

May 2017

May 16	4 and 5 Day kindergarten bus trip
May 17	BPA Spring Fling
May 24	BOD meeting 7:00 pm
May 31	Ice Cream Day - last day for 3 Day classes
June 1	Ice Cream Day - last day for 4 Day
June 2	Ice Cream Day - last day for 2 Day, 5 Day and Beginners
June 7	BPA Staff Appreciation Luncheon
June 13	Summer Nature Program begins



Notes from the Head of School

We blinked.

We blinked and the end of year Ice Cream Days have exploded onto the calendar. How did that happen? It seems like just yesterday we were welcoming new and returning families into the classrooms for Visiting Day. The days of children settling into their routines of saying a possible teary goodbye are in the rearview mirror. Children are talking about their fall home visits and revisiting those earlier memories as they gear up for a new Berrybrook year or kindergarten. I look at the Shutterfly class sites and can't believe how little the children look in those first class photos.

I would like to thank everyone for an amazing first year as Head of School. Having started at Berrybrook in 2002, I've seen a lot of changes and seen many families come through the door - whether it was the farmhouse door into the tiny cubby room, or the temporary classroom door via the long ramp, or the ADA compliant door of the schoolhouse. When I see families coming through the door with strollers, I know it's a struggle through those two doors separated by the vestibule but when I think back to how strollers couldn't even fit through the doors of the farmhouse into the cubby room and parents either had to take their little ones out of the stroller to come into school or hope that their child's cubby was close enough to the door that they could sign their children out at the threshold on a rainy day and avoid the dreaded (I mean charming!) cubby room.....I know we've come a long way!

The Berrybrook Parents Association, once again, went above and beyond to provide meaningful enrichment activities for the students. They enjoyed the tried-and-true monthly yoga among other activities and also sponsored some fantastic Family Fun Fridays. Jill Cooney and Danielle MacKinnon who have been the co-presidents of the BPA for the past two years will be severely missed. They have been constants for the office and had strong help behind the scenes to make all these activities welcoming for

Berrybrook families. I anticipate the Spring Fling this month will also be a blast and I hope everyone can attend.

The Board of Directors is a great group of volunteers who are tasked with making sure Berrybrook is carrying on Mrs. Mann's vision. While most of them are not in the building each and every day, the support I and the Berrybrook staff feel from the Board is like no other. I appreciate their trust that I will also carry on the mission of Mrs. Mann. Again, Berrybrook has made a lot of changes over the years but one of the steadies is to provide developmentally appropriate experiences for preschoolers. I have no doubt that teaching trends may ebb and flow, but number one for Berrybrook will be the focus on social and emotional growth and development.

I wrote in October that change is hard. We all become attached and don't want things to change from what we know. One parent was in tears the other day wondering how the next year could ever compare to her child's first year. She and her child had become so close to the teachers and other families, and she worried about her child making friends in a new classroom or becoming comfortable with new teachers. This is an emotional time of year as changes once again are occurring and are probably at the forefront of your mind. Your oldest may be starting kindergarten and you can't imagine how they will every be able to ride a bus. Or you may be leaving the cocoon of the 2 Day program to go into the 5 Day program. Perhaps your last child will be starting Berrybrook and you're noticing a bit of the 'empty-nest' feeling. Remember the metamorphosis I wrote about in the fall? Think about how much your children have grown over the past nine months, and the evolution of your family as well. I also have grown these past months and changes have occurred - some good, some bad - but they are all a part of the process. Thank you for being a part of my process this year.

♡ Mrs. Watts



Not a good-bye..

Berrybrook is a very special place for so many reasons, one of the most important being the teachers here whom dedicate their time to nurture and guide the children once they come through that gate. Teachers at Berrybrook often stay for many years and have become very well acquainted with families - parents and children, sometimes even the next generation! Two of our teachers have decided that it is the right time for them to retire. They have both said that they will continue to be a part of Berrybrook, visiting and helping out in the classrooms from time to time.

Thank you both for all the care, time, and dedication.

MRS. CADDLE
teaching at Berrybrook since 2001

MRS. DELANO
teaching at Berrybrook since 1989

Beginners Notes



It's hard to believe we're entering our final month of school. It seems like just yesterday that our Beginners entered the classroom curious but a little unsure about what Berrybrook was all about. They have all grown so much. They now come to school confident and ready for a great day. They are so happy to play, explore, and spend time with their friends. They have learned so much and have built a great foundation for the years to come.

