfulness as you leave them in the morning. Some children may even appear to transition into school smoothly, only to regress months later. This is their period of adjustment. As parents we have some adjusting to do as well. It's not easy to leave them when they are crying and clinging to our arms...the most secure place in the world. It's difficult to see our little ones in distress when our own hearts are unsure too. Yes, beginning school will be a roller coaster ride for all of us, child and parent alike.

We can help to soften this bumpy ride by providing our children with tools for an easier separation and transition into school. Building their confidence is key to helping our children feel secure in themselves and secure in the world. One way to foster independence and accomplishment is to encourage children to "Walk with me." Some children will not relish this idea at first but our job is to promote and positively reinforce this behavior. By allowing our children to walk into school rather than being carried, sends the message that they are capable and that they have some control over being in school. A simple step indeed, but one with huge rewards.

As parents, our dream is to see our children grow into strong, independent people. A "Walk with me" attitude gives them the support to stand on their own and the knowledge that we are beside them always, with waiting, loving arms to embrace them.

*(Mrs. Dunn teaches in the 3 Day Room 1 and 2 Day Room 3 Classes.)*

## Second Year Program News

September is the month of new beginnings – a time for children to adjust to a different classroom. There is a tremendous amount of information given to the children at the beginning of the school year to assist them in becoming aware of and comfortable with their new environment. The following are a few examples of developing skills that are taught and encouraged for the second year students...

Saying good-bye at the door and walking into the classroom independently

Learning responsibility by putting things away when finished; for example, individual playdough, Lego trays, puzzles, block creations, etc.

Developing respect for others' work; for example, being very careful when moving around others' block creations

Becoming familiar with the open snack routine

Working on the daily art project during free time

Participating in circle time and listening carefully to stories read aloud

Dressing themselves independently, learning how to zip, button, snap, etc. On the playground the children will eagerly meet the challenge of pumping the swings by themselves and going across the horizontal bars independently

These skills and many more will develop as the year progresses with lots of encouragement from the teachers and as the children succeed with these tasks, they will feel proud of their accomplishments.

Getting acquainted with new teachers and classmates is another important part

of September. Children are learning the names of their classmates, where cubbies and trays are located, and becoming familiar with the classroom rules and routines. The amount of learning and adjusting that takes place at the beginning of each year is amazing!

One way to assist the children with learning names is by singing the following song together.

### HELLO

Hello (person's name),

And how do you do?

Who's that sitting next to you?

Art projects that correspond with the Berrybrook curriculum are offered daily. These projects are open-ended, no-fail activities allowing the children to feel a sense of pride for their accomplishments. Some projects are completed in one day while others may take longer. Fine motor skills continue to develop during these activities.

Watercolors are used for art projects throughout the year. A demonstration of the correct technique for working with watercolors precedes each child's first water color project (painting a pre-cut paper fish). Another watercolor project requires the children to cut a pre-traced paper apple before painting it. In the future they will learn how to trace a pattern, cut on the pencil lines, and finish with paint. As the year goes on, various uses of watercolors will be explored. Some of these projects will be put on display and/or placed in the children's yearbooks.

October is Fire Safety month where children will have the opportunity to explore and experience fire safety apparatus in the dramatic play areas.

During this time students are introduced to a chapter book about a fire cat named Pickles and will create interesting projects relating to this book. We begin our study of the life cycle of pumpkins by comparing classroom pumpkins, estimating their weight, and scooping out the seeds. Some of these seeds will be placed in clear plastic bags to allow the children a chance to observe them as they germinate and some will be served at snack after they have been roasted and salted. Various shapes will be carved out of the pumpkins while making jack o lanterns. At the end of the month these jack o lanterns will be carefully placed outside for observation as they decay and go back into the earth.

The children will also learn about owls, bats, and spiders, as well as, sing songs and listen to stories relating to Halloween. There will be many opportunities for discussions focusing on “real” and “pretend” hoping to make the children’s Halloween experience fun and comfortable for them. They will have a chance to create a prop and participate in a classroom play based on the story, *The Little Old Lady Who Wasn’t Afraid Of Anything*. On Wednesday, October 31<sup>st</sup>, the children will be making individual pizzas for their Halloween celebration which is one of our many Berrybrook traditions. Happy Halloween!

