

Dear families,

This past month has been a very yummy one for the preschoolers! We have learned quite a bit about what it means to be a pizza chef. We began our unit while learning how to be safe around a fire during our fire unit. We were able to take this knowledge that we have about safe bodies and listening ears around a fire to the school cafeteria. Here we took a tour of the kitchen while keeping our bodies safe around the stove and oven. The children enjoyed seeing all the oversized appliances such as the industrial mixer, stove and fridge that the whole class was able to fit inside! We talked a lot about how our kitchens at home have much smaller appliances then the schools, which feeds many, many children each day. They also got to hold the oversized cans of food that the kitchen staff uses to prepare their meals, such as beans, corn and tomato sauce.

Once our tour of the school kitchen was complete we were able to embark on our first pizza making quest, English muffin pizzas! We read the book Pizza at Sally’s, which talks about the ingredients needed to make a pizza and off we went. Each child had to listen to directions, and follow a sequence before beginning their english muffin pizza (you can’t put the cheese on before the sauce!) This was a good opportunity to practice these important skills.

We also read other books about pizza including Hi, Pizza Man by Virginia Walter, The Little Red Hen by Margot Zemach, and Pete’s a Pizza by William Steig. We discussed the lesson in the story of The Little Red Hen and asked deeper level thinking questions about the text, “Do you think the Hen was mean for not sharing her bread with the others”, or “ Do you think she was being fair?” These are the types of questions you can begin to talk about and think about with your children now to promote higher-level thinking. We took a vote on this question and it was almost split down the middle, I found this very interesting.

The children thoroughly enjoyed acting out the story of “Pete’s a Pizza” by joining one other friend and taking turns being the pizza or pizza maker. The child being the pizza got to go inside a large brown paper bag while the ‘pizza maker’ added all the toppings while following the steps and sequence of the story, it was indeed great fun! At the art table children cut, colored and identified their shapes while putting their shape pizzas together.

After we learned about all the ingredients needed to make a pizza, we talked about where each ingredient comes from. Dough comes from wheat, which is a plant that grows in the ground, just like they talk about in the story of The Little Red Hen. Tomatoes sauce comes from tomatoes which grown from a plant, cheese comes from milk and milk comes from cows. At this point we were ready to knead, pound and spread dough to make our individual pizzas and cook them on the wood-burning oven outside. Once our mini pizzas were made we walked them all the way to the other side of the building where we watched Joe put them into the oven. The children observed how the dough began to change, turning bubbly and golden. Once back in the classroom we were able to enjoy our delicious cooking! All the while in the classroom were busy practicing our careful finger and wrist movements while sewing our aprons together which we hope the children will find useful while helping to cook at home!

Before heading off to Positive Pie to sum up our pizza unit, we watched a short clip on YouTube of how professional pizza makers spin the dough and add the toppings to their pizza. When the big day arrived the children were very excited. Once at Positive Pie the children were put in groups of four to watch Kevin ‘the pizza man’ stretch and spin the dough. When this was complete the children were able to add the toppings they desired, while trying the ingredients of course! Their little faces watched with awe as they saw their big pizzas slide into the large oven. While waiting for their pizzas to cook they were given small balls of dough to manipulate and play with, which they very much enjoyed.

We hope this gives you a clear understanding of the learned that takes place while the children are immersed in a topic that they are truly interested in!

**Important Dates and Announcements**

* There is no Preschool Friday, May 5th due to busing challenges. Please see the note send home from Principal Mooney to learn more about this.
* We are hoping to take a field trip in the month of May to the Humane Society as part of our pet unit. Please keep your eyes out for this permission slip; it is imperative they are returned to us by the requested date.
* For the children moving onto Kindergarten next year the screening dates are on Thursday the 4th and Friday the 5th of May.
* The last Day of Preschool is Wednesday, June 14th. You will be getting an invitation closer to the date for our end of the year celebration.

Warmly,

Elaina and Emily