



March 2017

Wednesday, March 15
Wednesday, March 22
Friday, March 24

Professional Day - no school
Board Meeting 7:30 p.m.
Enrollment Contracts Due



Notes from the Head of School

Last month Berrybrook teachers and administration had our second Professional Development Day of the year. As soon as I took over the Head of School role, I knew I wanted to reach out to Diane Levin to see if she would present to the teachers on one of our Professional Days. Diane is a Professor of Early Childhood Education at Wheelock College in Boston (my alma mater), and she is an internationally recognized expert on media and its impact on children. She helps professionals, parents, and policymakers understand and respond to the impact of various issues (such as trauma, violence, media, and commercial culture) on children's development. Diane is the founder of three advocacy organizations: T.R.U.C.E. - Teachers Resisting Unhealthy Children's Entertainment, which supports educational professionals to help parents deal with the impact of media and promote quality play; Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood, which works to end the commercial exploitation of children; and Defending the Early Years, which advocates for appropriate early childhood practice that counteracts inappropriate aspects of recent school reform mandates. Diane is also the author of nine books, most recently "Beyond Remote-Controlled Childhood: Teaching Young Children in the Media Age". To say that I am a fan of Diane Levin's is an absolute understatement.

I consider myself a pretty low-tech parent. While I use my computer and iPhone frequently for both work and personal tasks, I am strict when it comes to screen time for my children. My children rarely watch TV or have screen time - other than homework - on school days and I don't allow screens at the dining table or in the car (unless we are embarking on a long road trip). Truth be told, it's a constant battle with my husband and myself....he would have no limits on screen time, where when I allow screen time I use the microwave timer to make sure they know when their hour of time is done. My oldest

son celebrated his twelfth birthday last month and it was my idea to give him an iPod Touch as a gift. I have seen the teachers use them in the classroom for music at circle time, for taking pictures for the class Shutterfly sites, and to use the internet to look up information for topics of interest for the students. Knowing that most of his friends have iPods and that he needed to soon learn how to use these types of devices in a safe environment, he received the iPod and a two page technology contract. The night of his birthday I asked him to read over the contract at a time when he wasn't distracted and excited from his birthday. I explained to him the importance of a contract, and that if any of the twenty (yes, 20!) terms weren't clear to him or if he disagreed with some and wanted to negotiate them, I wanted him to ask before he just signed off thinking that would get him to this screen quicker. He didn't have any questions so I told him that if at any time he he did have questions, we would be happy to answer them. The next morning, he woke up and said he had a question - "Are there any apps that I can use to get books?" He loves Harry Potter and wanted to make sure he could have any of the books at his fingertips at any time. He is an avid reader just like I am, so this made me so happy! Knowing Brady, I am pretty sure that given the choice of his iPod or the actual book to read, he will probably choose the physical book as he is old-school when it comes to books. However, I know that this is only a piece of the technology puzzle. We are working with Brady on finding that balance and there are so many parts to this - budgeting his screen time wisely, acting appropriately on his device, and so much more. I know that many of his peers have been working on this for so long already but my personal feeling is that technology can be such a Pandora's box - handing off a device may seem innocent but it has the possibility of so many negative consequences. I wanted to wait until he was a little older as you can't unsee those things you may come across when you have a device, and I don't just mean inappropriate images online. Online bullying is such a worry for me now that Brady has his device.....I hope and pray that he makes the best choices when it comes to this (one of his twenty terms!) but I'm aware of peer-pressure and know that he has the potential to be both the sender and recipient of not-so-appropriate "trash-talking". I hope he chooses the appropriate path, but know this is all a part of the process.

I also worry that this new screen will become addictive for him. I remember when I first joined FaceBook and remember how much time I spent on there. You think you can't live without checking everyone's status and then you realize you'll be okay. I think anyone who first joins has that same feeling and then the novelty wears off for the most part. One other term of Brady's contract is to talk IRL to his friends. Years ago I would drive my kids to school and see groups of children waiting for the bus talking and laughing with each other. Now? I see the groups with their heads bent down looking at their screens and barely looking up, even when the bus pulls up for them to get on. I just read an article about a UCLA study which showed that children who were without their screens for five days were better at reading people's emotions than children who continued their normal screen-filled days, and that humans are losing their ability to communicate face-to-face. Another article I read said that many technology CEOs and venture capitalists are choosing to limit their own children's screen time and will ban screens during the week and limit them on the weekends for fear of their children being exposed to harmful content or becoming addicted to their devices.

