



April 2013



April 15-19

Spring Vacation

Tuesday, April 23

School Pictures, 3 Day & 4 Day

Thursday, April 25

School Pictures, 2 Day & 5 Day

Wednesday, April 24

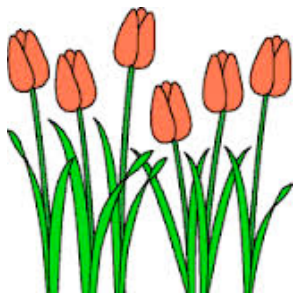
Parent Discussion Group 1:15 pm

Wednesday, April 24

Berrybrook Board of Directors 7:30 pm

Notes from the Headmaster

If you have visited your classroom Shutterfly site, you have been able to see up close the many varied activities that happen in Berrybrook classrooms every day. Teachers have always taken lots photographs at Berrybrook. I have been here long enough to recall our purchases of 35 millimeter film, and the envelopes we used to mail to processing centers to print our “Kodak moments.” In the old days, we would eliminate the photos of children we could not use because they were out of focus, and pass the remaining prints along to parents to include in the “Memory Books” they would assemble for their child at the end of the year. Over the last several years, we have moved to digital images that are easy to edit and share. The Shutterfly sites we use now were suggested by parents and they have been a great way for us to share cherished moments at Berrybrook. The sites have also resulted in a new and improved process for creating our Berrybrook Memory Books. Now, at the end of the year, teachers present a book to each child with projects and favorite classroom songs, poems and recipes, and then parents are encouraged to print photographs they would like to add to their child’s book. These books are also a good place to put artwork or projects you may have been saving at home. Families may take all the time they need to add photographs or other items to the book. The goal is to make each Memory Book a unique, meaningful, and cherished recollection of your child’s Berrybrook year.



We have many more memories to make in April and May. Please take the time to enjoy every last minute of this school year!

Pat Keeley

Pussy Willow

First Year Program News

Spring is hopefully on it's way and here to stay at Berrybrook! One springtime tradition is the tapping of a maple tree. Students will be able to see the bucket, try a drip or two, and have homemade maple syrup on a special classroom snack.

Classes have begun grocery store visits to Foodies, coinciding with our classroom grocery stores. It is amazing to see how much of their play comes from real life experiences!

Our first school picture day is on it's way, class pictures are always a nice conversation starter and a way to remember growing friendships.

As April comes to our classrooms we will focus on various thematic units between the classes, including: transportation, weather & wind, pond life, flowers, and planting. Spring is also a fun time to learn about weather changes, as it changes so dramatically from arrival to outdoor play and even daily. After vacation week students will be planting seeds and watching how they grow.

April conferences are always a wonderful time for the teachers and parents to take a moment together to reflect and enjoy the progress and development of our young learners.

Thank you for your continuous support in our classrooms, especially for the tricky task of blowing those Easter eggs!
Happy Spring!

First Year Teachers
Mrs. Barlow, Mrs. Capasso,
Mrs. Delano, Mrs. Dunn
Mrs. La Forest, and Mrs. Piccuito

I know a little pussy,
Her coat is silver gray.
She lives down in the meadow,
Not very far away.
Although she is a pussy,
She'll never be a cat.
For she's a pussy willow,
Now what do you think of that?
Meow, Meow, Meow,
Meow, Meow, Meow, Meow,

SCAT!

Second Year Program News

This month, the changes that Spring brings will be the focus of our activities. The children will learn about some of the early blooming bushes such as Pussy Willows and Forsythia. They will be watching carefully as they travel around town to see if they can spot these bushes as they miraculously change, and then they will be creating their own blooming renditions at school.

Outside our windows the bird feeders are being visited by a variety of birds. The children have been observing the birds flying between the trees and feeders and are enjoying watching all the activity. At circle time we have talked about the importance of keeping the feeders full.

Another sign of spring is the arrival of insects which we will be observing and learning some interesting facts about. Throughout the year we teach the children to respect all living things even small creatures. Our classrooms have bug catchers which we use frequently to save any insects that find their way inside.

The traditional tapping of the maple tree is included in our observations about nature. The tree will be tapped when the days are above freezing, and the nights are below freezing. We will be waiting for the right conditions to collect the sap and boil it down to syrup. (Approximately 40 gallons of sap are needed to make 1 gallon of maple syrup!). "Sugar On Snow", written in 1964 by Nancy Dingman Watson is the inspiration for our sugar on snow party. The "sugar" will be maple syrup, the "snow" will be vanilla ice cream, and donuts and sour pickles will also be served at our authentic Sugar on Snow party!

Parent conferences have started and will continue over the next few weeks. Please make arrangements for your conference with your child's teachers.