April was a busy month. We learned about frogs, snakes, and turtles. We started using the equipment on the big playground and spent time exploring down in the Nook.

In May we hope to continue enjoying our time outside. We will also be learning about farm animals, insects, and the ocean. We will learn about metamorphosis and watch as our classroom caterpillars change into beautiful butterflies.

As our month comes to a close we will celebrate with the traditional Berrybrook Ice Cream Day on Friday, June 2nd. Children arrive at 9:00 as usual, and families return at 10:30 to enjoy ice cream made by the children. See you then!

~ *Mrs. Rosen*

Mrs. Rosen teaches in the Beginners and 4 Day classes

Berrybrook teachers would like to thank parents for everything they do to support us during the school year. Thank you to the BPA and especially co-presidents Jill Cooney and Danielle MacKinnon for arranging September playdates, our wonderful Harvest Festival, and engaging enrichment programs for our children and families. We also appreciate the snacks classroom parents arrange for our after school meetings! Thank you to all parents for working with us to provide the best possible experience for the children. We are grateful for all of the smiles, nods, suggestions, and words of encouragement and appreciation that nourish us and make our work at Berrybrook so rewarding. Thank you for creating a true partnership between school and home.

First Year News

Happy Spring!



The first year children have been learning all about the Farm. In fact, we had a visit from Soule Homestead. Farmer Meghan read a barnyard story called “Books, Books, Books.” The children were able to meet and pet “Snowball” the chicken and “Bella” the bunny as they learned all about how these pets live on the farm. They also saw all the different sizes and colors of chicken eggs and make a small craft using cleaned sheep’s wool.

In the classroom, we have been following the farm theme and making a variety of barn animal projects. One favorite has been the sheep.

Here are the steps your child followed to make their sheep:

1. They take an oval piece of paper for the body of the sheep.
2. Children were asked to write their name on the back of the paper.
3. They count out 1 piece of paper shaped to be the sheep’s head and 2 pieces of small pre-cut paper for the sheep’s legs.
4. Then they find a seat at the project table.
5. The children used dabbers and paint to make the woolly texture on their sheep and then add where they think the head should go and where they think the legs should go.
6. The teacher then asked them how many eyes they wanted for their sheep and they used a glue stick to add the eyes and complete their project.
7. The children place their finished project on the drying mat and then wash their hands.

Each child’s sheep really shows their own personality and they are so proud of their finished creations.

~ Mrs. Knight

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



Congratulations to the Arcese Family, 3 Day room 3!

Welcome Baby Able!!





Second Year Project Notes

Maypole Song

Sing a song of Spring time
Winter's gone away
All around the maypole
We will dance today
Tra, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la
Tra, la, la, la
Tra, La, la, la
(repeat chorus)

The month of May is a time when children appear comfortable in their classrooms enjoying the company of peers and teachers while spending time reflecting on their Berrybrook experiences and discoveries. After kindergarten registration some children may begin to ponder about next year. Teachers acknowledge and validate these strong emotional feelings and through fun and interesting activities help children enjoy their remaining days at school.

Last September teachers read a book, "How Joe The Bear and Sam The Mouse got together" by Beatrice Schenk De Regmiers. This story is about two characters that finally come up with an activity they can enjoy together... eating ice cream every day at the same time. Ice cream seems to be one of those comfort foods that many people enjoy eating together. On the last day of school, children and families enjoy eating hand cranked ice cream. This has long been a tradition at Berrybrook. It is a sign of change...an ending...and a beginning. This day becomes a very special memory for all Berrybrook families.

At the end of the school year children will be taking home a book to treasure for years to come. This book is a journal of their artwork including, photographs, Berrybrook songs, poems, recipes and more. Some classes refer to them as "Memory books"... Classroom Two refers to them as "Yearbooks". These books are relatively new in comparison to the age of the school (sixty-three years old!).

