



November 2017

Thursday, November 9	Plimoth Plantation field trip - 4 & 5 Day classes
Friday, November 10	Veterans Day - no school
Saturday, November 18	Berrybrook Open House
November 22, 23, 24	Thanksgiving Break
Wednesday, November 29	Board Meeting 7:30 pm



Notes from the Head of School

Last month we had our first Professional Development Day for the 17-18 year. Berrybrook is licensed through the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) and each staff member is required to take a certain number hours of Professional Development annually. This number correlates to the number of hours a teacher works with children; for example a teacher who works twenty hours or more weekly with children is required to have 20 professional training hours each year. Many of our staff take more than the required hours of classes, because we enjoy learning all we can about early childhood development. The staff is fortunate that the Board of Directors sets aside funds for staff training. Not only do we have the three daytime Professional Development days, we also take evening classes throughout the year when topics interest us. Personally, I enjoy when we host a trainer at the school so that we are all hearing the same message and can discuss our thoughts and interpretations of the training after. As you know, fifteen people listening to the same presentation may have fifteen different takes on the subject!! The topic last month was "When Bad Things Happen in the World". As much as I enjoy a good training, I would have preferred not to have to schedule a training like this. When I inquired about this training, it was in the height of the hurricanes in the South and that was my focus. A day after I booked the training, we heard news about the Las Vegas tragedy. When I woke up early that

Monday morning and saw the news, my heart sank and my first thought was, “Not again! What am I going to tell my children THIS time??” In all honesty, I’m really tired about talking to my children about events such as this. There are only so many times I feel that I can tell my older children about these events without losing it emotionally. However, until we can stop all these tragic events - and that is for a much larger discussion - all we can do is help our children feel safe. I tell my children all the time that my job is to make sure they are safe. Can I with all absolute certainty promise they will be safe forever? Of course not, but they won’t know that. I will keep our family routines and remind them that my priority to keep them safe. Safe and loved ❤️

Mrs. Watts

Safety Notes

Remember, our parking lot can get very busy at arrival and dismissal. Be sure to follow the Berrybrook rules for safety:

- **Hold your child’s hand in the parking lot**
- **Lock the gate behind you**
- **Turn engines off**
- **Park in marked spots (not the fire lane)**
- **Never leave children unattended in cars or in the parking lot**
- **Supervise your child once you have signed out**

Thank you for following the Berrybrook rules to keep EVERYONE safe!

Colder weather is on its way.....



Berrybrook will cancel school if

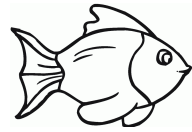
Duxbury Public Schools



are closed due to weather emergencies. Please watch 7NEWS (WHDH) for cancellation notices. Berrybrook makes every attempt to keep parents informed of weather related changes through Facebook and emails as well. As the weather changes, be sure to dress children appropriately for outdoor play, including the Nook. Now is a good time to locate all hats, mittens, gloves, and warm jackets that will be necessary as we head into November. Once the snow flies, children should bring snow pants and snow boots with them every day. Children are welcome to keep slippers, sneakers, or crocs at school to make sure they are comfortable in the classroom. **Please remember to label all clothing.**

Beginners Notes

Hello Beginners, We're Glad You Came To School!



Each and every morning after the Beginners have arrived, hugged their families goodbye, and begin to discover and explore in all the areas of the their classroom – soon, something else begins...and it begins with a song...

“Hello, _____.

Hello, _____.

Hello _____, we're glad you came to school.”

As the teacher holds the gift of a story in her hands, sitting among the scattered cloth mats that await their owners and begins singing this song using each of the Beginners' names... something amazing happens. Children look up at the sound of their name being sung. Through experience they now understand that it would be alright to leave their work they are involved in because they can now trust that it will still be there when they return after the story. They all come, smiling at hearing their name in the song. Some sing along, some listen, some choose a companion to bring such as a doll, a miniature animal figure, a drawing they just created. We laugh together as we finish the song by trying to sing all three teachers' names – along with Smiley the goldfish – as the grand finale...and then the story begins.