The Second Year Teachers,
Mrs. Caddle, Mrs. Fosdick,, Mrs. O'Neil,
Mrs. Neal, Mrs. Rosen, Mrs Swan,
Mrs. Piccuito and Mrs. Worley

Parent Discussion Group

The topic for the March Parents Discussion Group was "Transitions". Several first and second year parents and additional Berrybrook staff members held a lively discussion one afternoon on what transitions mean to adults (change, adapting, preparing, concern, unknown, learning) and for children (unknown, loss, long way off, fear, excitement, loss of confidence, nervous, growing up).

We addressed how important it is to prepare for transitions

- realizing each child handles transitions in their own way, some prefer to know all the details for others less is more
- creating a calendar as a visual works well for some children
- validating children's feelings

Transitions may be a challenge for parents also. Discussions with your spouse or other family members can be helpful. Remember children are very aware of parent's emotions. Best to remain calm thus keep the lines of communication open when talking with your child. If your child comes to you with an unsettling concern you could respond with "Thank you for telling me, how do you think we can handle this situation?"

Several parents attending the PDG have children who have transitioned from Berrybrook to Kindergarten. They found attending any activities offered by the Kindergarten over the summer and playmates with classmates helped their children become more comfortable with their new school.

Most children ride a school bus to Kindergarten. Peer pressure can be a challenge here. It is helpful to role-play with your child about how best to handle situations that may arise. Children will have a chance to use the conflict resolution skills they have learned at Berrybrook.

The final PDG for this school year will be **Wednesday, April 24, at 1:15 pm**. We plan to meet outside in the "Courtyard Café". Children are welcome to play in the Courtyard if other childcare arrangements are unavailable for you. The topic is -



*"A Penny
for Your Thoughts".*

What is on your mind? Moving on from Berrybrook? How to continue the magic of Berrybrook? Let's talk!

Mrs. Delano, Mrs. Dunn and Mrs. LaForest

Berrybrook Parents' Association

Spring is here! Hopefully we will all have more time on the playground as the days heat up. I know I plan on packing lunches more often for the playground. I hope you will join us some days after pick-up or before drop-off!

Patriot's Day in Action!

As we prepare to celebrate Patriot's Day, the BPA would like to help facilitate some patriotism in action! Thanks to the Szczesny Family for connecting us with the Adopt-A-Soldier program, a grassroots effort to allow citizens to connect directly with one of our soldiers. As a community we will be collecting items to send to the Szczesny's "adopted" soldier who will distribute the items to his platoon. Sgt. John Tackett has been in the Army for almost 10 years and currently is an Apache Helicopter Maintainer in Afghanistan, following 5 ½ years as an Infantryman. He now works on the helicopters and supervisors others as they work on the aircraft.

Since we understand every family introduces soldiers and these issues in different ways, we have a few different ways to help out so all can participate in a comfortable way!

1. We are collecting items for the soldiers themselves. Items we are collecting include: beef jerky, Mio water flavoring drops, high protein granola bars and ramen noodles.

2. It would also be wonderful if the children could make some patriotic cards, pictures or thanks for your service messages.

3. One of the soldiers is also collecting school supplies for the Afghani children. Items we are hoping to collect for the children include pencils, crayons and paper.

All donations can be left at the BPA table in boxes labels "Adopt-A-Soldier." Thanks in advance for your help!

Enrichment

April means a visit from Soule Homestead for children. Soule Homestead is a 501(c)(3) Educational non-profit organization which focuses on teaching children about farm life and farm animals, whose past visits have included chickens, rabbits and spinning wool. They will be visiting on April 3rd and 4th. Be sure to ask your child about the visit and check out the sure-to-be-cool take homes!

Family Fun Friday!

Thanks to all who attended BeeWise in March! Who knew how fascinating bees could be! We hope you saved-the-date for the April 26th family visit to Soule Homestead. Join us as we continue the learning of Soule Homestead by visiting the farm and meeting some of the animals. Sign-up sheet will be available at the BPA table. The BPA will be subsidizing the event and keeping the cost to \$5 per family. Please sign up by April 22nd.

Spring Fling!

Please save-the-date for the Spring Fling on May 15th from 4-6 p.m. with a rain-date of May 22nd! The Spring Fling is an annual event that helps us celebrate the year as a community. Join us for dinner and fun! As always please let us know if you have questions, comments, or concerns at berrybrookparentsassociation@gmail.com or 617-458-1621. **And it's not too late to support the work of the BPA with dues. We ask each family to donate \$30 or whatever is appropriate for your family.**

Thanks! Allyson

Kindergarten Already??!!