At one time, only four/five year olds attended Berrybrook, which was referred to in this area as the "Harvard" of preschools. Early enrollment insured placement; therefore, many children were enrolled at birth. Memory books at that time were non-existent as were sheet protectors and binders we have available today. However, at the end of the school year, children did make "Autograph Books" which continues to be a tradition. To make an autograph book a child approached another child and asked, "Will you sign my autograph book?" The classmate responded back to the child with the same question. They exchanged books, wrote his/her name in the book and passed it back to the rightful owner. This continued until every child in the class had signed every other child's book. Each child was given a photograph of themselves to place on the cover. This activity could take a few days to complete.

Memory books came into being after the three-year old program began. A teacher of three-year olds (new to the staff but not new to the school) gave each child in

her class at the end of the year a beautiful hand-made memory book. What a surprise! The other teachers had never seen anything like it before and parents and children were thrilled to receive them. After that every child and parent wanted one of these books at the end of the year. The pressure was on! To the disappointment of parents not every teacher could devote the countless hours required to make these books and so a compromise was reached. The school would supply materials/photographs and the parents would make the books for their child. Parents would get together one or two evenings at school working on these books. It was a "BIG JOB". To be more accurate one might say it was a work in progress which was seldom, if ever, completed at school or at home.

As you well know it can be a dilemma what to do with all the papers/projects children bring home from school. Some parents had boxes/totes to save them in but even that wasn't always enough...and then there was the "waste basket" which in this day and age is called "trash". To help solve this problem, memory books evolved into journals and that is what we have today. Teachers assemble them with each piece of art work dated and chronologically placed in the book. This makes progression of cutting/writing skills evident. Additional pages and photos may be added after the books go home.

Parents seem pleased with this arrangement and it offers teachers an opportunity to touch each child's work for the last time and reflect back to the day it was made. This can be therapeutic for teachers as they, too, emotionally prepare for the "good-bye" day.

And now an afterthought which was omitted in the April newsletter under Classroom Two...the Berrybrook egg hunts of long ago. Children arrived excitedly the day of the egg hunt. The hunt took place in the block room which literally was a room full of hundreds and hundreds of blocks. Plastic eggs had not yet come into being so the jelly beans were placed on blocks and window sills all around the room. Can you imagine it? Teachers had to clean the room the best they could the night before...not an easy task! Tablecloths or shower curtains covered two doorways to the block room. Children lined up at each doorway eager to see if the bunny had come. And then a moment of silence when a teacher whispered these words, "When we came to school this morning we heard a thumping sound but we didn't see anything". Anticipation ran high! The cloths were pulled aside and there on the block room floor was a path around the room of small wisps of white cotton fluff. Never mind the jelly beans – the first thing the children wanted in their baskets was fluff from the bunny's tail! When the fluff was gone the hunt for jelly beans began in earnest until it seemed that all the jelly beans had been found. Not so! Jelly beans were still appearing days later from their hiding places amongst the blocks! How exciting it was to find one! Although years have passed and the wisps of cotton fluff have gone down memory lane, children continue to enjoy Berrybrook egg hunts!

~ *Mrs. O'Neil and Mrs. Caddle*

Mrs. O'Neil teaches in the 5 Day class and Mrs. Caddle teaches in the 4 Day class



Kindergarten Bus Trip

On Tuesday, May 16, the 4 & 5 Day children and their teachers will take a Bus Trip to the Chandler Elementary School in Duxbury. The 5 Day morning class bus will leave at 9:30. Parents may drop the children off in their classroom at the regular 9:00 start time, and are welcome to wait in the multi-purpose room or outside until 9:30.

The 4 Day students will start their trip at 1:00 so parents must arrive at Berrybrook at 12:30 on that day.

Although many Berrybrook students will be attending kindergarten in other towns in our community we feel the trip to Chandler School is fun and very appropriate. The goal of this visit is to help children anticipate kindergarten positively by providing them a glimpse of a kindergarten setting. Permission slips will be available soon.

Lunch Bunch

The last day for Lunch Bunch will be Thursday, June 1. Thank you to all of the families who participated in our Lunch Bunch program. Mrs. Capasso, Mrs. Dunn and Mrs. Neal want to thank all parents who were so careful to pack allergy safe lunches for their children. We appreciate our families who take the extra time to make sure all Berrybrook children are safe.



I Scream, You Scream, We All Scream For Ice Cream!

