



January 2016

Monday, January 4	2016-2017 Enrollment Begins
Monday, January 18	Martin Luther King Day, No School
Wednesday January 20	Berrybrook Board Meeting 7:30 pm
Saturday, January 23	Admissions Open House
Friday, February 5	Professional Day, No School

Notes from the Head of School

For me, the true beginning of the new year is September, when the new class arrives at Berrybrook. That is when I set goals and make my “new year’s resolutions.” By January, the year is well under way. The children have made that separation from home and have become comfortable with teachers and friends. They have become familiar with our environments and are very well aware of the rules and routines that help them manage the classroom with their peers. The children return this month with enthusiasm and more confidence in themselves. They are eager to embrace all the interesting and challenging activities that Berrybrook teachers are introducing in the classroom. Teachers carefully arrange environments and plan developmentally appropriate activities that optimize learning. We are informed by our training and experience, and guided by the standards of the National Association of Young Children and the “Guidelines for Preschool Learning Experiences” issued by the Massachusetts Board of Education. Curriculum content includes English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science and Technology/Engineering, History and Social Science, Health Education, and the Arts. Berrybrook children learn through meaningful activities presented in a developmental sequence and teachers plan many opportunities for children to:

Plan: consider what they are going to do and how they are going to do it.

Play: use materials in ways that best suit their personal curiosity and understanding.

Reflect: recall things, reinforcing or questioning their understandings.

Revisit: practice skills and replay experiences in many different ways, refining or modifying previous understandings.

Connect: connect new knowledge with past experiences, creating links among subject areas and areas of skill development.

This month, children really begin to hit their stride as learners and members of the Berrybrook community. From now until the end of our school year, their growth will be phenomenal, as they work hard, preparing themselves not only for kindergarten, but for life. It is an amazing and inspirational process to observe. Thank you for sharing your children with us.

A New Year, A New Way to Respond

Joanne LaForest

It's a new year. Often times we think of making New Year's resolutions to start a diet, get more exercise, use our many technological devices less...all great and wonderful resolutions. But what if we all made the resolution to practice responding in a new way to our children? It just might be the thing that will result in less frustration, less stress, more quality interactions and help develop better problem solving skills in your children. Who wouldn't love to have those kinds of results in 2016?

In what ways should we be responding to our children? Responses can be made in both verbal and physical forms. When our child asks us a question, answering them with a question rather than the answer can instill a love of curiosity and learning. For example, when my daughter was young she would love to ask many "why" questions. "Why are the leaves different colors, Mommy?" "Why does my tummy growl like a bear when I'm hungry?" Often times we feel pressured as parents to answer all our children's questions so they have all the answers. What if you responded, "Why do you think?" and listened intently to their idea? Better yet, after they've offered an idea you could follow up with "Interesting! How do you think we could find out more?" Empowerment would immediately fill the room. Empowerment leads to feelings of confidence, independence, pride and high self-esteem – this New Year is looking good already!

Our physical responses can be just as important. Your child, when feeling frustrated, may appreciate no words at all but rather a gentle touch from you on their back, or a welcoming hug. Problems don't always need to be solved right at the moment. In contrast, some children may not like a lot of physical touch. Your best response would be then to honor that and remain quiet and still as they express their frustration, then talk about things when they are calm.

Our facial expressions are most important when responding to our children. Take some time to look in the mirror, imagining your child just said a bad word, pushed their sibling, drew on the wall, yelled at you....what does your face look like in response? Of course having a firm, stern facial expression is called for sometimes but what if we practiced the look of compassion, empathy, trust, and welcome? I'm guessing our children would feel more loved, appreciated and safe as they learned about the consequences of their actions as young children. This would undoubtedly result in the beneficial learning of how to deal with frustration, how to be truthful and how to be responsible as they grow older.

