



Preschool Newsletter
Preschool Webpage

November 16, 2006

A Day of Discoveries

Thursday's walk to the climbing tree was picture perfect. The children had much to explore, and in spite of some scrapes, bumps, and slightly muddy conditions, they delighted in the changes that had occurred since their last visit.

The first dramatic change was the appearance of the large Osage oranges that coated the area. The sticky fruit made a wonderful addition to the sandbox, rolled noisily down the metal sliding board, and were great for making pyramids. Some children were simply happy to carry the enormous orbs in their arms.

Another change was the increased visibility caused by the leaf drop. Playing hide-and-seek was a bit more challenging without the thick cover of leaves.

Two more children discovered that persistence pays off. With just minimal coaching from another child at the top, they independently reached the peak of the climbing stone. The view is great from up there!

The teachers discovered children entering the next level of play. Many children discovered new playmates for their imaginative play.

While we were there, a group of middle-school children passed through as they took the Haverford College Arboretum "Tree Tour" with their teacher. One parent chaperone with the group called her son aside. As he towered over her, the mother asked the son if he remembered coming to the tree with her when he was a young child. It was fun to see the flash of recognition on his smiling face. We trust that your children will have wonderful memories of this magical space and time in their lives.

(Several former preschool parents have been in touch over the years to report that their high school seniors chose to have their informal senior portrait taken at the climbing tree. Neat!)

Important Dates

November 22
Wednesday
Grandfriends Day
Thanksgiving Holiday Begins

November 27
Monday
School Resumes

December 1
Friday
First Friday @ FSH
8:30am

December 5 & 6
Tues. & Wed.
Holiday Gift Sale (PTO)

December 15
Friday
All-School Coffee
10:00am
&
Holiday Meeting for Worship
11:00am
Winter Holiday Begins
after Meeting for Worship

January 2
Tuesday
School Resumes

January 5
Friday
First Friday @ FSH
8:30 a.m.

January 6
Saturday
OWLS Gathering

January 9
Tuesday
PTO Meeting
7:00 p.m.

January 12
Friday In-Service Day
PUPIL HOLIDAY

January 15
Monday
Martin Luther King Day
SCHOOL HOLIDAY

January 16
Tuesday
Parent/Teacher Conferences
Preschool & Prekindergarten
PS/PK PUPIL HOLIDAY



Memory Cards

On Monday the “Memory Cards” were pulled out and placed face-up on the table. Children worked together to pick matching pairs (visual discrimination). The activity was *not timed*, there were *no winners or losers*, and there was *no sense of failure* by turning over the “wrong” cards. The object was to work together to clear the table of cards. The children were observed happily playing this matching game again and again.

Touchy-feely is the best way to describe Monday’s circle time activity. Tr. Jennifer placed three items in a cloth bag and instructed each child to keep eyes closed. Each child was instructed to select one of the items: a small pumpkin, a banana, or a very dehydrated apple half. Using only tactile cues they found that they could see with their hands.



Rutabagas were on the snack menu this week. Rutabaga is the waxy yellow and purple root vegetable that you usually see on the periphery of the produce department and rarely on the conveyer belt of the check-out counter.

Once they are peeled, the rutabaga's dense flesh can be cut into large cubes for boiling and mashing or cut into sticks and snacked on in their raw state. Preschoolers tried it in both forms.

To prepare mashed rutabaga, peel and cut into cubes. Boil in water to which some salt has been added. When tender, strain and mash with some butter and cream (optional). They have a nutty taste that is a great complement to a Thanksgiving dinner.

Q. Why do Tina and Jen serve such unusual foods to the kids?

A. The following is an excerpt from *Encouraging Preschoolers to Try New Foods*, Laura Bellows and Jennifer Anderson, *Young Children*, May 2006

"Children establish food preferences and dietary habits during the first six years of life (Birch 1998). It is essential to introduce a variety of foods to children at an early age. Preschool-age children go through a normal developmental phase called neophobia, or fear of new things—in this case, new foods. Many adults refer to this stage as "picky eating." But consistently offering a variety of foods to preschoolers helps the majority of children overcome the natural tendency to reject new foods and leads to more healthful eating habits (Birch 1979).

"Children's eating behaviors, food preferences, and willingness to try new foods are influenced by the people around them. Parents and other caregivers influence children's eating practices in several ways. They control availability and accessibility of foods, determine how and when meals are served, model eating behaviors, and establish good manners and etiquette around food (Ray & Klesges 1993; Nicklas et al. 2001)."