It's May! Ice Cream Day is upon us at the end of the month on the last day of school. First of all...yum!! Secondly, what a way for families to celebrate a full year at Berrybrook!

At first glance, the simplicity of a vanilla ice cream cone may not be the most appropriate representation of all that is involved in a year at Berrybrook. However, upon taking a closer look, one might notice it is just that simplicity that best represents it after all. Simplicity doesn't necessarily mean easy. Something that is simple can be magical, clear and easily understood and truly seen because of its simplistic nature.

A vanilla ice cream cone is simplistic in its ingredients:

**a cone*

**a scoop of vanilla ice cream*

(vanilla - not a fancy flavor, not a mix of flavors, and with no extra things mixed in, like gummy worms or chocolate chips)

A vanilla ice cream cone is simplistic in the way it is enjoyed:

**scoop *hold *eat*

Berrybrook is simplistic in its "ingredients":

**respect and validation = "the cone" *emotional and academic learning = "the ice cream"*

Berrybrook is simplistic in the way it is enjoyed:

**respect each other's ideas and opinions *validate the feelings and perspectives of others *embrace a love for learning.*

In the same way we hold an ice cream cone, we hold onto the importance of respect and validation for one another. An ice cream cone is strong to withstand the tasting and melting of the ice cream. This is also true of the strength of respect and validation at Berrybrook. It holds all of the emotional and academic learning, the practice of problem solving, the building of friendships, the understanding of numbers and letters, the remembering words to a song or story and the awareness and appreciation of the world around us.

"What? No sprinkles on the ice cream cones on Ice Cream Day?" you ask? There is no need! Toppings, like "the icing on the cake" are just that – the extras, the visual celebration of something already great. The smiles, the laughs, the joy on Ice Cream Day among all the families will be the sprinkles!! Simple? Yes! Delicious? You bet!

How delicious the year has been, thanks to all of you! Happy Summer!

Mrs. LaForest

Parents Association Notes

It is hard to imagine this is the BPA's final newsletter for the school year! What an amazing year it has been and it is all thanks to our wonderful Berrybrook community. Thank you to all who have participated and supported the BPA this year. We really could not do it all without your help.

Enrichment

Our enrichment activities are winding down for the year as the end of school nears. Miss Kim will return one last time this month for yoga (which continues to be an all time favorite activity for the kids). The second year students will have a visit from Annawon Weeden, a member of the Mashpee Wompanoag and Narragansett Tribe. This is a wonderful opportunity for the students to learn more about native people and their culture and traditions.

Family Fun Friday

Please join us for the last Family Fun Friday of the year on Friday, May 19th. The outing will be an ice cream sundae cruise around Plymouth Harbor with Plymouth Cruises. The children will get a boat ride, some stories, games and dancing, and a make-your-own sundae treat. The cost of this trip is \$15 per person. The cruise will be from 1:30-2:30PM, but please plan to arrive at 1:00. As this is a boat excursion, all persons in your party (babies, adults, and preschoolers) will count toward the head count for the outing and be charged the full amount. Maximum passenger capacity for the boat is 50. The cruise fills up fast so be sure to stop by the BPA table and sign up!

BPA Spring Fling

All families are invited to the Spring Fling on Wednesday, May 17th (rain date May 18th) from 4-5:30 p.m. for pizza, a treat for the kids and some playground fun. The spring fling is an annual event that allows us to celebrate the end of the Berrybrook school year together. Be on the lookout for an evite!

BPA Spring Play date

Again this year, the BPA is happy to sponsor play dates on the Berrybrook playground for all currently enrolled students for the 2017-2018 school year. This is a wonderful opportunity for students to meet their new classmates before the start of the summer. The schedule of spring play dates will follow with class placement letters and will most likely be the second week in June. As always there will be additional play dates in the fall before the start of classes.

BPA Officers 2017-2018

The BPA is looking for new officers for the 2017-2018 school year! New faces bring new ideas and your commitment can be as little or as much as you like. If you are interested please reach out to the BPA or Mrs. Watts/Mrs. Piccuito.

As always thank you to those that have already paid their BPA dues! Each contribution provides great school enrichment and subsidizes many of our Family Fun Friday events. If you have yet to do contribute it is not too late. If you have any questions, concerns or feedback email us at berrybrookparentsassociation@gmail.com

Thank you!