This New Year of 2016, we can do it! Try some new ways of responding, not to just questions but behaviors, and see how it goes! Sometimes children are surprised by new responses to their typical behaviors; old habits often die hard. So be prepared for your child to try "pressing different buttons" because the one they usually push (for example, "When I keep on asking Daddy for a cookie and don't give up he always ends up saying yes!") consistently worked for them before. On the following page are some responses to try and even words to use *proactively* to get new results for the New Year.

Good luck!
Happy New Year!

Words that work

First, get your child's attention:

If you find you are repeating your child's name over and over, STOP! You are getting nowhere and your child is clearly not "hearing" you. Try a new approach, such as those above.

"Oh, look!" (bring attention to a sign, a prop, a gesture from you).

Use a very quiet voice to get your child's attention, followed by "I have to tell you something so important. After I tell you about it, you get a turn to - - do it / hold it / go off and play / have your snack, etc.

Next, let your child know what to expect. Be proactive!

"After lunch we'll be going to the library." rather than, as lunch goes on and on, "Hurry up! We need to get to the library for Story Hour! Now we'll be late..."

"When we go to the park, we need to hold hands when we get out of the car until we're on the grass. *Then* you can run and play."

When your child knows what you expect, there's greater probability he or she will do what you ask.

Remember to speak less and listen more!

Using fewer words actually helps your child understand directions more easily.

Your child knows when you are truly listening. Practice active listening, be mindful and in the moment and really listen.

Repeat the same words calmly. Example: "It's time to get your shoes on." Your child says, "But I don't want to get my shoes on....look Mommy...see what I can do?....my toe's itchy...." You can respond with, "It's time to get your shoes on," again, as you work *with* your child, staying with your child if needed, THEN engage in all the child wants to tell you!

Thank your child genuinely when they follow through on what you ask of them.

"Thank you so much for listening when I asked you to hold my hand. I love you so much and now I know you're safe."

As Mrs. O'Neil always says, letting children know they are "responsible" is the greatest, most empowering trait you can recognize. "You are being so responsible with those new colored pencils. Thank you for using them so carefully."

Validate! "I know you're so excited to be here at the birthday party but let's quickly go over our safety rules then you can go right along and play. It will be so much fun!" Then thank them for doing so!

Be a detective and figure out how your child listens best:

What type of learner is your child? Visual? Auditory? Kinesthetic?

Does your child need to see what you are referring to, actively do something when listening, or hold something while listening to you? When you respect the unique way your child learns you will be more successful in being heard.

Is it hard for your child to stop playing and listen? Maybe he or she can fully hear you if you say, "You can keep building with your blocks while you listen, today we're going to..." then ask them kindly to repeat to you what you told them.

"Children do well if they can" - Dr. Ross Greene, child psychologist

Beginners News

Welcome back! Here is to a brand new year, full of hope and possibilities!

Here in our beginners class, we will spend the month exploring the wonders that colder weather brings. We will be introducing snow and ice activities in our water table, and working on how to layer all that cold weather clothing to play outside. As we get back into our routine, we will be welcoming volunteers to come and join in the fun! We will place a sign-up sheet on the classroom bulletin board shortly. The Beginners will also be introduced to yoga with Miss Kim and other big room activities to help us get exercise on days that are too cold to venture outdoors. We are glad to be back with the students, and are eager to see what adventures await our class in the next few months!

Be sure to check our Shutterfly site for recent photos. When families look through the photos together, children use an abundance of cognitive skills to remember activities, songs and stories and lots of rich language to explain what the photos represent. It is a true learning experience. Watch us grow!

Happy New Year!

Mrs. Fosdick,
Mrs. LaForest,
Mrs. Piccuito,
Mrs. Rosen



First Year Program News

Welcome to 2016! The Holidays are memories in our past, while the new year brings fresh opportunities to make new ones. Our First Year Students are feeling very comfortable in school. We will be introducing

new discoveries, activities, and personal challenges. Interest themes this month will include animals in winter, such as Birds and Bears.

