



## February 2015

**Wednesday, February 4**

**Professional Day, No School**

**February 16-20**

**Winter Break**

**Wednesday, February 25**

**Board of Directors 7:30 pm**

### Winter Morning

Winter is the king of showmen, turning tree stumps into snowmen  
And houses into birthday cakes, and spreading sugar over lakes.  
Smooth and clean and frosty white, the world looks good enough to bite.  
That's the season to be young, catching snowflakes on your tongue.  
Snow is snowy when it's snowing, I'm sorry it's slushy when it's going.

- Ogden Nash

## Notes from the Head of School

Dr. Edward M. Hallowell, Child Psychiatrist and author of *The Childhood Roots of Adult Happiness: Five Steps to Help Kids Create and Sustain Lifelong Joy*, advises parents to have fun with their children, let them follow their own dreams, encourage them to play sports, read aloud to them for as long as they will let you, make family dinners part of your routine, and create family traditions. In Chapter 8 of his book, *Play: The Source of Lifelong Joy*, Dr. Hallowell states, "The reason to encourage children to play is not merely that play is a wonderful end in itself---although it is that. As a child plays, he learns a special skill---the skill of play---and it is a skill that is more useful than any other. The skill of play, of being able to make creative use of time no matter where you are or what you are doing, is the skill that lies behind all discoveries, all advances, all creative activity. If you can play, you will always have a chance to be happy and to do something great."

Early childhood experts agree that play-based learning is developmentally appropriate for young children. To promote play in the face of increasing emphasis on academic instruction for younger and younger children is a challenge. At Berrybrook, we champion constructive play, a natural activity fueled by a child's inborn curiosity and disposition to learn. Through play, children increase their knowledge of the world around them and have opportunities to practice language, mathematical and motor skills while absorbing concepts and building skills at a pace that is right for them. Children have the chance to make their own decisions about what to do next, and with whom.

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Play and academics are not mutually exclusive. It's not Play **vs.** Learning, it's Play **and** Learning. At Berrybrook, play based learning is balanced with direct instruction, guided play and scaffolding, where teachers structure activities to build skills in all areas. Last month, teachers in both of our afternoon classes set the stage for block building in the hallway. Practically every single block from both rooms came out! The children created a "road" that went from our back door to the multipurpose room. The curiosity, creativity and team work that the children demonstrated was encouraged and supported by the teachers. What valuable lessons the children learned, such as – observations are important, everyone's ideas and suggestions can help, some problems do not have instant solutions, people can find resources to help them solve a problem, - roads need rules to keep everyone safe! The road building in our hallway is just one example of hundreds of situations that arise every day where teachers allow the children the joy of discovery. These wonderful moments happen all the time and everywhere at Berrybrook...

and families can help to promote healthy play at home...

**Provide opportunities to play with peers** - Children develop better, more sophisticated social strategies when they are able to maintain relationships with other children they like over long periods of time.

**Play with children in a peer-like way.** - Parents of the most socially competent children laugh and smile often, avoid criticizing their child during play, and are responsive to the child's ideas and aren't too directive.

**Endorse positive, relevant strategies.** - Parents of competent children talk about various options, but endorse friendly, prosocial strategies that leave the door open to play or friendship. Children react more positively to peers who try to solve problems by negotiation or compromise rather than tattling, aggression or verbal coercion.

**Reflect a positive, resilient attitude toward social setbacks.** - Exclusion by peers is sometimes a fact of life for preschoolers. Parents of socially competent children endorse interpretations of social events that encourage resilient, constructive attitudes and encourage children to take an optimistic view of others and themselves as play partners. They reflect an upbeat, resilient attitude toward social setbacks and the belief that situations can be improved with effort and positive behavior.

