

December 2014

Wednesday, December 3	BPA Shopping day at Rhyme 'n Reason
Wednesday, December 17	3 Day Classes Holiday Sing-along
Thursday, December 18	4 Day Classes Holiday Sing-along
Friday, December 19	Beginners, 2 Day & 5 Day Classes Holiday Sing-along
December 22 - January 2	Holiday Break
Monday, January 5	2015-2016 Enrollment begins



Notes from the Head of School

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).

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 also is 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, and reading together is an important way to build intimacy among family members.

Last Month's newsletter article, "Talking the Talk at Berrybrook" by Board member Michelle Taylor inspired me to extend our conversation about Early Literacy. In addition to "talking the talk," Berrybrook, teachers supplement and support the literacy experiences children have already had at home 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

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

READING AND LITERATURE

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

COMPOSITION

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

Parents and teachers working together can offer these priceless gifts to children every day... and let's remember the many gifts we receive from the children! They give us the joy and magic of this season the whole year through.

Best wishes for joyful holidays, Mrs. Keeley

Beginners Program

In the month of November, the Beginners started out exploring the concept of family, which helps tie in to the beginning of the holiday season. The children were busy gluing pictures of people and animals onto houses and also worked on projects related to turkeys and food. Moving into December, we will be working on the topics of lights and trees.

The children are now very comfortable with the daily routine and the classroom. The teachers are now planning ways to show the children more of what Berrybrook has to offer! We have recently begun to use the rocket ship playground, and are excited to let them explore many more of the outdoor areas as time goes on. Other ways that the teachers will provide new opportunities include using the multi-purpose room to work on activities, and expanding circle time to incorporate even more interactive games and songs. Also, the much anticipated parent volunteer sign-up will be posted shortly after the new year begins!

Enjoy the holidays, and be sure to take a minute to reflect on all the simple joys that occur now, and throughout the year! Our Holiday Sing-along and Gathering will be December 19, the last day of school before break. All families are welcome to join us at 9:00 for merriment and refreshments!

Happy Holidays!

Mrs. LaForest, Mrs. Piccuito and
Mrs. Rosen



First Year Program News

December is quite a busy month for our first year students! We will be learning about winter holiday celebrations, singing songs, filling the school with smells of potato latkes and Christmas cookies, and be using lots of glitter! We will talk about family traditions, giving, and sharing. It is wonderful for us to be able to share our holiday traditions and to learn and appreciate our likenesses and differences.

The children will also be practicing for our holiday Sing-along. It is not unusual for preschool children to become anxious about performing in front of people. If children express any anxiety about performing, please reassure them that it is their choice.

2 Day-Rm 1 Friday, 12/19, at 9:00.
We begin as soon as everyone arrives.

3 Day-Rm 1 Wednesday, 12/17 at 9:00.
We begin as soon as everyone arrives.

3 Day-Rm 3 Wednesday, 12/17, 10:45.
Children arrive at 9:00, parents return at 10:30 for our Sing-along.

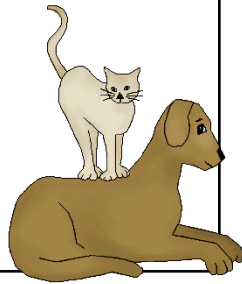
With the colder weather here, we request children come to school with a winter coat, hat, gloves, snow pants and winter boots. We try our best to get out daily, and even if there is no snow, snow pants add a layer of warmth. Because children share cubbies, we ask parents to label all items.

The first year teachers would like to wish all of our Berrybrook families a wonderful holiday and relaxing vacation. We can't wait to learn and grow with your children in the new year!

Mrs. Barlow, Mrs. Capasso,
Mrs. Delano, Mrs. Dunn, Mrs. LaForest
and Ms. McSharry

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. There will still be a box and a jar for pennies through December.

Thank you again for making the animals very happy!



Enrollment 2015-2016

During the holiday break, all current Berrybrook parents will receive re-enrollment information for 2015-2016. January is the month reserved for current and alumni families to submit an application. Starting February 2 we start enrolling new-to-Berrybrook families.

Tuition Assistance 2015-2016

The Berrybrook Board of Directors sets aside funds for tuition assistance through the Helen Wheeler Scholarship Fund. Families should not be prevented from attending Berrybrook because of financial constraints. **The FACTS Grant and Aid Assessment system is available for families to apply for tuition assistance.** Families may apply online quickly and easily on the FACTS web site that is completely safe and secure. More information about tuition assistance procedures will be included in the re-enrollment mailing. Families with any questions about tuition assistance are encouraged to speak to 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!