Another focus in January is Health. We will be talking about healthy foods and dressing appropriately in the winter. The dramatic play area in the classrooms will become a Hospital and a Veterinarian's office. We welcome any parents in the medical field to join us to share information about your profession at circle time. All parents are welcome to sign up on the volunteer sheet when you have a morning available to spend with us.

Thank you to all parents for attending our holiday gatherings in December. Remember, you can upload your holiday sing-a-long photos to the Shutter-fly classroom sites for all to enjoy.

As teachers, we continue to enjoy getting to know your children and your family. Please remember to join us for our Curriculum Evening on Thursday, January 28th at 7:00 p.m. Each class has chosen an area of curriculum to display. Every student in the class will have an example of work displayed. Come and see how busy the students are at Berrybrook, while having fun, and learning science, math, language arts, social studies, art, and technology.

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

NEW YEAR'S DAY

Last night while we were fast asleep,
The old year went away.
It can't come back again because,
A new one's come to stay.

Enrollment 2015-2016

All first year families should have received enrollment information over our holiday break. January is the month reserved for all current and alumni families to enroll at Berrybrook for the 2016-2017 school year. The second year program offers one 5 Day morning group and two 4 Day afternoon groups. When submitting an application, parents should circle their program preference. The placement of children into classes is a process which takes into account individual needs of children, balance in the composition of each class, and parent preference. While we would like to honor every preference, space or other factors may limit the number of children assigned to an individual class.

In 1964, Mrs. Mann placed legal responsibility for the welfare of Berrybrook in the hands of the Berrybrook Board of Directors and they continue to be dedicated caretakers of her legacy and to provide an early childhood experience that families have loved for six decades. The Board keeps a close eye on expenditures while sparing no cost to ensure children have a safe, quality, early childhood education delivered by trained, experienced and professional educators. Because of Katharine Mann's foresight, the school is very fortunate to have an operating budget that is not 100% tuition driven. Her ongoing charitable gift through the Lurcetia Prentiss Bailey Trust enables Berrybrook to set tuition rates below the true cost of our programs. The Board strives to keep tuition competitive while maintaining low student-teacher ratios, plentiful resources, competitive salaries, and one of the most stunning settings on the South Shore. The Berrybrook Board of Directors sets aside funds for tuition assistance through the Helen Wheeler Scholarship Fund. **The FACTS Grant and Aid Assessment system is available for families to apply for tuition assistance for the 2016-2017 school year.**

Families are able to apply online quickly and easily on the FACTS web site that is completely safe and secure. There is a FACTS link on the Berrybrook website. If you are interested in receiving information about tuition assistance please contact Mrs. Keeley.



Open House

Please let your friends and neighbors know that Berrybrook will be having an Admissions Open House on Saturday, January 23, 2016 10:00-Noon

It will be a chance to tour our school and ask questions about our philosophy and programs.

All Welcome!



Snow Cancellation

Berrybrook will cancel school if **Duxbury Schools** close due to a snow or other emergency. Please watch 7NEWS (NBC) for cancellation notices or sign up for "WHDH Closing Bell." There will also be notification on the school voice mail message.

Second Year Program News

Welcome back! We hope you had a happy, healthy and safe break. The second year holiday celebrations were such fun. The children did an amazing job. Their hard work really paid off. We would like to thank all who volunteered in the classroom to making latkes, baking cookies, and helping with other preparations. We would especially like to thank all of the children for their wonderful gift of song at our holiday Sing-a-Long. You may have noticed the children using sign language during some of our songs. We get our signs from the American Sign Language dictionary and the children worked very hard to learn each sign.

