

December 2012

Friday, December 14	2 Day Class Holiday Sing-along
Wednesday, December 19	3, 4 & 5 Day Class Holiday Sing-along
December 20 - January 2	Holiday Break
Wednesday, January 2	Re-enrollment begins
Wednesday, January 23	Board of Directors Meeting 7:30 pm



Notes from the Headmaster The Reading Mother

**You may have tangible wealth untold:
Caskets of jewels and coffers of gold.
Richer than I you can never be –
I had a mother who read to me.**

- by Strickland Gillilan

From *Best Loved Poems of the American People* (Gillilan, cited in Trelease, 1986, p. vi).

I might change the above poem to include “Reading Fathers,” but I love the sentiment. During this time of year, when we think about giving, it is important to remember that some gifts are priceless. Early childhood experts agree that literacy begins at birth. Before children enter Berrybrook they have already had years of early literacy in their every day lives at home. A clear strength of the home environment is that it can offer children opportunities for uncontrived learning situations. Achieving literacy includes interacting with books and writing materials, but it is also about skills acquired in the ordinary activities of everyday life. Berrybrook parents will be able to identify many examples of literacy learning at home. These include children selecting items while shopping by recognizing familiar labels, writing shopping lists, following a recipe, operating the washing machine, sorting laundry, writing cards to friends, drawing on steam on a window, reading along side a parent, using a home computer, singing, listening to music and looking at pictures and photo albums. In addition, children are surrounded by environmental print - on packages and clothing, on streets, in stores, in catalogs and newspapers. Berrybrook students have regular opportunities to see their parents read for pleasure, for practical purposes, and to find information. When children see parents reading and writing they learn unconscious lessons about what it is to be a reader or writer. Parents also show their children that reading can be enjoyed and

shared by reading to them. Reading together is an important way to build intimacy among family members.

At Berrybrook, teachers supplement and support the literacy experiences children have already had by helping children investigate the real world with numerous and varied literacy activities. We accept and extend what children already know and we understand that literacy is a process that occurs in natural ways in meaningful contexts. Teachers use the standards of the NAEYC as well as the Massachusetts Department of Education *Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences in Language Arts* to plan literacy activities. The following are some specific guidelines we use to promote early literacy at Berrybrook.

LANGUAGE

1. Observe and use appropriate ways of interacting in a group (taking turns in talking; listening to peers; waiting until someone is finished; asking questions and waiting for an answer; gaining the floor in appropriate ways).
2. Participate actively in discussions, listen to the ideas of others, and ask and answer relevant questions.
3. Communicate personal experiences or interests.
4. Engage in play experiences that involve naming and sorting common words in various classifications.
5. Listen to and use formal and informal language.

READING AND LITERATURE

6. Listen to a wide variety of age appropriate literature read aloud.
7. Develop familiarity with the forms of alphabet letters, awareness of print, and letter forms.
8. Listen to, identify, and manipulate language sounds to develop auditory discrimination and phonetic awareness.
9. Link letters with sounds in play activities.
10. Engage actively in read-aloud activities by asking questions, offering ideas, predicting or retelling important parts of a story or informational book.
11. Listen to several books by the same author or using the same illustrator.
12. Listen to, recite, sing, and dramatize a variety of age-appropriate literature.
13. Relate themes and information in books to personal experiences.
14. Recognize and supply rhythm and rhyme in poetry.
15. Listen to, recognize, and use a broad vocabulary of sensory words.

COMPOSITION

16. Using their own words or illustrations to describe their experiences, tell imaginative stories, or communicate information about a topic of interest.
17. Add details or make changes to published or class-made stories.
18. Use emergent writing skills to make letters in many settings and for many purposes.
19. Arrange events in order when dictating a story.
20. Generate questions and gather information to answer their questions in various ways.

At Berrybrook, the giving of gifts is not limited to the month of December. Teachers make special gifts to children throughout the year. One gift that is very important, but sometimes overlooked, is the gift of time. Teachers give children enough time to finish work, time to make a choice, time to respond. Teachers patiently listen to children for as long as it takes for children to say what's on their mind. The gift of time is especially valuable this time of year when things get so hectic. It is also very important to remember the many gifts we receive from the children! Your children give us the pleasure of seeing the world through their eyes and we learn something new every single day. They give us the joy and magic of this season the whole year through.

Best wishes for joyful holidays, *Pat Keeley*

First Year Program News

Last month, classroom activities included a wood-working painted collage project along with the always popular tools in the classroom. The children enjoy repairing the classroom as they learn about keeping safe using different tools.