Perhaps there is something for the children to hold that pertains to the characters in the book. Perhaps they are asked by the teacher to look and listen for a certain clue in the story. Perhaps there is a rhyming text that can even be “read” by singing the words and the children help keep the beat. Or perhaps, and most intriguing, there are certain parts to the story the children are actually in charge of and when they hear about *their* certain part they can come up and add it to our felt board or shelf.

Just imagine the skills that are being used! If you were a Beginner you would be learning so many things! Learning to come together as a group. Learning to sit so that you have enough space for yourself and those around you...and so that everyone can see the book. Learning to trust that if wonderful things are being passed out to everyone that you *will* get one, that your teachers will always remember you because you are important. Learning how to add your own thoughts and opinions to a story ... and taking a guess about what might happen next that's never “wrong” or “unheard of” but *important, thoughtful and creative*.

Story Time in the Beginners Class is one of the most important group times of our day because it practices the above mentioned skills...and more! It also prepares children for longer and more creative Circle and Movement Times that come later in the school year and in their following years at Berrybrook.

The Beginners have *begun*...and we are all having a wonderful, joyful time

~ *Mrs. LaForest*

Mrs. LaForest teaches in the Beginners, 3 Day Room 3, and the 4 Day classes.

First Year Project Notes



During November, the First Year program begins to talk about families and family celebrations. Each child will be asked to send in a picture of their family to display in the classroom. This activity engages children in conversations about what it means to be a family. It shows that although we are individuals, we are also a part of a family unit which may be similar, or different, from others.

Families will also be asked to work together to decorate a feather for our classroom "Texture Turkey". Texture is the focus of this project. How does it feel in your hand? Is it soft?... smooth?... spikey? We ask that you look for **NON-FOOD ITEMS** to glue onto your turkey feather. This ensures that all our students stay safe while in our school. The children will have a chance to discuss the choices on their feather with the class.

During the month of November, our curriculum will include these areas:

Language Arts: We will learn what it is to be *grateful*, then work together to make a list of all the people and things we are thankful for.

Mathematics: We will sing 5 Little Turkeys, practice counting feathers, and categorize them by their attributes (color, shape, size).

Science: We will discuss a turkey's natural habitat. (Lucky for us, we see them through our classroom windows often at this time of year!) Then we use our observations to make a list of turkey attributes.

Social Studies: We will talk about how each family celebrates Thanksgiving. Dramatic play will be stocked with items related to holiday cooking, travel and going to visit family.

Art: Children will be creating turkeys, and other fall themed items which will enhance your holiday decorations!

~ Mrs. Dunn

Mrs. Dunn teaches in the 3 Day Room 3 and 2 Day classes.

Kingston Animal Shelter Donations

November brings an annual Berrybrook Community Service Project started by Mrs. O'Neil many years ago. Families may bring in donations of supplies needed to benefit the Kingston animal shelter. To receive these donations, boxes will be decorated by the children with cut-out pictures of dogs, cats, and other animals glued onto a colorful background. These boxes will be placed in the lobby and near classroom doors along with "Pennies For The Pound Jars". There will be class discussions about "What is an animal shelter?", "Adoption of pets", and "Being respectful of all living things." It is important for all children to develop empathy and practice kindness. Taking care of pets and other animals is a meaningful way for children to develop these traits.

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

Thank you all for supporting this year's Harvest Festival. It was wonderful to see so many families who braved some rather wet weather. A huge thank you to everyone who volunteered their time or donated a themed basket, silent auction item, refreshments, and decorations! We continue to be impressed with the generosity and support of our families and local businesses. We also want to extend a special thank you to all of the high school students who assisted with crafts, hay rides, and face painting. All of the proceeds from the Harvest Festival will support future enrichment and subsidize Family Fun Fridays. *There will be a redrawing for the Fall-themed raffle basket. Everyone who has paid their dues by November 15th will automatically be put into the drawing.* Dues are welcome at any time.