As the New Year is approaches so will the chillier weather. We will begin our discussions of cold weather, snow, wind chill factors, and most importantly, how to dress appropriately for the cold weather. As you know, we ask the children to dress all by themselves when getting ready to play outside. This includes zippers, snaps, and buttons. It is helpful for the children to practice getting dressed at home and we thank you for encouraging them to do so. One way to practice that difficult zipper is to lay your child's coat on the floor where they can sit in front of the zipper and practice working the small parts at the bottom. They feel very proud to be able to zip, snap, and button by themselves!

In the month of January we start to learn about health. Children will be exploring our new "Berrybrook Hospital" in the housekeeping area, which will later turn into a veterinary office. As a class we will talk about healthy eating, and try new healthy snacks. For upcoming projects we will need shoeboxes of any size. We would appreciate having any boxes you might not need.

Don't forget to check our your Shutterfly web site to see what great things are happening in the 4 and 5 Day Classes.

Thank you for all of your support!

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

Parents Association News

Happy New Year! We hope you all enjoyed the holiday sing a longs and had a wonderful holiday break!! We wanted to thank the entire Berrybrook community for allowing us to collaborate with the **Wicked Good Cause**. The outpouring of support for our giving tree was fantastic. We made many holiday wishes come true! During such a hectic time of year, the generosity of Berrybrook families made us feel proud and allowed us to reflect on what is truly important! Stay tuned for additional ways to donate to our community in the upcoming months.

Enrichment

January is the beginning of some exciting enrichment. The first year students will start their monthly yoga session with Miss Kim from Inspire Kids Yoga. She will focus not only on yoga, but self-esteem and body awareness. We are also hoping to bring back Mr. Tony, from All Hands Drumming for all of the classes to enjoy!

Family Fun Fridays

Thank you to those that attended the Challenge Rocks Family Fun Friday. We hope more families can join us **January 8th** from 9-10:30 at **Kingston Sports Center**. The cost is five dollars per child. More details to follow.

As always thank you to those that have already paid their BPA dues! If you have yet to do so forms are available at the BPA table. There are also cookbooks, magnets and adorable Berrybrook apparel for sale at the table as well. Be on the lookout for an email with specifics about our next BPA meeting.

Thank you! Jill Cooney & Danielle MacKinnon, Co-Presidents

Bored? Play a Board Game!

One of the things that makes Berrybrook so special is its commitment to the most fundamental early childhood principle: Children learn through play. In the classroom or on the wonderful playground, Berrybrook kids are afforded the opportunity to explore, socialize and develop essential academic and life skills through play experiences. This is a beautiful thing.

My absolute favorite thing about our home is that we are in a neighborhood where children get off the bus after school and play outside. As winter is now upon us, and the afternoons end a little earlier, or the air feels a bit cooler, I know that soon enough the bulk of my children's play time will take place in doors. When the novelty of brand new holiday treasures fades what's a kid to do? A little screen time is ok, but there has to be a balance...this means it's time to break out the board games!

Experts agree, board games offer many academic and social learning opportunities. Try "Sneaky, Snacky Squirrel" to support children's fine motor development, color recognition and turn-taking skills. "Uno Moo" is a fun way for little ones to practice sorting and categorizing by attributes such as color and type.

Check out the links below for more suggestions and information on the value of board games. It's your move!

<http://www.schoolfamily.com/school-family-articles/article/10895-the-benefits-of-family-game-time>

<http://www.pbs.org/parents/expert-tips-advice/2015/07/bringing-back-family-game-night/>

<http://familygamenightideas.com/the-benefits>

Michelle Taylor, Berrybrook Board of Directors

The Snowman's Resolution

Aileen Fisher

The snowman's hat was crooked
And his nose was out of place
And several of his whiskers
Had fallen from his face.

But the snowman didn't notice
For he was trying hard to think
Of a New Year's Resolution
That wouldn't melt or shrink.

He thought and planned and pondered
With his little snow-ball head
Till his eyes began to glisten
And his toes began to spread;

And at last he said, "I've got it-
I'll make a firm resolve
That no matter what the weather
My smile will not dissolve."