Recently, I asked local kindergarten teachers for three or four skills they would like children to have before entering kindergarten. Their response was, “letter recognition; rote counting to 10; write first name; proper pencil & scissor grip; and independence with belongings (ex. put coat on, zipper; pack & unpack backpack).” These are skills that Berrybrook children work on daily in school and I know parents also work on them at home. Beyond those skills, Berrybrook teachers are working on skills that will prepare children for life. We know that children who are self-sufficient and self-confident will possess the true ingredients of a well-prepared mind. I would like to reassure all parents that their children will do well beyond Berrybrook. They will do well because they have attended a developmentally appropriate preschool, and they will do well because they have caring parents who work hard at the toughest job there is - raising children.

The following is an interesting article about getting ready for Kindergarten and what parents and teachers can do to help children prepare for their next big step.

Mrs. Keeley

NewsObserver.com

Parent to Parent

Preparing for kindergarten: Beyond the ABCs

Published: May 28, 2012 By Betsy Flagler

Sure, it's fun to boast when your little one knows all his letters and can count to 30 before hitting kindergarten. But look beyond academics. Early learners also need to work on several social and emotional skills to make it through school – and life. Preschoolers need to use playing and pretending to gain confidence, develop friendships, show empathy and take baby steps toward resolving conflicts without adults acting as referees.

Foster these social and emotional areas to help prepare your child for kindergarten in the fall:

- Entering a group. Kids must learn how and when to join a group of kids without bulldozing in, knocking down block towers in progress or insisting on “being the mommy.” Help them learn how to briefly observe what friends are doing before joining in.
- Impulse control. Following the rules of simple games such as “Simon Says,” “Duck, Duck, Goose” and “Red Light, Green Light” help a preschooler focus, take turns and control basic impulses to run ahead or jump when “Simon doesn't say.”
- Self-awareness. This includes learning how close is too close to another person, and asserting oneself with phrases like “I need some space” rather than whining. It also means seeing oneself as part of a larger group, and accepting being the “odd man out” once in a while. Or, as one 4-year-old remarked during an activity limited to four children: “You're the person making it too many people here.”
- Expressing feelings through words. Help them express themselves with phrases like “I feel angry when my sand castle gets knocked over. I worked so hard to build it,” or “I feel sad and shy when Mommy leaves.” Along with naming feelings comes the all-important developmental step of learning to care about the feelings of others – that words like “poopy head” or “you're a baby” or “your lunch smells gross” are hurtful. Listening to a friend's show-and-tell, sharing your favorite stuffed dragon or helping to pick up a mess go a long way toward learning empathy and building friendships.

- Problem-solving. Confident kids resolve conflicts – such as two Thomas the Tank Engine toys for three kids – without always enlisting the help of a teacher. They're able to ebb and flow and not melt down when a game doesn't go their way. And they're learning to look within themselves, not to teachers, for self-satisfaction about their ability to climb the monkey bars, hop on one foot, catch a ball or draw a funny face.

Teachers have found that these things also prime kids for a more successful kindergarten experience:

- Confidence in self-help skills. These include washing their hands, taking care of their own bathroom needs, putting on their clothes, drinking out of a cup without spilling or opening their own lunches. Another biggie: Learning to keep their fingers out of their noses at circle time.
- Some tolerance for messes and other unexpected things. Inevitably, there will be mulch in their shoes, paint on their fingers, cookies that get broken or foods that touch each other. If your child melts down at sandwiches cut into the wrong shapes or can't cope with messy clothes in art class, he may have more trouble adjusting to grade school. An oversensitivity to touch and noise will make it tougher to navigate the new school cafeteria, for example, with lots of accidental knocks and bumps.
- Proficiency at helpful, everyday tasks. These include sweeping, stirring, washing tables and sorting toys.
- The knowledge that "Stop!" means whatever you're doing to your classmates, they don't like it and want you to quit.
- The ability to stand, and walk, in some semblance of a line without bonking into other kids or touching everything along the journey. And the knowledge that not being the line leader isn't the end of the world.
- Recognition of what's socially acceptable and what isn't. The bottom-line rule, as one 3-year-old told a baby doll: "You can't go with us because you're naked."

Betsy Flagler, a journalist based in Davidson, is a mother and preschool teacher. Email p2ptips@att.net

All-Sports Tag Sale to Benefit Crossroads For Kids

Spring cleaning out any old sporting gear? Please consider donating to the All-Sports Tag Sale. The sale is for ANY and ALL types of sports equipment and gently-used clothing with all proceeds going to Crossroads for Kids, a camp for at-risk youth located in West Duxbury.