Berrybrook teachers do not write a script for their students. They encourage children to engage in the curriculum around their own interests. The constructive play that happens here stimulates children to build positive relationships with their teachers and peers while developing their own special personality and sense of self. We know play inspires creativity, stirs the imagination and presents endless opportunities for meaningful problem solving. Our environments and activities support this philosophy, and at Berrybrook, our teachers have enthusiasm and respect for the children's ideas, choices and style. They believe that healthy, constructive non-violent play-based learning is the best way for young children to learn in all academic areas. They also know how important children's peer relationships are for their development and adjustment to school. We know that if we can build social competence in preschool, there will be a better transition into kindergarten and a better opportunity for life-long happiness.

Pat Keeley

## Beginners News

The Beginners Class would like to thank the Berrybrook Parents Association for the enrichment programs we enjoyed last month. We had fun keeping the beat with Tony from All Hands Drumming. There were so many percussion instruments and we made so much noise! On another visit to the Big Room we had a relaxing time practicing Yoga with Miss Kim. Thank you, BPA!

Children have been learning all year that friends can talk to each other, listen to each other and even share with each other by understanding that everyone's feelings are important, including their own. February is a natural time to extend our understanding of Friendship. The Dramatic Play Area will become a Post Office where lots of emerging writing skills will be practiced in meaningful ways when children "write" notes to friends and family. We will sing songs about all the people and pets we love and have a Valentine's Day celebration.

As a reminder, on Friday February 13, children may bring in simple valentines **without food or non-food items attached** to deliver to their friends during class time with their teachers. For ease of delivery, **please do not individually address valentines**. We will have a special Valentine's Day snack as well! Fun!

Parents should feel free to choose a day to visit our class by signing up on the Volunteer Sign Up sheet located on our class bulletin board. And remember to check out our Shutterfly site!

Happy Valentine's Day!

Mrs. LaForest, Mrs. Piccuito and Mrs. Rosen

## First Year Program News

Welcome 2015!!! Mother Nature has given us some very cold days and the children have learned about staying warm and healthy. Eating good food and dressing warmly with their hats, coats, mittens, boots and snow pants helps keep us on the right track when we do get to go outside and play. We have also been introduced to Yoga with Miss Kim and have enjoyed all of the fun songs she has brought with her. The dramatic play area has been transformed into our "Berrybrook Hospital" and the children are having fun taking care of their patients and using their pretend doctor kits. One week the hospital became a veterinary clinic and the children were excited to take care of their pets. All Hands Drumming in the multi-purpose room with Mr. Tony was a special treat

Looking ahead to February, we will be exploring feelings and what makes a good friend. Valentines Day projects and a trip to the post office will be part of our holiday celebration. Each First Year class will be meeting at the Duxbury Post Office in Halls Corner for a Valentine "Field Trip" Teachers will meet families at the Post Office at 9:00, children will mail their valentines, and then everyone will return to Berrybrook.

3 Day - Room 1  
Wednesday, February 11th @ 9 am

3 Day - Room 3  
Tuesday, February 10th @ 9 am

2 Day - Room 1  
Friday, February 6th @ 9 am

All of our classes will be celebrating Valentines Day by delivering cards and enjoying a special Berrybrook snack.>>

We ask that the children bring a valentine for each classmate. Please remember, because we have children with food allergies, valentines should not include candy. ALL candy should remain at home.

Please have your child sign their name on the card but leave the envelope blank. This makes it easier for the children to pass them out, one for each cubby.

Happy Valentine's Day to all from your  
First Year Teachers

Mrs. Barlow, Mrs. Capasso,  
Mrs. Delano, Mrs. Dunn, Mrs.  
McDonough and Mrs. Savoy



## Second Year Program News

February is a very busy month for the second year students at Berrybrook! The children are hard at work learning many valentine-related activities, from music to counting out money to “buy” a stamp to send home to their families. The children will be decorating their own valentine box, so shoe box donations would be greatly appreciated during the first week of February. Children will be passing out valentines on Thursday, Feb.12<sup>th</sup>, for the 4 day classes, and on Friday, Feb. 13<sup>th</sup>, for the 5 day class. A helpful suggestion for making those valentines is to allow plenty of time to finish them, plan to do a few every day. It is a big accomplishment to get them all done and ready to go! Please have your child bring in Valentines that are signed and addressed to each

classmate. Class lists will be placed in everyone's cubby, so that each child will be included in receiving a Valentine.