On a Halloween Night,  
When the moon is bright,  
Mr. Owl goes “Whoooooo”  
Mr. Owl goes “Whoooooo”

Happy Autumn!  
The Second Year Teachers,

Mrs. Caddle, Mrs. Fosdick, Mrs. Neal,  
Mrs. O’Neil, Mrs. Piccuito Mrs. Rosen,  
Mrs. Swan and Mrs. Worley



## Halloween Reminders

Children will celebrate Halloween by learning Halloween songs, decorating classrooms in Halloween colors and carving pumpkins. As part of our Halloween activities, we will be discussing the differences between make believe and reality. Halloween can be overwhelming for some children and that is why we ask that costumes remain at home.

Individual classes will be choosing and preparing special snacks. **Because Berrybrook has children with severe food allergies, we ask that candy be enjoyed at home.** This is especially important to remember after Halloween when children may want to bring candy to school in pockets or backpacks.

Thank you!



*Welcome*

Addyson Harrington (4 Day-Room 2)  
has a new baby sister!

Scarlett Elizabeth Harrington

Congratulations to the Harrington Family!

## From the Office

Tuition payment #3 is now due.

Annual tuition is divided into 10 equal payments. Payment #1 is due at time of enrollment and Payment #2 was due in September. Families have received an electronic invoice for payment # 3 due October 1.

Please contact Mrs. Watts with any questions about tuition accounts.

Also, please contact the office with any changes in your contact information.

Thank you.

## Arrival & Dismissal

Please remember the front door will be locked 15 minutes after arrival time. Any families arriving late may ring the doorbell and Mrs. Watts or Mrs. Keeley will let you in. Thank you to parents for waiting until 9:00 in the morning and 1:00 in the afternoon to enter the classroom. Teachers need every minute to prepare for the children. Likewise, thank you for arriving on time for dismissal. Children worry if parents are late. If you have an emergency, please call the office so we can let your child and teachers know you are on your way. Please remember our safety rules:

- **Drive Slowly.**
- **Supervise children after signing out.**
- **Latch the gate behind you.**
- **Hold hands in the parking lot.**
- **Children must never be left unattended in cars.**

A helpful Berrybrook tradition has been for parents to meet another parent with

younger children in the lot. One parent can watch younger children in the cars, while the other parent walks Berrybrook students to or from school. Please remember anytime you have an emergency or need help at arrival or dismissal, you may call the office and we will assist you!

## Check your cubbie!

By now you know that Berrybrook children share their cubbies. That is why it is important for children and parents to check cubbies at sign out time. We want to be sure that projects, notices and clothing go home with the right owner. Families are welcome to stay and play on the playground after school, but please remember to empty out your cubby before you start your fun!

## What to do with art work?

Speaking of cubbies, depending on your child's interests, you may have many projects, paintings and other art work waiting for you at the end of class. Depending on your interest, you may be saving every single item or collecting a few favorites. Parents of first year students may want to save a few things to add to a "Memory Book" that will be created for your child at the end of the year (more information about these books will come later). Second year students and teachers will be saving some projects here at school to include in their memory books which they will work on during the school year.

Q: What do you do with kids' art?

21% Save it all

75% Save a few pieces,  
but throw out most

5% Other: Take pictures/burn them in  
an annual bonfire/send them to  
the Louvre/I'll explain in the  
comments

- survey from  *moms.today.com*

## **Parent Discussion Group**

On Wednesday, October 3, at 7:00 pm, we will hold the first Parent Discussion Group of the year. The discussion 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.

Please plan on coming to the first parent discussion group to learn tried and true techniques for communicating with young children!

## **The Value of Parent-Teacher Conferences**

by Mrs. Delano

Berrybrook strives to provide a positive, nurturing and open environment for children, parents and staff. Day to day interactions provide an opportunity to address questions and concerns and in November, parents will have the opportunity to schedule individual conference time with one of their child's teachers.

