

TriBeCa Community School Newsletter

January 29, 2010

General Notices

PARENTS WORKSHOPS ARE HERE!

We invite you to see the work that the children have been doing.

If you did not RSVP yet, please do so to your child's teacher:

All workshops are held here at the school 7:00PM-8:30PM (no children).

RM1: Monday, Feb 1, 2010

RM2: Monday, Feb 1, 2010

Next week's snack:

Tricia Williams (chefanator@mac.com), a certified holistic nutritionist and chef (also a parent in our school!) plans and prepares our snack. For next week, the menu is (snack may change without notice):

Monday: NY State Cheddar and Whole Grain Crackers

Tuesday: Bananas

Wednesday: Pretzels

Thursday: Winter Veggie Crudite & Bean Dip

Friday: Oatmeal Cranberry Bites (butter, oats, spelt, maple crystals)

Room 1

Dictation story activity

During the past month we noticed that, while scribbling, many of the children are beginning to slowly form letter-like symbols. During their production, most of them are accompanied by gestures, verbalization and sounds, which shows an understanding of the connection between sounds and symbols, i.e. between phonetic and graphic languages. This is one of the fundamental elements of literacy development.

To support their investigations within the world of words, we also began scribing many of the stories that the children were sharing while sitting in the writing

area. Storytelling has become very popular.

Every day, the teacher offers the children an opportunity to dictate a story. Although short, sometimes only 5 words long, we can clearly see the communicative intention: even without proper grammar and syntax, the children are able to express ideas and thoughts that are meaningful to them. While one child is dictating their story, the other children gather around the table and listen, showing a strong interest in the process.

We started sharing the stories that the children dictated during our reflection

meetings. We noticed that because the children are listening to each other, they often borrow ideas and themes from their classmates, sharing an imaginative world.

Box exploration

The big box that we were housing in our class went through many modifications: we changed the orientation of the opening, we transformed it into a tunnel, and we added various tools to help the children explore this new space. When we saw the box has slowly but inexorably fallen apart, we thought that it might have been time to throw it away. But the reactions of the children lead us in a different direction. Since the box broke, the children worked on and around the structure, trying to fix it. They also discovered that they could change it in many unpredictable ways:

The “un-box“ became a pyramid, a tunnel, a mountain, a flat surface where cars and animals can run... what we used as a space to enhance our light

and reflection exploration, became a resource for our building and climbing area. Since the box is big and hard to move, this task forced the children to ask for each other help, cooperate, and to coordinate their movements. We were impressed by the amount of dramatic play, interaction and physical exploration that such a simple material brought to our class. We will keep observing the work of the children, and add challenging provocations as we see fit.

Reminders

The parents’ workshop is approaching, so we look forward to share our documentation with you, on the 1st of February at 7:00 PM. Also, please remember the “Get well soon” social for Renya! We welcome parents, children and nannies to come on the 2nd of February, at 11:00 AM to say hello to Renya and wish her a quick and successful recovery.

Room 2

E.L turned 3 this week. Happy Birthday. Her parents came to school and baked a cinnamon cake with EL, OW, VR and DB.

Incline

This week we began to have the children look at the speed and movement of the objects. We provided various objects that roll and slide and others that do not and ask the children to classify the objects as fast or slow. What we noticed was that for some students fast meant the object would roll independently (at a relatively small incline) while others classified the

objects as fast even if the object needed a push to reach the end of the track. While it is difficult for children to have a concept of velocity and compare the speed of two objects, we would like them to begin thinking about the shape and size of different objects to determine if the object will slide or roll independently and if the object can so with ease. We are working towards introducing the scientific method of inquiry; begin to form hypotheses, make predictions, and test their hypotheses.

Baby Investigation

Inspired by the large number of children in our classroom that had siblings on the

way and an intriguing comment made by MM, we decided to investigate the children's theories about babies. MM was talking to a teacher about a doll she brought from home and the teacher asked if it was a boy or a girl. She replied, "It's not a boy or a girl, it's just a baby." The teachers thought this was an interesting theory and wanted to know more. We now have a baby-doll in the dramatic play area and are observing how they children interact with the doll. HH thought the baby should have a chance to dictate a story and acted as the baby to tell the teacher a story. Eventually, a small group will be formed and they will conduct an in-depth investigation.

Storytelling

NM told a story inspired by his holiday vacation:

"I go outside and then inside. And then I go to the doctor's office. The doctor's office has toys there. And then I go

home. And then I go to Florida on a big plane. And it has a moving sidewalk. Daddy and me go on the moving sidewalk. And we step on it and then it moves. And then we get off the other side of the moving sidewalk."

Snails

This week, we provided magnifying glasses for the children to use when observing the snails. Not only did we want them to gain experience in using the tool, but we also wanted to see if they would notice any smaller details. OP said "they get bigger!" and BC was inspired to take a closer look at other items in the classroom, including a book, another student and toy cars in the block area.

Reminder

Our second parents' workshop is scheduled for this coming Monday, February 1 at 7pm. We look forward to seeing you all and sharing you child's new work with you.

Room 3

Thank you to all parents for attending Parents Workshop on January 27. We appreciate your continuous efforts to actively participate in the education and development of your children, and welcome your involvement. We invite you to be part of the class, and encourage you to bring your personal hobby, interests-or even a book- into the classroom to share with the children.

In the atelier, children have enjoyed using paint easels with watercolors, which were previously used with the light table. We've noted that the children

are using longer, broader brush strokes, as opposed to smaller, more fanciful ones. They're also layering colors more, making bright, beautiful color collages, instead of preserving individual color hues in separate spaces.