Because some children at Berrybrook have food allergies, we ask you to leave all candy and baked goods at home. We will celebrate at school with a special snack, prepared by the children and teachers.

This month is also a perfect opportunity for teachers to create lessons, and open conversations about feelings and friendships. The weather outdoors might be limiting the amount of time the classes can get outside, but the cozy classrooms allow children more time to get to know one another. Also a reminder, wearing snow boots is important for our playground time, but can be a little cumbersome getting up and down around the classroom. The teachers often suggest that a pair of slippers can be brought for class time use.

Don't forget to check out your classroom's Shutterfly site for images of the children at work!

Happy Valentine's Day to all!

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

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## Snow Cancellation

Berrybrook will cancel school if **Duxbury Schools** or the **Silver Lake School District** close due to a snow or other emergency. Please watch 7NEWS (NBC) for cancellation notices. Parents may call the school to check the voice mail message if they are unsure about a snow cancellation.

## Berrybrook Parents Association

Hello February! It may be the shortest month, but we have a lot going on at Berrybrook in February.

### Enrichment

January marked the beginning of monthly yoga for the Beginners and First Year Classes. Second year students started classes in the fall and are now quite proficient at some of the yoga poses introduced by teacher Kim Spires. They learned some different movements and how yoga can be beneficial to their bodies. Miss Kim will visit Berrybrook monthly to teach yoga to all of the classes through the end of the year.

Tony Fonseca from All Hands Drumming visited with classes in January. Children and teachers reported it was a great success. Tony will visit again in March and May.

February will bring a visit from Claire Reilly, a Community Dental Health Educator from Dentistry for Children in Weymouth, Mrs Reilly has been visiting

Berrybrook for many years now, and is wonderful with the children. She presents lots of good information about dental health in a developmentally appropriate way.

### Family Fun Fridays!

The January FFF at Kingston Sports Center was a great success. Thank you to all families who joined in!

**The next BPA meeting will be in early March. Once a date is figured out, we will post it on the whiteboard for all to see.** This meeting will discuss planning the rest of the school year and the Spring Fling, our annual end of year celebration for the children and their families. Hope to see you there.

And it's not too late to support the BPA with dues. We ask each family for \$30 and checks can be placed in the basket at the BPA table. As always, please let us know if you have any questions, comments or concerns. Email us at [berrybrookparentsassociation@gmail.com](mailto:berrybrookparentsassociation@gmail.com).

Thanks,  
Donna



The Berrybrook Summer Nature Program is offered during June and July, on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 9:00 – 1:00. Children must be 4 by September 1<sup>st</sup> ( or Berrybrook Beginners!) to register. We also welcome siblings up to 7 years of age. Current Berrybrook families will have the opportunity to register first, and then families from the community will be invited. All families will receive complete information about the program and registration the week of February 23, 2015.

## Berrybrook Board of Directors

Madeline Carey Sampson emailed me and a couple of other friends the following poem early on in this school year. Her current nanny, Anne Dargin Schroeder wrote it in May of 2000 when her youngest child, Emma, graduated from Berrybrook, following her brothers, Ryan and Ben, a bittersweet end to five consecutive years at Berrybrook. Anne is a wife to Jim, mother to now two college students, She is a teacher, writer, and artist/creator of Andi's People Greeting Cards + Stationery--re-launched at a Berrybrook Creative Evening for moms.