Jill Cooney & Danielle MacKinnon, Co-Presidents

From The Board of Directors

What Are Fine Motor Skills and Why They Are Important During The Preschool Years

Fine motor skills refer to the small muscles in your hands and fingers that allow you to be able to color with crayons, cut with scissors, paint with a paintbrush, tie your shoelaces, use a fork or spoon to eat and play with small objects such as legos, beads, or puzzles. Fine motor skills are integral to each child's development. Children who struggle with any of these activities often feel frustrated and their self-esteem suffers when they can't keep up with their peers. Due to the increased expectations of kindergarten students nowadays, children are required to be able to write with a pencil a fair amount. When your child has to concentrate on just trying to hold a pencil, there is less brain power to devote to actually learning the school work! As the academic demands increase, their writing tends to be messy; they may not complete assignments in the required time, or they might produce incorrect work because they are spending so much time focusing on the physical part of the task. This can cause frustration for the child which can transfer into them disliking academic tasks.

Children's physical development happens in a progression. Generally speaking, the major development of motor skills are "big to small". The child needs to develop and strengthen the larger muscles of their trunk and arms before the smaller muscles of the hands and fingers. It is important to note that children should be exposed to tasks that are appropriate for their age and ability. What you would expect from a four year old would not be the same as what you would expect from a three year old. Conversely, the skills that a child obtains when they are three years old build on and help them to achieve the higher level skills that would be expected of older children.

When you are thinking of a child's fine motor development it is often helpful to think of a four legged stool. Each leg of the stool represents one of the bases for fine motor skills. When one of those legs is missing, or misshapen, the stool will wobble and fall over. Each of the legs has to be in place in order for the stool to be stable. The four essential "legs" of the fine motor "stool" include:

Postural Stability: Children need to have a strong shoulder girdle and adequate trunk strength to be able to sit at the table or even sit on the floor and complete fine motor skills efficiently. Children who lack shoulder and trunk strength may unconsciously tighten their larger muscles to try to give them more stability which causes fatigue. You often see children who lack shoulder strength and trunk strength hold the pencil very tightly, press really hard on the paper, hold a pencil too loosely, and/or slump over in their chair and rest their head on their hands.

Tactile Perception: If you are not getting good tactile feedback from your fingers, it is difficult to be accurate with them. Poor tactile perception resembles what it feels like if you were to try to string beads, cut with scissors, or complete a lego project with rubber gloves on. Poor tactile perception can result in children being very clumsy with their fingers and hands. They may drop things frequently or let small items slip out of their grasp.

Hand Function: Hand function is probably the most important base skill because the hand and finger muscles need to work well together in order to control their pencils and other small objects. Getting lots of practice with different activities that strengthen children's hands, wrists, and fingers automatically provides more efficient hand function.

Bilateral Coordination: This is essentially the child's ability to use both hands together to complete tasks. Examples of tasks that require bilateral coordination include holding the paper while you are cutting with scissors, tying shoelaces, playing with construction toys, stringing beads etc.

Preschool tasks and activities provide many wonderful developmentally appropriate activities that foster the development of each leg of a child's "stool" which add to their independence with fine motor skills. Another very important thing to consider is, if a child is lacking any of these "stool legs" they often learn to compensate for the lost skill. This often results in children learning how to do things incorrectly. **The longer that a child performs a task incorrectly the longer that skill becomes a habit. The longer the child has those bad habits the harder it is to reverse them later on!** This is why it is so important for children to be exposed to tasks in a developmentally appropriate order. An example of what would be a developmentally appropriate skill progression is learning how to use scissors. A child in the 2.9 program or 3 year old classrooms would not necessarily be expected to use scissors properly. They should be playing and participating in the tasks that help build their hand function skills. After that the children should start by just being able to snip with scissors, then complete tasks that require two snips and so forth. Later in their first year of preschool they might be able able to cut along a line and by their second year begin to cut out very basic shapes. Once they have achieved the ability to cut out simple shapes they can then begin to work on cutting out more complex shapes and designs. It wouldn't be developmentally appropriate or considerate to hand a three year old scissors and request that they cut out a complex shape before they participate in the lower level tasks. One skill builds upon the next. Once you have a stable foundation, using your hands effectively becomes easy and almost "second nature"!