Also in November, Annawon Weeden, a Wampanoag native from Mashpee, Massachusetts came to share stories about his culture with the children. His visit was a great addition to the curriculum. Annawon is going to make a series of visits to our school to help us learn about Native People and how they live in the fall, winter, spring and summer.

2 and 3 Day students enjoyed many traditional Berrybrook activities that extended our studies of Thanksgiving, such as handprint turkeys, feathered pinecone turkeys, drums and food preparation for our Thanksgiving Feast. Shaking heavy cream in a jar to make butter amazes everyone every year!

*“Shake, shake shake the cream,
Watch it jump and flutter.
Shake, shake, shake the cream,
Turn it into butter!”*

Our Feast also included turkey, corn bread, Craisins and apple cider...yum! We shared what we were thankful for and discussed how we celebrate Thanksgiving in our own homes.

First year teachers would like to thank parents for taking time in November for parent conferences. We enjoyed sharing news about all of the growth we are seeing in our students and appreciate your support.

As we begin December, holidays will play an important role in our classrooms. Some families will be celebrating Hanukah, some will be celebrating Christmas. The holidays bring lots of excitement, and are often a very busy time of year for families. At Berrybrook, teachers make an effort to keep things simple and present activities with an emphasis on what the holidays mean and the joy they bring. Literature and cooking projects are excellent ways of exploring the holidays with children. Watching dreidels spin, creating simple menorahs, ornaments and gifts are activities that will extend our understanding of the winter holidays. The children will also be preparing their gift of song for you and will be practicing for the Holiday Sing-along. Watch for your invitation!

Lastly, the Berrybrook Holiday tree will soon appear all aglow in the hallway. Every child will be painting and placing a watercolor candle on the tree.

Happy Holidays and a
Healthy and Happy New
Year to all!

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



2 Day Class - Friday, December 14,
9:00. Our Sing-along will start as soon
as everyone arrives.

3 Day-Rm 1 Wednesday, December 19,
9:00. Our Sing-along will start as soon
as everyone arrives.

3 Day-Rm 3 Wednesday, December 19,
10:45. Children arrive at 9:00, parents
return at 10:45 for our Sing-along.

Enrollment 2013-2014

During the holiday break, all current Berrybrook parents will receive re-enrollment information for 2013-2014. January is the month reserved for current and alumni families to submit an application.

Our goal is to meet the needs of all of our current families and every effort will be made to accommodate parent preference. However, parents should be aware that Berrybrook reserves the right to make class placement based on the needs of the children and the composition of the group.

The Berrybrook Board of Directors sets aside funds for tuition assistance through the Helen Wheeler Scholarship Fund. If you are interested in receiving information about financial assistance please contact Mrs. Keeley.

Cold Weather Tips

Now is the time to locate all snow pants, boots, hats and mittens that have been packed away. One of these mornings we will wake up to a snowfall!

At Berrybrook, we will go out every day that is not freezing or raining. Children should come prepared for the outdoors. Please remember to have your child arrive with boots, hat, mittens, jacket and snow pants. We know that some days it is hard to tell what the weather conditions will be at the end of the session, so when in doubt, you could pack snow pants and boots in a tote bag to have in the cubby.

Even when there is no snow, these extra clothes allow for warm, comfortable outdoor play. Please mark each item with your child's name.

Parent Discussion Group

Our November Parent Discussion Group focused on the Berrybrook Curriculum and the purpose and process involved in our projects and activities. Important ideas such as fine motor skills, self-esteem and confidence were shown to be reflected in all areas of the curriculum. Teachers described the choosing, planning and focus involved for children throughout the day. How to respond appropriately to children's work was discussed, identifying that respect and validation for the child's effort and detail should be observed. Handouts are available in the hall and we thank all parents who joined us for a very informative evening.

Please join us on **Thursday, January 10, 2013 at 7pm** to explore,

Winter Days With Young Children

Learn about and share your ideas for
*fun winter activities

*indoor and outdoor experiences

*positive behavior success

...and other ways to

combat *Cabin Fever!*

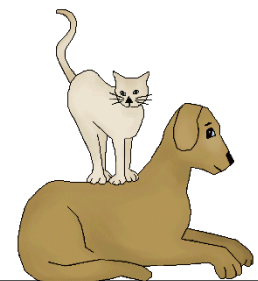
Have a wonderful holiday season and
see you in the New Year!

Mrs. Delano, Mrs. Dunn and

Mrs. LaForest

Thank you so much to all of the families who donated items for the Kingston Animal Shelter. Mrs. O'Neil will be bringing your generous gifts to the shelter, but there will be a box and a jar for pennines for the next two weeks.