Children should come prepared for the outdoors. Please remember to have your child arrive with boots, hat, mittens, jacket, and snowpants. 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 snowpants and boots in a tote bag to have in the cubby. Please mark each item with your child's name.

Family Matters News

Thank you to all of those who attended our afternoon gathering on November 19th to discuss how to **Keep Calm and Carry On During The Holidays**. It was a well-attended group discussion led by Mrs. Delano and Mrs. Dunn. Children played while families shared their common concerns about the coming holidays. We spoke of giving in meaningful ways, the pros and cons of "Elf on The Shelf" and the importance of family and friends. Although we may not have fully solved any grand problems, the reassurance that we are not alone in the stressors of daily life hopefully helped to alleviate everyone's concerns. Join Mrs. LaForest on **Tuesday, December 9th at 9:10 am** as she leads a discussion on the same topic, including other topics on the minds of families. Please take some time for yourself during the holiday season to be with other families for conversation, learning and laughter. Again, children welcome!

Hope to see you there! As always, you can visit our link **Family Matters** at www.berrybrookschool.org where we invite you to anonymously post a question for us to answer and help others with the same concern.

Happy Holidays,

Mrs. Delano, Mrs. Dunn and
Mrs. LaForest

Second Year Program News

Thanks to all the chaperones who visited Plimoth Plantation with us. It was a fun day for all and we learned so much about the Wampanoags and Pilgrims. The children have enjoyed sharing their experiences with their classmates. We have continued to learn in the classroom through the use of books, projects and classroom discussions. The Plantation dioramas the children brought home took many days to complete. We were also busy making musical instruments, headbands, and helping prepare food for our thanksgiving feast. The children made butter out of cream and helped bake pumpkin muffins and cornbread.

December is always a special time at Berrybrook. We will be learning a lot about holiday traditions. Children will be singing songs, baking cookies, making potato latkes, and creating special art work to bring home. It's a busy time of year but teachers will strive to make sure that they have time to relax. Children can often feel the stress of the holidays too. Our classes will focus on light by making stars and candles. We will learn how light is incorporated into many holiday traditions this time of year. We are also busy preparing for our holiday sing a long. Please keep a look out for your invitation in your child's cubbie!

The Holiday Sing-Alongs are at the following times:

5 Day Room 2 - Friday, December 19th
Children arrive at 9:00 and parents return at 10:30 for our Sing-along

4 Day Room 1 - Thursday, December 18th at 1:00
Our sing-along will begin as soon as everyone arrives.

4 Day Room 2 - Thursday, December 18th at 2:30

Children arrive at 1:00. Parents return at 2:30 for our sing-along.

At the conclusion of the sing-along, we will gather in classrooms for a holiday snack which the children have prepared. After we have enjoyed our snack our day will end and the holiday break will begin.

Happy Holidays!

Mrs. Caddle, Mrs. Fosdick,
Mrs. LaForest, Miss McNulty, Mrs. Neal, Mrs. O'Neil, Mrs. Piccuito,
Mrs. Rosen,

Lunch Bunch

Thank you to all of the families who enrolled in our Session 1 Lunch Bunch Program this fall. The last day of the current session will be January 22, 2015.

Current Lunch Bunch families have priority for the second session which begins on Tuesday, January 27 and ends on Thursday, May 28. Currently enrolled families will be asked to re-enroll by January 5. After that date, enrollment information for the second session will be open to all families.

Thank you!

Shutterfly

If you are looking for an activity over vacation, log on to your classroom's Shutterfly site and view the photographs with your family. Your Berrybrook child will be able to provide commentary to accompany the images!

Parents Association News

I hope all of you and your families had a Happy Thanksgiving! Also, I hope you find this month's update helpful, and as always please let any member of the BPA know if you have comments, suggestions, or areas where you would like to become more involved.

HOLIDAY CHARITY

Each year the BPA sponsors a charity drive to help celebrate the holidays. This year we are collecting on behalf of the Carolina House, located in Marshfield. Check out our giving tree near the BPA table, each ornament features a gift a child or family has wished for. Together, we can make all of their wishes come true. To participate, simply choose an ornament(s), purchase the requested gift(s), and return the unwrapped gift with the ornament attached to Berrybrook by December 19th. If you would like to make a monetary gift there is a box near the tree and the funds will be used to purchase additional gifts. Thank you for the support, and a special thanks to Erin Martin for taking the lead on this years charity campaign.

ENRICHMENT

Enrichment activities will begin after the new year, all classes will now participate in Inspire Kids Yoga. This program consists of monthly sessions with a certified yoga instructor, who will focus on yoga that encourages self-esteem and body awareness. Also, be on the look out for drumming sessions to begin in each class.