Mold Project

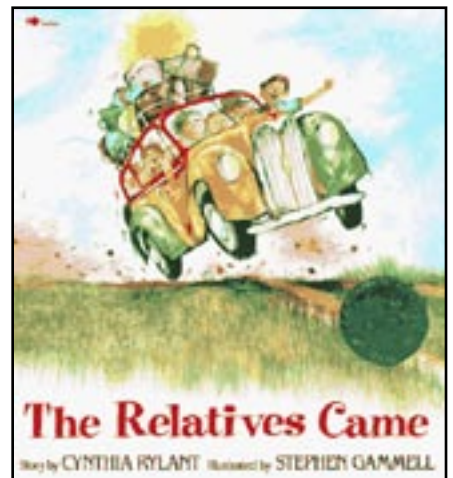
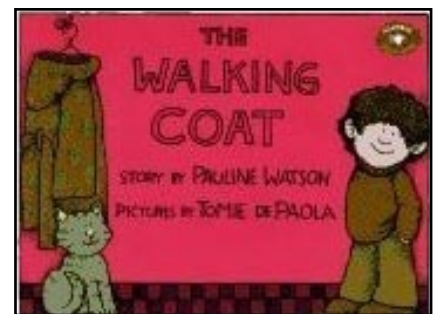
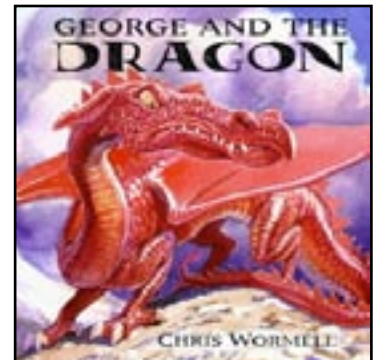
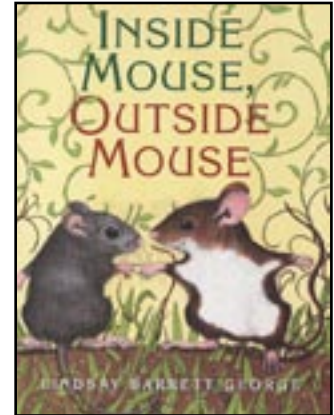
Old Jack has been putting on quite a show! If you look very closely, you can see a tuft of long hair-like mold sprouting from his cap over the eye on the left. Looks like he has "bed head". The smell isn't as bad as you'd think, and our classroom animals now include a bevy of fruit flies that stay pretty close to home base. We will relocate Jack to the grass behind the classroom door by the end of the week.



Books we have read recently include:

Inside Mouse, Outside Mouse,
Lindsay George
George and the Dragon, Chris
Wormell

The Walking Coat, Pauline Watson
The Relatives Came, Cynthia Rylant



The Preschool Service Project is well underway with mounds of bags lining the perimeter of the classroom. The last step will be for the children to sort and bag the mounds of items that have been donated by FSH families.

Next Tuesday, Miss Antoinette from the Community Action Agency of Delaware County will arrive with the agency van. After the children load the bags in the van, she will take the winter items back to the agency to be distributed to the young residents of their shelters.

We are grateful to all of the families who donated winter outerwear for this cause. We are grateful also to Antoinette and all the people at CAADC who provide necessary and valuable services to the people in our community throughout the year.

The preschool children at FSH have been sponsoring this annual event since 1987. You can get more information about the CAADC and see a picture of this year's Third Grade students as preschoolers on the CAADC website -- <http://www.caadc.org/info.html>



Grandfriends Day is right around the corner. For the comfort of our visitors and the safety of everyone, the teachers need the following information:

- 1) Will your child be at school Wednesday, November 22?
- 2) Will your child be hosting a guest? If not, there will be many laps to go around!
- 3) If so, how many guests will be attending?
- 4) Are there any special needs of which we should be aware?
- 5) Preschool dismissal will be from the **Meeting House porch**. Will you be picking up your child (and guests)? Will your child be leaving directly from MFW with a grandfriend?

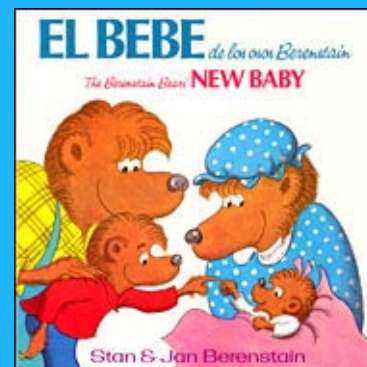
Parents: If you have not already done so, please respond to these questions before Grandfriends Day.