Thank you again for
making the animals
very happy!



Second Year Program News

Although the weather wasn't ideal, our trip to Plimoth Plantation a big success. Thanks to all of you who chaperoned our visit. We learned a great deal about the Wampanoags and Pilgrims and the children have enjoyed sharing their experiences with their classmates. Our learning has continued in our classroom with the use of books, projects and classroom discussions. The children enjoy talking about how our lives today are so different from the lives people lead long ago. They also worked very hard on completing their replicas of the plantation. For our special Berrybrook Thanksgiving, children were busy making butter and baking treats for our feast. Thanks to the parents who helped coordinate this special day. It was enjoyed by all.

December is a very special month at Berrybrook. We will be learning a lot about family holiday traditions. The children will be singing songs, baking cookies and making special art work to bring home. The importance of giving is a focus of learning, and the children learn that giving doesn't always come from material things. Giving can be as simple as, offering a helping hand, a kind word or gesture, or making a home-made gift. Our classes focus on light, (candles and stars) and how light is celebrated and incorporated into many holidays this time of year. The children will take part in decorating their classrooms and learning special holiday songs for our annual sing-a-long. Please be looking for your invitation in your child's cubbie!

The holiday get-togethers will be at the following times:

5 Day Room 2 - Wednesday
December 19th at 9:00 a.m.
Our Sing-along will start as soon as children are ready.

4 Day Room 1 – Wednesday
December 19th at 1:00 p.m.
Our Sing-along will start as soon as everyone arrives.

4 Day Room 2 – Wednesday
December 19th at 2:30 p.m.
Children arrive at 1:00, parents return at 2:30 for our Sing-along.

At the conclusion of the sing-along, there will be a holiday snack which the children have prepared. After we have enjoyed our snack together our day will end and the holiday break will begin.

Happy holidays to you and your families. Enjoy your time together.

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

Simple Gifts

'Tis the gift to be simple,
'Tis the gift to be free,
'Tis the gift to come down
where we ought to be,
And when we find ourselves
in the place just right,
'Twill be in the valley
of love and delight.

Parents Association News

I hope all of you and your families enjoy the holiday season and get a chance for some fun and some relaxation! I hope you find this month's update helpful, and as always please let me know if you have comments, suggestions, or areas you where you would like to become more involved.

Holiday Charity!

Each year the BPA sponsors a charity drive to help celebrate the holidays. Check out our giving tree near the BPA table where each ornament features a gift a child or family in a local homeless shelter has wished for. I think together we can make all of their wishes some true. To participate simply choose an ornament(s), purchase the requested gift(s), and return unwrapped gift with the ornament attached to Berrybrook by December 19th. We hope it may even be a nice family activity! If you would prefer to make a monetary gift there is a box near the tree and the funds will be used to purchase additional gifts. Thanks for the support! And a special thanks to Erin Martin for taking the lead on this year's charity campaign.

Enrichment!

Last month the children had a wonderful visit from Annawon Weeden of the Wamponoag Tribe. Annawon provided the children the opportunity to learn about native culture and history. Annawon will be visiting each season this year to allow for continuing education and enrichment.

Family Fun Friday!

Thanks to all families who came out to our first Pizza and Pajamas Party in November. We hope you had as much fun as we did! December is such a busy month that we don't have a formal program scheduled, but keep an eye

out for an email if weather permits an impromptu sledding party!

Festival of Trees!

We hope you had a chance to check out the amazing Festival of Trees from November 30 - December 2 at Plimoth Plantation. In case you missed it or for a second look, the Berrybrook tree will be making the move to the Big Room for a couple of weeks so be sure to stop in and take a look. Thanks again to Volta Oil with the help of the Garrett Family for sponsoring Berrybrook's involvement and to Candice Smith-Corby (Rex's mom) for doing the trimming!!

BPA Dues!

We are excited that about 40% of families have already supported the BPA through dues this year. And it's still not too late to increase that number! Each year we ask parents to support us with \$30 in dues. We appreciate any support and checks can be placed in the basket at the BPA table!

Happy Holidays and see you at school soon.

Allyson

berrybrookparentsassociation@gmail.com

Snow Cancellation

Berrybrook will cancel school if **Duxbury Schools** or the **Silver Lake School District** close due to a snow emergency. Please watch the news for cancellation notices or call the school for information about a snow cancellation.