FAMILY FUN FRIDAY

Thanks to all the families who came out in the freezing cold to the South Shore Science Center in November. We hope you had as much fun as we did! December is such a busy month that

there is no formal program scheduled, but keep an eye out for an email if weather permits for an impromptu sledding/hot cocoa get together!

HOLIDAY SHOPPING EVENT at Rhyme 'n Reason

Please mark your calendars and plan to join the BPA for a day of shopping at Rhyme n' Reason Toys located at 295 Old Oak Street, Pembroke (Christmas Tree Shop location) on Wednesday, December 3rd from 10-8. So get a jump start on some holiday shopping. Best of all 20% of sales will come back to the BPA to help support enrichment and special Berrybrook needs. We will be sure to send out a reminder email. Again, a big thanks Jessica MacFarland for organizing

BPA DUES

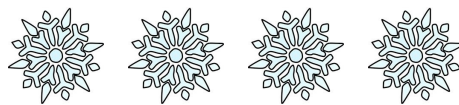
It is not too late to contribute dues to the BPA. We ask for a suggest \$30.00 per family donation, but are thankful for any you can contribute.

Thank you and Happy Holidays,
Donna Hillary

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 channel 7 for cancellation notices, sign up for "WHDH Closing Bell," or call the school for information about a snow cancellation.



'Tis the Season to be Jolly

“December is a month filled with holidays – including Christmas, Chanukah and Kwanza. These holidays have in common a sense of joy and excitement, and as adults we want to share these feelings with our children. In our enthusiasm, however we have to be careful to recognize that children view the holidays differently from adults. First the activities surrounding the holidays can simply overwhelm a child. Their meal schedule is different, the foods they eat are different, there are many visits from family and friends, parties to attend and in general the pace is much faster than any other time of the year. Second, since adults are caught up in these activities, they may not focus their usual levels of attention on their children’s emotional needs.”

Mary Ucci, Educational Director of the Child Study Center of Wellesley College

Reducing Holiday Stress for Families and Children

- Keeping emotionally and physically healthy is a gift we all deserve.
- Stay in your family routine. Adults as well as children thrive best with structure.
- Avoid the “everything must be perfect” attitude. Be realistic with your ideas.
- Avoid living up to children’s, society or relatives expectations.
- Set priorities for your family. Ask family members what is most important to them.
- Evaluate past years. What worked, what needs revising or eliminating.

Traditions – It’s a wonderful time of year to begin or continue family traditions- baking, singing, reading, decorating, cards, events, etc.

Gift giving – Remember gifts may be time, talent or tangible. Children can set the table, sing a song, draw a picture, etc.

Remember those in need – Homeless shelters, Senior citizens, Animal Rescue League.

Wishing you and yours a safe, happy and healthy Holiday Season! Mrs. Delano

Thank you

When I sent out the email last month asking if families would be willing to donate any items for my six year old cousin who has lost all of her belongings in a fire, I had absolutely no idea how tremendous the response would be! Within minutes I had families reaching out, asking what they could do. When I came into school, I couldn’t get to my desk because the bags of books, toys and clothes took over my office! Families I have known for years - and families brand new to Berrybrook, who I have known for only weeks - gave so generously. Many told me that your children headed to their toys to pick out special things for Callie once they heard about the fire. My family is so appreciative of the help everyone at Berrybrook has provided. They are amazed that so many people who have never met them have been so supportive.

Thank you to my Berrybrook family!

Mrs. Watts



Board of Directors

December 1, 2014

Dear Berrybrook Parents:

In preparation for the upcoming school year we are making plans for improving the content and quality of our programs while increasing the efficiency in the office. In a review of our operations, we have been studying our method of handling tuition payments.

Since the stability of our school and the quality of its programs are of the utmost importance, we are always seeking ways to make improvements to benefit everyone. After much research and investigation, starting with the 2015-2016 school year, Berrybrook has contracted with FACTS Management Company to help us manage our tuition payment program. FACTS is used by over 6,000 schools nationally. We are excited to be working with them and are confident this program will lead to greater financial stability for the school.

Please note the following advantages in using the FACTS system for tuition payment handling:

- ❖ Convenient online payment plan sign-up
- ❖ Maintain your demographic and financial account information online
- ❖ Receive e-mail payment reminders before your payment is due
- ❖ Online Tuition Payments
- ❖ Multiple payment options
- ❖ Web-based interface for account viewing

More details will be included in 2015-2016 admissions materials. As always, we thank you for your continued loyalty to Berrybrook and for your support in our efforts to fulfill the mission of exemplary private education for our students.

Lauren Brown, President

Berrybrook Board of Directors