Spanish Corner:

*El Bebé de los Osos Berenstain, Stan and Jan Berenstain
(The Berenstain Bears' New Baby)*

New and Reviewed Vocabulary:

*Bebé/ baby
Mamá/mommy
Papá/daddy
El hermano/brother
La Hermana/sister*



MUSINGS

During the recent parent/teacher conferences, some parents wondered what they can do to support their child's budding interest in the process of reading and enjoying books together.

The following is food for thought from Jen Wagner.

(Next week's musing is an article on the topic of "Nature Deficit Disorder", recommended by Ainsley's mom, Tracy.)

My child is interested in sounds and words and print! What to do?

Teachers in the pre-primary grades at FSH are forever playing the advocate for young children by resisting the "top down" pressures that can exist in our society at large. We strive to maintain our children's innocence by sheltering them from the media and from commercialism. We provide uninterrupted time to play and explore by keeping coordinate subjects to a minimum. We meet children where they are, and when they are ready, we help them to build skills through meaningful experiences.

It is this mind-set that guides our work with regard to pre-reading skills. Although it is our belief that preschool is too early for formal sound and letter work (phonics), it is just the right time to have fun with phonemic awareness activities (fun with sounds).

Phonemic awareness deals with the sounds in spoken words, specifically the ability to differentiate and manipulate those spoken sounds. In contrast to this, phonics refers to the printed word, and requires emerging readers and writers to be secure and comfortable with sound/letter correspondence and ready to apply this knowledge to their own reading and writing -- this happens much further down the road.

As exciting as it is to witness the early signs of interest in reading and writing, we resist the urge to get ahead of ourselves. Because research shows that in order for phonics instruction to be effective, children need a solid phonemic awareness.

Listed below are some ways for parents and teachers to easily engage kids in activities that will help them over time to hear the individual sounds within words.

RHYME: Read rhyming books and nursery rhymes. Song lyrics provide a rich opportunity for recognizing and creating rhymes, for example, *Willoughby, Wallaby, Woo*, and *Down by the Bay*. Try nonsense words! Making up rhymes for wacky words presented by mom or dad comes easily for preschoolers. Example: Say "bouse," and your child may say "house, louse, mouse." Adults and children can also generate their own silly rhymes while driving in the car or raking leaves. Example: There was a snake with a rake. Mom, can we bake a cake?

ALLITERATION: Listen for and string together words that contain the same beginning sound. Example: Gavin goes galloping with gorillas. Seven silly seagulls swooped down and swallowed my sandwich. (*Animalia* is a great picture book for this activity.)

RHYTHM OF THE WORD: For fun, try clapping the beats (syllables) in your names too. Children's names and names of family and friends are a great place to begin word study!

PHONEMIC MANIPULATION: Listen for and then replace individual sounds at the beginning and ending of words. Example of beginning sound substitution: Change the /s/ in sun to /f/ and you get fun! Example of ending sound substitution: Change the /t/ in hot to /p/ and you get hop!

Say your friend's names but change the beginning sound to a sound of your choice. Try the /L/ sound (avoid saying "L". This is the second step in the process and will come "down the road".)

Example: Lainsley, Lythe, Lole, Lorinne, Lemily, Lemma, Lames, Lyle, Lily, Ladison, Latalie, Loah, Letros, Lebastian, Lofia, Lusanna, Lessa, Loe

Let your child guide you and keep it brief! If it's playful and everyone is smiling, keep it going. If your attempt to engage your child in any of these activities is not well received, postpone the game for another time, month or year. Our goal here is simply to offer guidance to parents who are eager to get in on the fun.

Recommended pre-reading activities for adults to enjoy with preschoolers:

*Read aloud to your child. Remember that children love to read familiar books again and again; be patient! Take lots of time to look at and wonder about the illustrations.

*Have a story come alive by changing your voice slightly to match the different characters in a book.

*Participate in oral storytelling.

*Take dictation for your child in long-hand about their ideas.

*Talk about characters and events, and predict what might happen next in a story read aloud.

*Act out a familiar story. (*Just ask you child to take you on a bear hunt!*)

*Model reading and writing in your daily lives – let your kids see you writing a shopping list or a list of household chores, journaling, writing letters to friends, etc.

*Avoid sounding out words in print with your child; this is the best way to zap a child's enthusiasm for the story, the reading process, and the joy of reading with an adult.

*Avoid selecting "easy reader" books unless they have a great story and will be read aloud by the adult.

* Enjoy literature together and the rest will fall easily in place in Friends School's developmentally appropriate reading program.