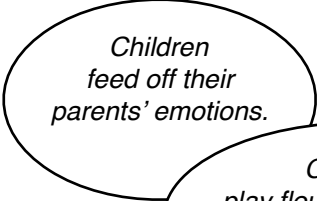
Berrybrook Book Review

Cynthia Dunn

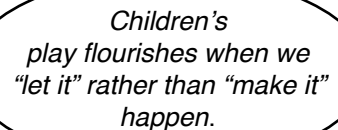
Simplicity Parenting - Using the Extraordinary Power of Less to Raise Calmer, Happier and More Secure Kids by Kim John Payne, M.ED

As I began this book, I was already sure I would enjoy it. What I did not know was how practical and easy its lessons would be. It was easy to navigate through each chapter. The author discusses reasons to simplify our lives, shares the impacts it has on children and their behavior, and then goes on to give us examples of applying these techniques to our own lives.

Helpful in each chapter are the “bubbles” interspersed between discussions and examples. Even if one had only a few moments a day, time could be found to read a few and ponder them while going through the daily routines of life.



*Children
feed off their
parents' emotions.*

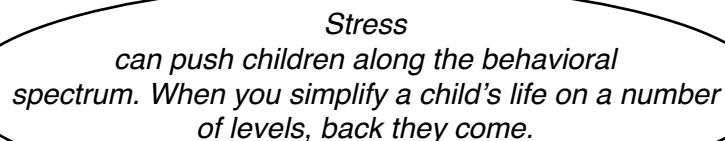


*Children's
play flourishes when we
"let it" rather than "make it"
happen.*

Helpful also are the reasons to establish rhythms and rituals to our children's lives. Scaling back on media, toys and confusion help to protect the state of childhood as an interpersonal, thoughtful, engaging and magical time. Finding time to schedule intervals of calm and connection for our children adds meaning and purpose to the family.

As I read this book, I thought of clearing the clutter out of an overstuffed closet or basement. If it is difficult as an adult to function amongst clutter, I thought of how it might seem to a child to try to order their environment if it were over cluttered with the daily stresses of our modern lives. Think about the assault on our senses just for five minutes while waiting in line at the grocery store. The music is playing, there are computer monitors streaming constant commercials to the patrons in line, at eye level are a host of unhealthy snacks, children feeling hot or cold or tired, customers talking, the beep of the scanner as each item is rung into the computer, smells from the bakery or fish counter,.....Do you get the idea? Now think about your ride home in the car. Is it a time to reconnect and calm, or is it another over stimulating time with video games, movies or TV shows?

This book is a thoughtful example of giving childhood back to children. I highly recommend this book.



*Stress
can push children along the behavioral
spectrum. When you simplify a child's life on a number
of levels, back they come.*

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

Berrybrook Board of Directors

Berrybrook is a busy place all of the time, not just during holiday celebrations. Berrybrook celebrates childhood everyday. Everyday, Mrs. Keeley and the teachers design a child-centered program knowing that children need joy, laughter, caring respect, and nurturing support.

This is the time of year, when we count our blessings, and the Berrybrook family has many to count. They are manifest in each child's enthusiasm for the school, and their pride in what they create at Berrybrook. We are thankful to have involved parents who contribute time, talents and gifts. We are blessed with staff members who care deeply about the children and quality early childhood education. Berrybrook has a rich tradition, which provides cherished memories for everyone involved with the school. We are blessed.

The Board of Directors wishes every member of the Berrybrook family a happy holiday season.



Twinkle Twinkle

Twinkle twinkle little star
How I wonder what you are.
Up above the world so high,
Like a diamond in the sky
Twinkle twinkle little star
How I wonder what you are.

Jingle Bells

Jingle bells, Jingle Bells
Jingle all the way
Oh what fun it is to ride
In a one horse open sleigh!

Jingle bells, Jingle Bells
Jingle all the way
Oh what fun it is to ride
In a one horse open sleigh!

Hannukah Latkes

Take a potato, fat, fat, fat.
Grate it and make it flat, flat, flat
Fry in a pan with fat, fat, fat,
Hannukah Latkes, clap, clap, clap!

Hannukah, Hannukah

Hannukah, Hannukah
Festival of lights
Candles glow in a row,
seven days, eight nights.

Hannukah, Hannukah
Make your dreidel spin,
Round and round,
Round and round,
Everyone join in!

Oh Christmas Tree

Oh Christmas Tree, Oh Christmas Tree,
How lovely are your branches.
Oh Christmas Tree, Oh Christmas Tree,
How lovely are your branches.

We wish you a Merry Christmas

We wish you a Merry Christmas,
We wish you a Merry Christmas,
We wish you a Merry Christmas,
And a happy New Year!