### **Why make time for a Conference?**

Conferences are an essential ingredient for quality early childhood education.

Conferences provide an opportunity for teachers and parents to discuss a child's progress, identify concerns and to set future goals.

Conferences help to identify your child as an individual with unique strengths, weaknesses and attributes.

### **How to make the most of a Conference**

If possible, the ideal is to have both parents attend.

Parents are encouraged to prepare in advance thoughts, questions or concerns, and to bring in and/or take notes.

Teachers or parents may alert the other in advance of a topic or concern they wish to discuss.

Teachers and parents should agree on a plan to follow-up on any school/home approach discussed at the conference.

Parents may let their child know about this time for the teacher and parent to talk and follow up with the child.

### **Remember**

Relax...parents and teachers work as a team - being open minded, respectful and honest while supporting each other for the benefit of the child.

Stay focused on the child. A child's well being and strengths are most comfortable to discuss. Conference time provides an opportunity to address any areas of concern. Through open communication a strategy can be agreed upon. Children respond best when they receive similar responses in both their school and home environments.

Preschool is a time to build life skills such as separating from parents, cooperating with teachers, sharing with peers, developing conflict resolution skills, participating appropriately in group activities, and beginning to discover oneself.

## Parents Association News

It has been great to see old friends and to meet new ones as the year gets started. The BPA is excited to be planning for some amazing enrichment activities this year including seasonal visit by a member of the Wampanoag tribe as well as a new monthly fun, fitness program.

### Harvest Festival October 6<sup>th</sup>

We are off to a great start with a big weekend approaching. We are excited to welcome all families and friends to the Harvest Festival on Saturday October 6<sup>th</sup> from 10- 1pm. I am sure it will be an amazing event because of the help we have already received from so many of you! A big thank you to Mrs. Keeley, Mrs. Watts, the other BPA officers, classroom parents and other volunteers who have all pulled together to make the day a success. As you know the event is our largest fundraiser of the year and all funds raised go to pay for enrichment activities for our children and parents.

### Family Fun Fridays

Mark your calendar for the third Friday of each month for Family Fun Friday! These casual get-togethers will give us the chance to get together socially when it fits your schedule. We hope you can make some of the events. **This month join us at 2:30 on October 19<sup>th</sup> at Bog Hollow Farm for hayrides, games, a trip to the pumpkin patch, and the cranberry bog.** All children go home with a pumpkin and cranberries they pick themselves. Be on the lookout for more info and a sign-up sheet at the BPA table. So we have an accurate count please sign up by Oct. 12<sup>th</sup>. As always siblings are welcome!

We are looking forward to an amazing year. I hope you can all make it to the next BPA meeting on Wednesday,

October 17<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m. I know it is tough to get out of the house in the evening but I promise your participation will only enhance your experience at Berrybrook. If you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to contact us at [berrybrookparentsassociation@gmail.com](mailto:berrybrookparentsassociation@gmail.com).

Allyson Frazier

**P.S. Each year we ask parents to support us with \$30 in dues. We appreciate the support and checks can be placed in the basket at the BPA table!**

### "Say Hello to Mrs. Keeley!"

I enjoy arrival time. I think it is important to greet every child each day and it gives me the opportunity to meet and to get to know the entire family, including younger and older siblings. Saying hello to everyone is a favorite aspect of my job, and I am not offended in the least if a child does not say, "Hello Mrs. Keeley" in return. I notice many parents encouraging their child to return my greeting, but please know that I understand that some children, especially our first year students may not feel ready to return a greeting just yet. I know from experience that soon, children will feel very comfortable giving me a hello at arrival and a goodbye at the gate. It is such a thrill for me the first time a child says, "Hi Mrs. Keeley!" spontaneously. Berrybrook teachers model and encourage polite behavior and we know through working with your children, that parents do the same at home. So, feel free to encourage your children to "Say Hello to Mrs. Keeley" but please know that I do not consider it a requirement!