### Skeins of Gold

Many golden minutes are bound up in this book;  
Along with special memories of our time at Berrybrook.  
Our year began in Autumn and making Beach plum jam.  
We got acquainted in the playground crying "Catch me if you can."  
We learned about the Pilgrims, even dressing up as they;  
We gave thanks around our tables, preparing for Thanksgiving Day.  
In December we had a pageant each day as we recall,  
Jesus, Mary, Joseph--we took turns and played them all.  
Some of us were donkeys, some wise men, some were sheep;  
We delighted in the caroling--oh, these memories we'll keep.  
As Christmas Day got nearer, a Christmas tree we picked;  
We cut it down and set it up, our ornaments befitting it.  
Our memories continued weaving on a spinning wheel;  
A spinner showed us how to spin- with pedal and our heel.  
There was magic, oh, such wonder, all the sights our eyes have seen;  
Our teachers, oh we'll miss you--our guiding light is what you've been.  
We've tapped trees for maple syrup, we've grown marigolds from seed,  
We've fed our birds our pine cone goodies; we've painted eggs for Easter trees.  
Our memories continue weaving all our separate strands;  
Through our lifetime we'll remember the cozy farmhouse and the land.  
Homespun yarn is what is binding homespun memories in this book;  
We've learned much about each other, we've learned much at Berrybrook.  
We will miss you-all our teachers, you've been kind and you've been great;  
We'll remember well our childhood---  
and inside the wooden gate.

When I first read the poem- I thought it was very sweet and very "Berrybrook". Just recently- I reread it and something caught my eye...this poem was written in May of 2000!! It occurred to me that this poem was written almost 15 years ago- but it could have been written last month or last year-because everything in the poem still happens almost every year. Since choosing Berrybrook for a preschool for my oldest child back in 2009, I have felt very fortunate to be part of such a special place. I have found my self wishing at times that the whole world could be like the Berrybrook playground...where friends respect each other and will give another friend a turn in a minute when they are finished. This is my first year serving on the Berrybrook Board of Directors and now that I have an inside look into how the school runs and how decisions are made I am even more impressed at the lengths the teachers and staff go to to help Berrybrook stay true to the original mission established by Mrs. Mann many years ago. At the most recent board meeting, we had a discussion about some of the supplies that

the teachers needed. One of the things that the teachers were requesting was new record players! I'm not sure how we even go about finding a record player (luckily Mrs. Keeley knows just where to get them), but I love that even with all the modern technology available and our state of the art building, I like that "simple" is usually viewed as better. I love that my children go on nature walks and learn about the environment around them. I love that each of my children has had a unique and special experience at Berrybrook- yet each of them has made homemade jelly, tapped the maple tree, made pine cone bird feeders, have gone to Plimoth Plantation and made a similar but different Plimoth Plantation diorama, participated in a Thanksgiving Feast, made potato latkes and cookies during the holidays, learned how to spin wool and paint blown eggs in the Spring. I love that when my current preschooler tells us about his day, his older siblings will often say, "I remember doing that...that was so much fun!" We just enrolled our youngest of four children in the Beginners Program for next year. It is such a bittersweet experience to be so grateful that he too can experience everything the older kids have-but yet... it will be our last few years being an active Berrybrook family. I hope that you and your children have had as many amazing memories and experiences behind the wooden gate as our family has.

Karen Gallagher, Berrybrook Board of Directors



### ***My Father's Valentine***

I'm working on a Valentine,  
My very special own design,  
A heart to give my dad tonight  
(It's quite a chore to get it right).

The first time that I cut it out,  
One side was thin, the other stout,  
And so I tried to fix it, but  
I made an error when I cut.

I wasn't careful (though I tried),  
And over cut the other side,  
But one more snip should do it, then  
Whoops! I cut too much again.

A snip off here, a snip off there,  
And maybe just another hair,  
It's finally done, but understand  
It's somewhat smaller than I'd planned.

It's not much bigger than a bean,  
The tiniest heart I've ever seen,  
I guess I'll give it to him now...  
I bet he likes it anyhow.

### ***Mother's Chocolate Valentine***

I bought a box of chocolate hearts,  
A present for my mother,  
They looked so good, I tasted one,  
And then I tried another.

They both were so delicious,  
Then I ate another four,  
And then another couple,  
And then a half a dozen more.  
I couldn't seem to stop myself,  
I nibbled on and on.  
Before I knew what happened,  
All the chocolate hearts were gone.

I felt a little guilty,  
I was stuffed down to my socks.  
I ate my mother's valentine...  
I hope she likes the box

~ Poems by Jack Prelutsky