When we realized children were bringing classroom objects over to the clay table to use in and with the clay, Monique supplied the children with a diverse collection of tools for them to pound, flatten, and imprint the clay. Not only has this been a great opportunity for children to enhance their fine motor

skills, spark their creativity, and continue building with a different medium, but it has also increased the opportunity for socialization, conflict resolution, and sharing skills. We carefully watch as children negotiate the terms of use around single-number tools that have piqued the curiosity of multiple minds (and sets of hands). We tell the children to address one another when they say they "want" or "need" a tool a classmate has. Classmates are encouraged to respond with honest answers- yes or no- and explain their rationale. We've been really impressed with the increase in confidence that children have shown in addressing one another since September, as well as their ability to describe their rationales for acquiescing

with their classmates' requests or not. At home, you can help by encouraging children to ask questions and make requests themselves, answer others honestly, and explain why.

This week in Morning Meeting we discussed rhyming words, and what they are. This came up when one student suggested "easel" and "pop goes the weasel" sound similarly. Children in the class proposed the word "peach" rhymes with "beach", and that "hand" rhymes with "band." You can use these as starting points to reinforce rhyming words at home, and point out when they encounter them through literature.

Room 4: Atelier

Room 1

The children have begun experimenting with the physicality of action painting, parallel painting actively goes on in their mini atelier. The children in small groups have comfortably been learning about new painting materials from the children in Room 2. Many students in Room 2 have demonstrated their paint mixing process. Room 1 students will soon have tempera paints added to their mini atelier due to the growing independent engagement within the materials in Room 2.

Room 2

The children focused on mixing tints continuing their long investigative process in color mixing. Working side by side with Room 1 children has become a natural social progression in their classroom. After understanding a

deeper connection to the painting process, the students have been effectively teaching and communicating color-mixing methods.

Room 3

Room 3 students have begun painting using easels. Their entire painting experience has changed. The children appear more engaged in the act of painting. While working at the easels, the children explore mark making, specifically within the gravity of their drips. They have also been working for longer periods of time and layering colors in a new more deliberate expression.

Room 5

In Room 5, the morning and afternoon children both experienced new textures

and transparencies in paper materials at the light table. Next week the children will be introduced to using tempera

paints. They are ready to explore a new type of painting consistency.

Room 5

Dear Families,
Thank you so much for attending the workshop last evening. We got a lot of positive feedback and the projects you created look wonderful. We can't wait to share the photos and work with the children. The mobile you created will serve as an inspirational piece for the children's light and shadow investigation. Recently, the children have shown a strong interest in the light given off by the projector, and we hope that the mobile will provoke further questions about light and reflection. We are looking forward to sharing the messages and mailbox with the children. We believe that the message center is a place where connections and relationships can grow through communication and exchange. The children have recently shown a great interest in print and writing. Many children have begun to notice letters, and have even become interested in the mail that is delivered in the afternoon. Our new writing center provocation allows the children a quiet place to practice their writing and has allowed them to become more aware and

familiar with different kinds of print. The postcards that have been sent to our classroom foster further investigations related to messages, and your written messages to the children will provoke more thoughts on this topic. We will be sure to update you on their reactions, and we look forward to building more connections with you in the future!

Loris Malaguzzi said, "I understand myself through my interactions with people and objects around me and the way I am reflected in the eyes of other people". We believe this statement to have powerful truth and see all of our families as an essential piece to making a meaningful educational experience for the children.

Reminders

If you were unable to make it to the Parent Workshop, please schedule a time to view the presentation. It is approximately one hour, and needs to be viewed at the school on one of our computers. Also, we are running low on wet wipes. If you have a child in diapers/pull-ups please bring some in.

Room 6

Light and Shadow

Over the past two weeks the Room 6 children have been exploring light and shadow through manipulating sand on a

light projector. JL sprinkled sand and watched the projected image saying "it

looks like magic!" After we viewed video footage of the Ukrainian artist who uses sand on a light table last week, we felt

that the children may need a bigger space to work with this medium. We introduced a light table in our classroom (borrowed from Room 3) and placed a large translucent tray of sand on top. The children have been exploring the properties of the sand on the light table, as the shadow created by the sand can be manipulated with their fingers as they move it on the table. The children have begun creating images such as faces, lines and circles, and letters, as well.

Block Area

We added a table-top platform in our block area this week. We noticed that the children were not using many of the unit blocks in their buildings, but rather the large hollow blocks. We wondered if the rug is not a stable enough surface for building up with unit blocks. We placed the hard platform surface in the block area and have noticed the children working with unit blocks more. FS, HR, RG, and HL have been working with long blocks standing like table legs, while balancing a flat board on top. The space on the platform also serves to help the children move around the block area while keeping their structures confined to the space on the platform. We are interested to see how the children continue to use the platform as a base for their buildings in the block area.

Literacy

We have been continuing our work with personal word rings. These word rings

are a collection of words that each child has chosen as words he or she would like to read and write. Many of the words come from work in their journals, as the children are beginning to label their pictures with words. Adding words to their word rings requires the children to first demonstrate that they recognize and can read the existing words, before gaining a new one. It is an incentive for early sight word recognition and helps with sound-symbol correspondence, as the children often look for the beginning letter/letter sound (among other cues) to read the word. OS: "ruh, ruh...race car!" MCH: "k...kitty."

Further, words on the children's word rings are being used as the children work with the Montessori moveable alphabet that we have acquired. The moveable alphabet color-codes consonants and vowels to show the children that words require vowels as well as consonants. As they use their word ring to choose letters from the alphabet and lay them out in sequence, the children's attention is drawn to this distinction.

Reminders

Please check your child's extra clothes bag for essential items: pants, underwear, tights, shirts, and socks. *Also, please e-mail Ryan or Kristen if you would like to view the Parent Workshop presentation on a computer here at school.*