

Dear families,

The beginning of the school year seems long gone.  Your children have adjusted to the ways of the preschool classroom and are feeling quite at home with their friends and teachers at school.  This past month was filled with activity as we made the most of the rainy days of October that set in.

In the classroom we changed the dramatic play area into an animal den complete with a stuffy for each child’s animal, they are enjoying gathering food for the winter and storing it in cozy spots amongst the pillow and blankets in the den.  We have added 'window washing' to our work choices and recently a beautiful doll house was donated to our class. The children have been enjoying these new 'work choices'. At meeting we have been talking about how our minds and bodies feel at different points of the day and how different people’s bodies need different things.  Some people have more energy in their bodies and need ways to get that energy out. We introduced the trampoline in our classroom as a way of expending some of this extra energy while in the classroom. There is a 3-minute timer that sits next to the trampoline, which helps children know when their time is up. As a part of the same conversation we made lying on your belly a choice during story time if this feels good for your body.  As a class we learned a new 'movement song' at meeting which incorporates yoga with music. The children practice child’s pose, downward dog, and tree pose in this song. After we do a movement song where we move our bodies quickly, we do a transitional activity to help us have calm bodies again like rubbing our hands and putting them over our eyes, deep breathing or sitting on our hands. As a part of our curriculum on understanding ourselves and our bodies and giving our bodies what they need in appropriate ways, we have conversations about how to relax ourselves after a stimulating activity.  You can practice these techniques with your children at home to help them learn how to self regulate. Children who are able to self regulate are better able to listen and learn, starting now and continuing through the grades.

We have also been practicing rhyming at our meeting.  Rhyming is an important pre- literacy skill that can be practiced in a fun way by reading rhyming books and playing rhyming games.  We have read There was an Old Lady Who Swallowed A Fly, Bear Snores On, as well as a Halloween counting rhyme book.  At lunch children have been interested in telling jokes, so I challenged them to tell a joke that rhymes.  You can play this game with your child at home to continue practicing the skill of rhyming. To practice our counting, the job day friend now has to tell us the “magic number” for the day by counting how many children are in class on that day.

In the woods I told the story of Big Pumpkin which the children later acted out in Loose Parts Play.  We have been loving the season of mud! Children have been painting with brushed and rollers of all sizes decorating our entire woods area with mud!  We have learned a new game called “FIRE” where the children roll a large die and then match the number rolled to quantity by while practicing their letter identification and counting skills.  In the field we learned a new game called ‘Mouse House'. In this game the children have to move quickly in and out of their friends' arched arms while trying to make it into the ‘house’ by the end of the song.

Hiking to “Woodpecker Pass’ has opened up the doors to a new imaginary world of imaginative play.  The children love climbing up and around the large boulders and sliding down large rocks. As a part of our hiking adventure children drew maps when we returned.  Mapping is an activity that works on a variety of skills including representation, sequencing and memory.

One special day I brought my son River to school.  As preparation for this day we read books about babies and what they need and created a ‘baby washing work’ where they could give our baby dolls a bath.  We talked about the things babies like and don’t like ad how they need lots of love and to be handled with such care. These experiences prepared the children for River’s visit, they welcomed him with smiles, and everyone wanted to play with him.  River enjoyed the busyness of the classroom and loved being around all the ‘big kids’. The children showed empathy for River by staying so very quiet during our story and lunchtime so that River could continue his nap in the carrier. It was a good opportunity for the children to practice thinking of others and having empathy for a baby.

On our field trip to Little Wood Farm we ate so many fresh vegetables and some fruit, that the children were able to harvest themselves.  We saw chickens and turkeys and went pumpkin hunting in the cornfield. We hope you enjoyed the pumpkins the children got to take home. As part of the Halloween fun we played a game called “Who's under the mask”.  Children have to close their eyes while one child from the group is chosen to come put the lion mask on. So far friends have been able to guess whom the child under the mask is by their voice and the clothes they are wearing!

Teachers were observing a conversation amongst the children about hair length and gender.  We listened closely as children talked about how “boys have short hair and girls have long hair.”  We opened up this discussion and spoke about it as a class using Alexander as an example of how boys can choose to have long hair and Ms. Rebecca as an example of how girls can choose to have short hair.  To expand on this lesson we recruited Mr. Popoli to gather some ‘big kid’ volunteers to come down to our classroom as examples of different hairstyles. We had 9 students of all different ages come down to the class to share with us what gender they identify as, what type of hair they have and why they chose that style of hair.  The answers ranged from choosing a particular hairstyle for easy, to the length or style of their hair being a part of their identity. The children seemed to have a greater understanding of our similarities, differences and choices by the end of the conversation.

Warmly,

Elaina, Rebecca, Dianne and Becca

News and Announcements

* Thanksgiving break W-F 21-23
* December break M-Tues 24-Jan 1
* We will be sending out an invitation to our ‘Thankful Potluck”, please keep an eye out!