

November 2020

November 11

November 25, 26, 27

Veterans Day - no school

Thanksgiving Break - no school



Notes from the Head of School

“Let’s be proactive, not reactive” is something I say quite frequently at home. For example, this weekend two of our three children and our dog were headed in three different directions, all for 9am commitments (shout out to my mom, our family’s Super Nana who is right where we need her at the right time, during the week and weekends!). My daughter didn’t have water for her soccer game in her bag and I knew that we were all running late; although it only takes seconds to go back to the pantry to get said water while Mr. Watts secured her cleats, I sighed and yelled to anyone who was listening (is anyone really listening to my early morning rants?) “Proactive, not reactive ~ it’s my newsletter topic this month!!”

Why is it important to be proactive? First it shows significance to others; you are important enough to me to think ahead that you’ll need water, and maybe even a second bottle since I looked at the weather forecast and it’s going to be unseasonably warm for your game. And second, it could set the tone of frantic when you’re all rushing out the door at the same time and EVERYone needs SOMEthing. I know for me personally, that feeling can sometimes be hard to shake for the rest of the day.

A proactive approach is one that focuses on stopping problems before they have a chance to start, rather than the reactive approach that is responding to events once they have happened. That’s why, most nights I try to have my children find their mid-morning snacks and pack them into their lunchboxes, and to have an idea what they are thinking about for lunch rather than adding to the already chaotic daily morning routine. I’ve mentioned to the kids that they might want to lay out their breakfast too, the night before, but they weren’t on board with that one - oh well! I’m not saying that every morning is bliss at the Watts house or

that it's a well-oiled machine as there is always some cog in the process (today's crisis text was from my oldest, who wanted to know where I put his school ID. I refrained from the "I don't know, I don't use it" as it bordered on one of those phrases from your childhood that you swore you wouldn't use when YOU became a parent). I just know that if we didn't proactively think ahead, blips like the elusive ID have the potential to completely derail everything each and every day. At Berrybrook, teachers are constantly using a proactive approach. We think ahead to situations that could potentially arise, forecast what difficulty might present, and problem-solve. Many times on tours (remember those, when we could have people in the building? I miss the good ol' days!) prospective families would ask how we deal with discipline issues. Or they will comment that while on the tour, in none of the three classrooms did they see children disagreeing with each other such as fighting over a toy. We assure them that yes, those situations do occur but at Berrybrook the teachers do their best to head off any situations before they happen - that we are proactive so we aren't forced into a reactive situation. That's not to say that we are "Lawnmower Educators". You've probably heard the term Lawnmower Parent, defined as a parent who will intervene, remove, or 'mow down' any difficulties that their children might have to deal with. Instead at Berrybrook, we think ahead to how we will deal with those situations before they occur. We know children will squabble here and there, but we've proactively given them the tools to help settle disagreements with their peers. We empower the children by giving them the words not only during the heat of the moment, but all the time so that they can have helpful phrases at their disposal when it counts.

Which brings me back to the Watts Family routine . . . sure, it could be a lot easier for me if I just packed their snacks and lunches in the morning myself, but what am I teaching them? I'm not always going to be there choosing between animal crackers and Pirate's Booty for them, and it's important to give them the power to choose an appropriate snack. I'm trusting that they will make the best choices now about snacks, to empower them to make the best choices later in life when it really matters. Being proactive now with the snacks might help reduce potential, explosive reactive situations later in those glorious teen years! 🙌

~ Mrs. Watts

Teacher's Notes

What are YOU thankful for?

November brings many new lessons and projects for us to teach the children. From scarecrows to harvest corn to picking what fruit goes in their cornucopia or what color feathers to add to their turkey. These are big decisions! Project time is a way for the children to express themselves and a way for us to see how they perceive the things that they observe.

Last November, one day we worked with the 3 Day children to make fall wreaths as a project. They started with a paper plate with the middle cut out to form a wreath. The children painted the plate with glue and added pretty multi-colored leaves all around their wreath. Then we attached a ribbon so they could hang their wreath up at home during Thanksgiving break. When they were all done with their decorated wreaths, I asked them a simple, but meaningful question. "What are YOU thankful for?" I enjoyed all the answers that were given by each child as I wrote them down. Some were quick to answer, and some would really think long and hard about the question I had asked. This part of the project was my favorite! "My brother & sister", "my mermaid", "Mommy & Daddy", "my cousin", "my family", "turkey and mustard"...and there were many more. All different and all just as important. I wrote down each and every one on yellow construction paper and we attached it to the middle of their wreath. The children enjoyed sharing these with their families at pick up time.