Mrs. K





## Berrybrook Book Review

Joanne LaForest

*Keeping Your Child In Mind*, by Claudia M. Gold, MD

There are many parenting books today that focus on the challenges we all experience throughout the course of our child's development. Behaviors are seen during the natural phases of childhood as a child's sense of self evolves and they begin to find their place in the world around them. Parents face obstacles in situations where the need for tools to manage these obstacles effectively can benefit their children in future experiences.

Rather than being advised on "what to do", the book *Keeping Your Child in Mind* teaches parents "how to be" with children. The ideas of validation, empathy and respect for children accomplishes this, however the key difference in this book is that the focus is also on the regulation and management of *the parent's* feelings and emotions. Claudia M. Gold, MD, a pediatrician who also studied contemporary developmental theory with the Berkshire Psychoanalytical Institute states, "if a parent is given the space and time to think about (their) child's experience, it has a significant and immediate effect on the child's behavior." Therefore when the adult manages their own feelings and behaviors about a particular challenge, space is provided to validate how their child feels. After all, "being understood by the person we love is one of our most powerful yearnings," Gold reminds us.

For those of you who love how- to books, myself included, there are steps to follow when keeping your child in mind. Gold discusses the importance of first understanding where your child is at developmentally so that realistic expectations are made. Next, having empathy for how your child is feeling by validating and naming those feelings is very important. Third, help your child to contain the emotion they are feeling (happy, sad, mad, frustrated) with the goal being for them, themselves, to regulate different emotions experienced. At Berrybrook, we provide these experiences daily so that success can build as children practice these skills. Finally, Gold suggests practicing these three steps while creating the foundation of handling *your own* feelings throughout. Ultimately, your child will feel kept in mind. The book describes it in words your child would say if they could express it as, "When you think about me, I learn to understand myself."

The book uses different case studies to illustrate these ideas and techniques. Topics and challenges addressed take the reader from infancy and colic, through first separations such as bedtime and first school experiences, on up through elementary-age and adolescent parenting issues. I believe parents will find most helpful the idea of "the holding environment" – a space adults create where children are validated yet given boundaries on which limits are placed on behavior. Berrybrook is a true "holding environment", demonstrating that "discipline that accepts the feelings but places limits on behavior can teach a child to manage difficult emotions."

Let's keep our children in mind, every day, this entire school year!

## When One Door Closes Another Opens

There is some thing different at Berrybrook this year, the farmhouse is gone. Since 1954 the small farmhouse at the edge of the field was the daytime home to thousands of children over the years, myself included. I remember the window seat where we churned butter and the room with all the blocks upstairs, the absence of the farmhouse can not diminish so many memories from so many children. I am sure the experiences in our new school building will take an equal spot in the memory of my children and yours.

The farmhouse was taken down very carefully this Summer, its parts cataloged and about half of it survives stored safely in a barn in Norwell waiting for a new life at a new location. The Berrybrook years were only the recent history of the small cape style farmhouse that was built in the middle of the 1700's. Several families lived and worked in the farmhouse for nearly 200 years before Mrs. Mann began her preschool. One occupant, Luther Sampson fought in the revolutionary war and returned to 267 Winter Street in Duxbury to become a housewright and carpenter, known then as a shop joiner. He outfitted his own house with beautiful moulding, paneling and mantelpieces which were of the highest style in post revolutionary New England and were an elegant interior for our school. These interiors, carefully sawn and moulded by Luther Sampson are intact and today sitting in that barn in Norwell.

Luther Sampson had a wood shop next to his house, it's the small white building just over the crest of the hill, near the maple tree we tap in the early spring, we call it the Shingle House. This little building has sat there undisturbed for 2 centuries and is today the oldest, best preserved example of an 18th century joiners shop in the country. In a few weeks we will have a group of preservationists travel from all over the Northeast to document and research our little Shingle House, they represent prestigious institutions known for their commitment to preservation, Winterthur Museum, Colonial Williamsburg, Historic Deerfield, Boston University and of course Plimoth Plantation. I am not sure exactly what will happen to this little but important building, there is still a lot to learn and a lot to do. I do know the Board and the Berrybrook community is in full support of preservation and learning from the past.

Christopher DeOrsay

President, Berrybrook Board of Directors