Please start checking your closets now for used equipment that you would like to donate and call Selden Tearse at 781-864-9599 with any questions. Drop-off is at the Duxbury Senior Center parking lot on Thursday, April 4th from 9 am – noon & Friday, April 5th from 9 am – noon and 6 – 7 pm. Then join us on Saturday, April 6 from 8 -11 am at the Senior Center to get some great equipment at fantastic prices and help send a deserving kid to camp.

Berrybrook Book Review

Elaine Piccuito

I read this month's book, *Parenting with Love and Logic*. I have to admit I was intrigued by the title – as a parent of an 8 and 10 year old, that is what I try to do on a daily basis!

The book is written by Dr. Foster Cline, a psychiatrist, and Jim Fay, an educational consultant. This updated and expanded edition has excerpts from parents who have used their techniques based on their first, original edition of the book. The book is divided into two parts. The first half is devoted to explaining their concepts on parenting in general. “Effective parenting centers around love: love that is not permissive, love that doesn't tolerate disrespect, but also a love that is powerful enough to allow kids to make mistakes and permit them to live with the consequences of those mistakes.”

The second half of the book dives into situations that could occur in any family, relating to young children through the teenage years. They have picked 48 of the most common and relevant disciplinary problems that face parents of today. They deal with issues that run the gamut from bedtime, eating and manners, tantrums, and pacifiers to the internet and peer pressure.

The main ideas in this philosophy being portrayed involve a parenting style that is based on being a “consultant” parent. When a child is faced with a situation, the authors stress “instead of telling their children what to do, they (should) put the burden of decision making on their kids' shoulders”. They recommend starting this method from an early age, so that the time the children are teenagers they are used to making good decisions.

I, personally, found some of the comments and scenarios a little harsh. The hard line of tough love throughout this book seemed....a little too “tough” at times. I understand the logic and the eventual outcome that they are striving for, however, I would try to go through the situations with a more gentle approach. Of course, I have not yet reached the teenager stage in my house! At this point, a quick two way conversation will usually do the trick. There are many sentiments within the book that I agree with, and I implement them both at home and at Berrybrook:

MODELING- children learn so much by watching the adults in their world.

CHOICES- instead of making a power struggle between parent and child, give them a choice of two reasonable options – let them have power of making their own outcomes.

EMPATHY- let the child know you understand how they feel – give them words to help express themselves.

(Mrs. Piccuito teaches in our 3 Day-Room 1 and 4 Day-Room 2 Classes.)

Berrybrook Board of Directors

John Verity

One task of Berrybrook Board members, is to contribute to the monthly Newsletter. I volunteered for this month, and as a father of 2 young children, (Ella, a Berrybrook alum and Daelan, who is in the 3 Day Room 3 Class) I thought I would share some great ideas on how to get your kids to eat healthy foods from one especially helpful article I found on <http://www.goodlifeeats.com> is called *Five Ways to Make Food more Fun* - written by Katie Goodman. Enjoy!

Focus on Color-

Not only are bright, colorful foods naturally more appealing to children, but they are also better for them. Eating a rainbow everyday will help your child get the wide variety of nutrients that he/she needs to grow strong and healthy. And it is fun! Produce and veggies...

Maximize Their interests-

What is your child's latest top interest. Incorporate it into their food. For instance, geography is an easy subject to build a menu around. They will be more interested in what is on the plate. Shapes, many folks cut cheese, lunch meats, veggies, breads, pancakes into circles, triangles, stars. It makes it fun, use cookie cutters or mandolin's to help prepare

Use Fun Names-

It may seem crazy but calling food by crazy names can instantly change the attitude about a new food for someone under the age of 8. Teach them the proper names of fruits and vegetables but have fun calling food by silly fun names. Make a game of it!

Serve it differently-

A change in presentation can make all the difference, and doesn't take that much time. Try fruit kabobs, also add healthy dips whenever possible as kids love to dip. Veggie kabobs are also excellent for color and fun shapes etc, also serve items in mini size, English muffin pizzas, bite size sandwiches and of course mini muffins. Fruit can get a little boring so have them help you make smoothies. You can even make your own ice cubes, and frozen Popsicles!

Involve them in the food selection and prep-

We all know that many folks do not like taking the young ones into busy food stores, however if handled correctly it can be fun, safe and really educational to have them help pick things they like. Colors, shapes, displays, smells are all good enticements to help our small ones grow up liking a variety of foods and cooking methods. The store experience can lend itself to assisting in the entire meal deal. Let them pick two things each they would like to try. Use produce to practice colors, and with older children you can talk about the benefits of eating carrots and how they help your eyes etc. Appeal to their developing reasoning skills. Most kids love to work in the kitchen and with proper management everyone can learn, participate and have fun. Of course there are obvious limits to the involvement but again it is fun, they are learning and the announcement can be at dinner, prepared by Chef??