Last month's Family Fun Friday, at Sauchuk Farm had a great turnout! Thank you to all who attended and thanks to our enrichment coordinators for making the event happen! Our next event will be Big Ryan Storytelling on November 17th. Stay tuned for more details!

As the holiday season approaches, the Berrybrook School will continue to support an initiative that impacts the community. We have chosen to support the "Holiday Heroes" initiative through Youth Villages. This non-profit agency follows the Evidentiary Family Restoration® approach to helping our nation's most vulnerable and troubled children. They emphasize family, measurement, community, intensity and accountability. This holiday season, Youth Village will be serving 25,000 children nationwide. We will be sponsoring 50 of the 450 children being served in the New England area. *Please be on the lookout for the Giving Tree at the BPA table as we will have the 50 children and their wishlist located there.* Each child was given three wishes. Gifts may be given to Mrs. Watts and Mrs. Piccuito. Please include the sponsoring child's info and their wishlist with your gift, should you choose to participate. The deadline for gift collections is **December 1st**.

We hope you will join us **Wednesday, November 8th at 7:30** for our next BPA meeting. We will recap the harvest festival, plan for future enrichment and community outreach opportunities. All are welcome!

The new Berrybrook apparel, which was previewed at the Harvest Festival is now available online. There is a widget on the Berrybrook website that provides a direct link to the *Land's End* school apparel. Feel free to take a look at the variety of options that can be personalized for Berrybrook families.

Thank you for your support and participation! For any questions please email the BPA.

Dianna Stewart and Jenna O'Donnell Co-Presidents berrybrookparentsassociation@gmail.com

From The Board of Directors

I have often wished that Berrybrook was K-12 as I put my two Berrybrook alum on the bus and off to a much larger school. But since Berrybrook isn't going to be our children's school forever, I think it is up to us to work on creating environments in our new schools that build on the foundation we have provided them here. Education policy is a complicated and confusing arena, but for me it all boils down to a simple basic. A school should be a child-centric place that addresses the needs of the whole child, a place where it is safe to explore, make mistakes and find their own path.

We are seeing much greater success around the world in educational systems than here in the U.S. One particular system that has caught my attention is Finland. Finland in recent years has ranked on the top of nations around the world in education outcomes in math, science and reading. 40 years ago Finland decided to make drastic changes to the way it educates its children. Today children do not start school until age 7, they rarely take tests and don't do homework until later in their teen years, and they have 75 minutes of recess a day. Dr. Pasi Sahlberg, author of a best-selling book about the Finnish experience called "Finnish Lessons", has said "the first six years of education are not about academic success. We don't measure children at all. It's about being ready to learn and finding your passion."

And they are finding success. They have the highest rate of college attendance in Europe, they have a higher high school graduation rate than the US, and they spend about 30% less per student than we do in the United States. Much of the success is also attributed to the role of teachers in Finland where only the top 10% are admitted to teacher training programs and they are harder to get into than medical or law schools. And as professionals are viewed similarly to doctors and lawyers.

Some naysayers say we can't apply the lessons from a country like Finland which is very different than our country. But interestingly when we look at Norway, which is similar to Finland, but follows a US style of education, it is not finding similar success to Finland but rather ranks near the US in math, reading and science. I am not saying we should be creating an exact replica of the Finnish system. What I am saying is that we need to think about focusing on the child and not on standardized tests and comparing child-to-child as they begin their educational journey. That as parents we need to be more involved in the development of educational policies in our own communities. Together we can work as partners with our schools to make them safe places to grow and explore and help our children become their best selves. I guess in the simplest terms, let's bring some Berrybrook with us when we move on.

Allyson Frazier, Berrybrook Board of Directors



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