Try these activities to work on postural stability:

- Crawling like various types of animals (crab walking, bear crawling, slithering like a snake).
- Using the monkey bars, climbing trees, ladders, ropes or rock walls (just get outside and play!).
- Playing a balloon volley game where you try to keep the balloon overhead / off the floor.
- Drawing, painting, or coloring on any type of vertical surface (an easel, paper taped to the wall or the fridge, painting with shaving cream on the wall in the bathtub).

Try these activities to work on tactile perception:

- Put a variety of small objects (small ball, plastic spoon and fork, matchbox car, lego piece, crayon) into a small bag. With your child not looking ask the child to reach and find each piece by just feeling it. (You can play a similar game by putting the same or similar objects in a tub of uncooked rice, beans, or pasta!)

- Various art activities such as finger painting, playing with play-doh (you can even put things in the play-doh like glitter, small objects- find so many small marbles, etc), playing in sand, snow, and even water!

Try these activities to work on hand function:

- Crumbling paper (start with small amounts like half a sheet of tissue paper for younger kids and gradually work up to regular paper or newspaper). The activity works the best if kids try to do it with one hand at a time!
- Picking up small objects with a variety of squeeze tongs.
- Spraying water bottles (water the plants, wash away a chalk drawing, clean off shaving cream from the bathtub wall). Again, this activity works best when the child uses one hand at a time to operate the spray bottle.
- Cutting with scissors. Remember- start with small snips for younger children (snipping straws, play-doh, one inch strips of paper) and gradually work up to the activities listed above).

Try these activities to work on bilateral coordination:

- Jumping, skipping, catching a ball, riding a bike, beating a drum, jumping rope, threading beads, doing buttons, lacing activities, drawing a line using a ruler, and cutting with scissors, and swimming.

All of these activities should be fun for your child! If they are hard or the child is becoming frustrated adapt the activity to be easier and gradually work your way up to the other tasks.

Karen Gallagher

Berrybrook Board of Directors

Pediatric Occupational Therapist

NOOK NEWS

All of our classes are enjoying our amazing outdoor classroom. Children have been dancing on the stage, planting flower bulbs for the spring, and working together on construction and engineering projects in the large building area. Some classes brought a daily project to the Nook. Some have eaten snack together under the canopy of trees, and an outdoor puppet show has been created by one of the classes as well.

In just a few short months, teachers and children have settled into the space. The most common report from teachers is how peaceful the Nook is. We have observed the children run, climb, explore, and imagine; this leads to a sense of calm. According to the Science section of Business Insider, here are the top benefits of spending time with nature.

<http://www.businessinsider.com/scientific-benefits-of-nature-outdoors-2016-4?op=0##/1-improved>

TOP BENEFITS OF NATURE

1. Improved short-term memory
2. Restored mental health
3. Stress relief
4. Reduces inflammation
5. Better vision
6. Improved concentration
7. Sharper thinking and creativity
8. Possible anti- cancer effects
9. Immune system boost
10. Improved mental health

Our children and staff, as well as families, are reaping healthful benefits from the Nook. We look forward to a healthy, happy summer.



Berrybrook Annual Appeal and Helen Wheeler Scholarship Fund

Every year, the Berrybrook Board of Directors conducts an Annual Appeal to raise money for the Helen Wheeler Scholarship Fund. Each May, current and alumni Berrybrook families receive a mailing asking for support. Every dollar donated to the Annual Appeal reinforces our commitment to provide tuition assistance for families who wish to send a child to Berrybrook but cannot because of financial constraints. The funds also enable current families who may experience a sudden financial emergency to continue at Berrybrook. Before we reach out with our 2017 Annual Appeal this month, we wanted to acknowledge the generous donors to the 2016 Annual Appeal which raised over \$1,885.00 for the scholarship fund. We are so grateful for their financial support and their dedication to Berrybrook. Gifts to the Annual Appeal have made a lasting difference in the lives of many children and their families who are experiencing Berrybrook because of their generosity.

2016 Berrybrook Annual Appeal Donors

Tom and Kris Delano

Kelly Family Foundation

Rose Dentali

Kirsch Family

Michael O'Keefe and Rachel Ezell

Joanne LaForest

The Frazier Family

Gail and Paul McNulty

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