I know all too well the feeling as a parent of worry and stress that your child may be going without something, or that they will fall behind if they don't have the same access to technology as the next child. I'm not arguing that we should ban all electronics by any means. It's just important to find the balance that is the best fit for your family and realize, understand, and respect that your family's view on technology, electronics, and screen time may vary widely from other families' views. Let's face it, we are not losing screens anytime soon but we need to find a way to live in this technology-filled world. If anyone is interested in an awesome technology contract for your child, I'd be happy to share Brady's!

~ Mrs. Watts

Special Announcement!

We need your donations!

Messy and wet... how lucky can you get?

Soon Summer Nature Program will be here... we're getting ready to prepare!

New this summer! A Mud Kitchen in the Courtyard!

We need your help! With Spring Cleaning upon us all, please consider donating any gently used metal or wood cookware and utensils for the children to explore with this summer!

The following will work well with mud and water :

*Pots and pans
Spoons
Cooking utensils
Bowls
Plates*

Donations may be brought to the Berrybrook Courtyard on Friday, April 14th. Any unused items will be donated to Restore in Hanover, which helps Habitat for Humanity. For large donations or any questions, please see Mrs. LaForest. Thank you very much!

~ Summer Nature Program Teachers



Beginners Notes

Welcome back! We hope everyone had a fun and relaxing February vacation. It's hard to believe it's March already. We are all looking forward to warmer weather and spending as much time as possible outdoors in the months to come at Berrybrook. As spring arrives, we will plant, explore nature and watch as everything turns green! It is amazing to think how quickly our school year has passed, and it has been so much fun to see the Beginners grow and blossom.

In the classroom, the children have been enjoying the flurry of activities that have taken place. Our housekeeping area has been a lot of fun lately. The children have seen it transformed from a hospital to a veterinarian office. We also enjoyed our special Valentine's Day celebration that took place before vacation week. The children each made a watercolor heart, deciding which color it should be and carefully using a paintbrush to create a colorful masterpiece. We ate our sugar cookie snacks made with frosting and sprinkles and had fun passing out valentine cards to friends. This month we are looking forward to another visit from Miss Kim, our yoga instructor, and a special visit from Claire Reilly, a dental hygienist who will teach us all about taking care of our teeth.

~ *Mrs. Rosen*

Mrs. Rosen teaches in the Beginners and 4 Day classes

Congratulations To Mrs. Savoy and Family!!!!



Jordan Savoy was born on February 23

First Year Notes



March is here! It's a time when the classes notice changes in nature as spring slowly arrives. We will make our observations from the classroom, as well as during our time outdoors and down in Berrybrook's outdoor classroom, the Nook.

A favorite tradition we observe each year in March is the tapping of a maple tree. The teachers know that a signal for us to watch for is the gradual warming up of days and the continual cooold nights! When the weather is just right, we, as a class, make the annual trip to the resident maple trees to tap the tree and collect the sap.

The children trek through the playground, led by the teachers, to just the right spot. They carefully pick a prime viewing spot, and listen carefully to the teacher explain how to find the perfect spot to drill into the tree. When the teacher places the bucket on the hook, the students strain to hear the official first drop of sap settling into the bucket. The children also get to taste a drip of the sap on their finger if they would like to, and decide if it tastes like syrup....or water.

The children have so much to learn during this process. They are made aware of the changing seasons, and the weather that is conducive to tapping. Patience must be had to wait for the perfect day! New language is introduced when learning about the tapping process: drilling a hole, inserting a spout into the tree, sap, boiling, evaporation, steam.... Stories are also introduced at story time, such as "Sugaring" by Jessica Hass, and "Sugar, White Snow, and Evergreens" by Felicia Cherneskey. The grand finale of the whole process is enjoying our homemade syrup as part of a snack after it has boiled down from sap that dripped from the tree into proper syrup!