I am looking forward to this upcoming project and hearing what the children will be thankful for this year. My hope is that during their Thanksgiving break, they can look at their hanging wreath and be proud and reminded of what THEY are thankful for.

There is always something to be thankful for. What are YOU thankful for this year?

~ Mrs. Knight

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

From The Board of Directors

It's strange that as I write this, I'm honestly not sure what the world will look like on the not too distant day that you're reading it. There is so much uncertainty in our lives right now – as I sit here at my desk, we're on the brink of a polarizing presidential election during a pandemic. We have no idea what each new day of this crazy year will bring. We've all seen the 2020 bingo/betting pool memes – “Okay who had murder hornets!?”

Don't worry - I'm not here to get political. I'm here to marvel at us as we wade through this seemingly never-ending uncertainty. Yes, you and I! I'm marveling at us as parents, and as humans currently living on the planet Earth. And I'm marveling at our kiddos too.

On any given day since last March my brain, as a parent and citizen of Earth, has been filled with questions that take up a lot of bandwidth – Is it safe to play with friends? Is it safe to go out to eat? Do we need to stock up on more hand soap/toilet paper/Clorox? Did the case numbers tick up? Is a vaccine coming? Will it work, and safely? Will school change again just as we're getting used to this routine? Are my kids learning? Are my kids happy? Am I happy? Are we okay? Are we doing this right? Is there a right way to do this?

And on any given day, since last March, the answers to those questions are different. So different, that it takes up so much space in my brain I can't even imagine what it will feel like to NOT have to ask and answer them each day.

In all the uncertainty and chaos, I find myself looking for a constant. Something I can rely on, that won't change - a light in the shifting fog that keeps shining. For me, that's my kiddos. What resilient little people we are raising. I always know that no matter how hard and uncertain things get, these two and their joy, curiosity and amazing ability to keep moving forward no matter what will bring light to my day. With everything we've faced this year it almost sounds crazy to say it, but – I'm actually going to miss all the extra time I've had to watch them learn and grow so closely, when this is all over and we all blissfully bound back to our old, busy routines.

We're going to have hard days. Sad days. Mad days. Days where the universe seems out to get us. They're going to keep coming, and things will probably be uncertain for a while. But we're going to get up each day and show up for our kiddos, and what's magical, and took me a while to realize, is they're going to do that for us too! Our little lights in the fog.

Beth Marois
Berrybrook Board of Directors



Colder weather is on its way.....

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 WITH
YOUR CHILD'S NAME.**



Snow Days/School Cancellation



It is our policy to cancel classes whenever Duxbury Public Schools are closed due to weather emergencies. Families should watch Channel 7, WHDH for a school cancellation at Berrybrook. Every attempt at notification will be made through email messages, text messages, phone calls via OneCallNow and/or social media.

In the event Duxbury Public Schools require a one hour delay, Berrybrook will have the usual 9 am arrival time.

In the event Duxbury Public Schools require a two hour delay, the AM session will be cancelled.

A Season of Giving

Kingston Animal Shelter Donations

The month of November, as everyone knows, is traditionally the start of the holiday season. Here at Berrybrook, it is the time of year that teachers share yet another meaningful tradition with the introduction of a Berrybrook Community Service Project that was started 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 in each class with cut-out pictures of dogs, cats, and other animals. These boxes will be placed on the porch near the front door to collect items brought to school. There will also be “Pennies For The Pound” jars in the classrooms for the children to add their coins brought from home. 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 children to develop empathy and practice kindness. Taking care of pets and other animals is a meaningful way for children to develop these traits. Any and all donations will be appreciated by the animals and the shelter. Thank you for your help!

Some of the items needed are:

Dry cat and dog food (grain free)

Baby food (ground turkey/chicken)

Cat litter

Paper towels

Tall kitchen trash bags

HE laundry detergent

Ziplock bags (quart and gallon size)

Canned Pure Pumpkin

Flea & tick medicine

Small area rugs

Dog treats

Bleach

6 ft. leashes

Kitten Milk Replacement