~ Mrs. Neal

Mrs. Neal teaches in the 3 Day and 2 Day Room 1 classes



Congratulations to the Gerson Family

(2 Day Class)

Ginger has a new baby sister, Miriam!!



Second Year Project Notes **Rocket Ships**



Children create their own rocket ships as a project in class, in relation to learning about space. They learn about how rocket ships are used in space travel, and about the astronauts' job piloting them. This project promotes each child's creativity by giving them a variety of steps to personalize their rocket.

To begin, students paint a paper towel tube in silver pearlescent paint, which is especially shiny. This allows children to learn about recycling and how Berrybrook reuses products to create many projects. The tubes are then left to dry overnight. Teachers write names on the inner part of each child's tube and cut small slits on each side of the tube.

Day two is for adding details to the rocket ship model. Each class has a slightly different approach to adding details. In the Five Day class, children are given two quarter sized pieces of small paper. Each student is given the instruction that one is the nose. It can be colored any way they want with markers, adding color as much as possible to both sides. The second piece of paper is the flame and children are given realistic marker colors for fire (orange, red, and yellow).

The Four Day class changes this step by giving children one piece for the nose, and a teacher helps the child fit a pre-made cardboard stand on the bottom.

Next, students choose a paper ladder and a small paper cutout of an astronaut. They color both as they choose to and use glue to apply the pieces onto the paper towel tube. Children decide on stickers to add, many in star shapes and one American flag.

Finally, a teacher helps each child tape small American flag onto the rocket ship to complete the project.

~ *Miss McNulty*

Miss McNulty teaches in the 4 Day and 5 Day classes

The Berrybrook Staff would like to thank the Parents Association for arranging snacks for our monthly after-school meetings. Each month we have a 2 hour meeting to discuss curriculum and other matters. These meetings are scheduled from 4:15-6:15 and we appreciate having a snack to fortify us. We are thankful for all of the support and encouragement we receive from parents. It is very thoughtful of parents to take time from their busy schedules to prepare refreshments for us.

Thank You Very Much!!

Parents Association Notes

Welcome to March, Berrybrook families! February vacation is now behind us and although we have had a few snow days, we are hoping that spring is near. March is turning out to be a very busy month for BPA programming.

Enrichment Update

March will bring quite a few enrichment activities to the children sponsored by the BPA. Yoga will continue for all classes this month with Kim Spires. To help celebrate St. Patrick's Day, the Haley School of Irish Dance will be sending dancers to demonstrate their skills sometime during the month.

We are also fortunate to have Claire Reilly visit us as well. Mrs. Reilly is a Community Dental Health Educator from Dentistry for Children in Weymouth. Mrs. Reilly has visited Berrybrook for many years and is wonderful with the children. She presents great information about dental health in a developmentally appropriate way.

Be sure to ask your children to share their thoughts about these fun visits!

Family Fun Friday

The February Family Fun Friday, at the Duxplex has been rescheduled for March! The new rescheduled date is Friday, March 10th, from 1:30 - 2:15. Again we want to extend a thank you to Molly Curtin for providing the children with this fun filled activity.

Berrybrook Parents Night Out

Join us Thursday, March 9th at 7:00 for a fun night out at Station Eight, in Marshfield. This is a great opportunity to meet parents in other classrooms, chat about upcoming events and share some of your favorite Berrybrook stories. The BPA will provide appetizers to munch on. If you are interested in attending please rsvp to berrybrookparentsassociation@gmail.com.

Save the Date Spring Fling

Each year the BPA sponsors a casual end of year celebration for all the families. Please save the date for this special event on Wednesday, May 17th from 4-5:30 p.m. with a rain date of Thursday, May 18th. Be on the lookout for additional details regarding this fun afternoon!

BPA Dues

The BPA has been very busy this year and we would like to thank all of the families who have paid their BPA dues. We could not plan these fun events for our children and families without your help. It is not too late for your family to support our work! All donations are very much appreciated. We suggest \$30 per family, but all amounts are welcome. Please don't hesitate to reach out to any members of the BPA if you have any questions, comments, new ideas or concerns.

Thanks,
Jill Cooney & Danielle MacKinnon Co-Presidents



Conversation Connections

Tuesday, March 28th at 9:15 - 10am

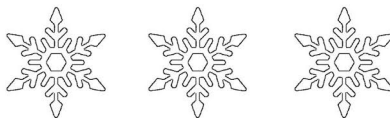
Join Mrs. LaForest and other families to discuss common challenges when raising young children.

Our conversation will begin with a discussion about the upcoming kindergarten registration process for 4 and 5 Day students ~ come with your questions!

Children are welcome as play materials will be available.

Hope to see you there!

~ Connections



Snow Cancellation Reminder

Berrybrook will cancel school if Duxbury Schools close due to a snow or other emergency.

Parents may call the school to check the voice mail message if they are unsure about a snow cancellation.

From The Board of Directors

I hate to jinx it, but I can't help to feel that after the weather we enjoyed during February vacation—spring is here! Parenting through New England winters can be a real creative challenge. The days are shorter, but to me they feel SO much longer. It's not always easy to come up with interesting activities to fill the cold days cooped-up inside, but somehow we go the extra mile to break the monotony. When we start to venture back outside, it's easier to let the kids do their own thing. There's less structure needed, and it seems there are more options for them to entertain themselves. I recently read a blog post, however, that inspired me to try and challenge myself to come up with more creative outdoor activities as well. The excerpt below is from Suzanne Goss at *Gimme the Good Stuff* (gimmethethegoodstuff.org). My kids had a lot of fun with this exercise that she suggested, and the book she references has some great ideas for many outdoor activities that are all very "Berrybrook".

It's (Finally) Spring -- Time to Get Outside!

Joseph Cornell's [Sharing Nature with Children](#) is a classic book that I used when my children were young. These days, it continues to inspire me as a grandmother. It's full of activities to increase children's awareness of nature and develop their minds and senses.

Just exploring outside can be enough, but for school-age children, Cornell's Blind Walk is a great activity. According to Cornell,

Blindfolded activities dislodge our thoughts from self-preoccupation, and free our awareness to embrace more of the world around us. Vision is the sense we depend on the most. Deprived of it, we must fall back on our less-used senses of hearing, touch and smell. Our attention is powerfully focused on these senses, and our perceptions through them are intensified. The babbling of our mind slows down, overwhelmed by the information that our fully awake senses are giving us.

A Blind Walk is simple to organize and lead. For supplies, all you need is one blindfold per pair of people. Here's how to do a Blind Walk:

- Form pairs, with mixed adults and children, or children together if they're mature enough.
- Each pair decides who will be the leader first and who will be blindfolded. The leader guides his partner along any route that looks interesting. Be very careful to watch for logs, low branches, and so on.

- The leader also guides his blind partner's hands to interesting objects and brings him within range of interesting sounds and smells.
- Remember to demonstrate how to guide a partner safely. Remind the leaders that they are the eyes of their blindfolded partners.
- Have partners switch roles, transfer the blindfolds, and repeat the process.

When people try something new, they're often nervous and cover it up by joking and laughing. Since covering one's eyes is a novel experience for many children, it's helpful to play the following game to warm up for a Blind Walk:

- Ask everyone to sit in a circle and close their eyes.
- Tell them that you are going to pass an object around the circle and each person is to use their sense of smell, touch, and possibly hearing to discover something new about the object. (A stick, stone, pinecone or leaf will do the job.)
- Have each player share his or her discovery before passing the object to the next player.

Note: You can also use this warm-up activity on its own. It's great for exploring natural objects if you're otherwise cooped up inside.

*~ John Hannon
Board of Directors*



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 1st, (or Berrybrook Beginners!) to register. We also welcome siblings up to 7 years of age. More information can be found on the Berrybrook website or stop by the office.