

TriBeCa Community School Newsletter

February 26, 2010

General Notices

DEFINEUM: RealMoms Program:

A wonderful initiative by one of our parents, called RealMoms- a discussion group program that provides a supportive, fun and energizing forum for exchanging advice and sharing feelings about the joys and challenges of motherhood- **PLEASE SEE FLYER AT THE BOTTOM OF THIS NEWSLETTER.**

Room 1

Welcome back, Room 1!

We hope you and your family had a joyful and relaxing winter break. If during the past week you and your family traveled, vacationed or did something special, we invite you to share the experience with the class.

Outside

Since the beginning of the year, the children of Room 1 have shown a deep interest in transportation. Cars, trucks, tractors, trains and airplanes have always played an important role in the work of the class. Fire trucks- so shiny and noisy- seem to fascinate and intrigue the children most.

During our last outdoor exploration, we had the opportunity to approach a parked fire truck in front of the local firehouse. The children looked through the truck's windows to observe its large interior.

The firemen noticed our small group, and invited us to visit the firehouse another day. This past Tuesday, we finally had the opportunity to visit and tour the firehouse. Three children from Room 2 also joined us on our exploration. We thought that the older children might be less intimidated and more independent amongst the unfamiliar spaces and faces. Their example would possibly help our younger children to warm

up and gain confidence inside the dark building.

While the children seemed a little intimidated by the noisy gate, the massive fire truck, and by the many new faces, the children of Room 2 quickly started investigating around, questioning the firemen, asking to observe and manipulate the different tools. After few minutes our younger children got more comfortable and uninhibited.

A. was the first that decided to try to sit on the big truck, and soon J. asked to go on the driving side.

The children noticed that in the truck there were many tools and objects:

E. "I see a hat. And here I see letters, here, see?" She said pointing to an electronic device.

J. Holding the steer said: "Big wheel, and sticks here" because he noticed many lever switches.

The firemen showed part of their gear and how some parts of the equipment work: They showed the oxygen mask (J. later called it the "Big face"), the water hose and the extinguisher.

When E. Asked "What is that" pointing at the long pole, a fireman slid down from the first floor.

The firemen left the children free to explore the space, and we really appreciated their patience! They were always available and open to any questions, but they also tried to appear less intimidating to the children (before putting on the oxygen mask, the fireman reassured the children many times, explaining that even if it appeared weird or scary, under the mask was still the same person).

After the firehouse exploration we started revisiting the experience in the class. We show part of our documentation to the children, we offer them the opportunity to

write and draw their memories and their thought about the fireman, the firehouse and the fire truck. We also observed how this experience influenced their dramatic play.

If you notice some interesting dramatic play or drawing regarding this topic, or if your child will tell you about this experience, please, share your observations with us! It is a great resource for us to know how the children reported and revisited the experience at home.

Room 2

NF mom joined us for morning meeting to read one of NF's favorite stories, *Tanka Tank Skunk*, by Steve Webb. The children enjoyed stomping their feet to the musical rhythm of the story. Thanks for spending time in our classroom.

Thanks to ND and family for taking care of the snails over winter break. We appreciate you welcoming them into your home.

A.G's arm was placed into a cast due to a playground collision with an older child (not within the school). We wish him a speedy recovery.

Babies Investigation

We started discussing where babies come from. Initially, this was a simple question for the group to answer: "tummies." Our follow up question elicited more varied responses. HH said babies got in the tummies when their mommies ate food. AG said they came from "the tummy store." NM said that they came from "who made the world," and NF thought they came from home. We finished the week with the children drawing pictures of babies in tummies, which inspired discussion about how babies get out of the tummies. NM and AG seemed to

agree that babies crawl out through belly buttons. We will begin with that idea next time we meet. FOR NOW, PLEASE REFRAIN FROM PROVIDING YOUR CHILD WITH THE FACTUAL INFORMATION OF WHERE BABIES COME FROM.

Light Projection

The children began placing non-transparent objects on the projector, such as small toy cars and plastic animals. We watched them place the objects on the projector surface, adjust them and then look at the projection on the wall.

Seemingly unsatisfied with how the object appeared on the wall, then returned their attention back to the projector and repositioned the objects. It appeared to us that they were confused as to why the car didn't look like car but just a rectangle instead. BC tried turning the car on its side and realized that this made a more car-like shadow on the wall. He then zoomed the car along a transparent image of the Golden Gate Bridge.

Incline

While we began to discuss the speed of the objects at various incline, we noticed that

children would use the tubes placed in the block area with the incline objects. Perhaps because of the mystery of what goes on inside the tubes, it was exciting for the students to watch the object emerge at the other end. We felt that the students have had sufficient experience working with and watching object of various shapes and sizes move down the tracks and thought that an enclosed tube may aid the students in comparing the speed of two objects. We

introduced gutter like tubes with a rectangular opening. In our first meeting this week, we discussed the differences between the new tracks and the old. N.M noticed that the new tracks “have four sides” and O.W noticed that they were longer. The students then chose one object they thought would travel fast and we began to talk about the characteristics of the chosen objects.

Room 3

Welcome back to school! We hope you had a relaxing and enjoyable break. Children in Room Three have had an exciting return to school this week.

In the dramatic play area, we have seen children become much more emphatic and expressive as they dress up and participate in pretend play. Rather than dress up alone and than find a place to play with peers, we see children choosing costumes together, trading and sharing pieces, and deciding on new areas to venture to, together. As they dress up, they use more complex vocabulary, with words like "theatre" "lovely", and "fancy."

Since immediately before and returning from vacation, we've also seen pretend play surface in other areas, such as the building blocks. In addition to responding to the day's building provocation, children are also pretending to be different characters- sometimes mirroring those we read about through literature in class- and discuss these inventive, imaginary roles as they build.

Resultantly, we've seen buildings become more creative-adorned with more open-ended and varying materials- and children stopping to have dialogue as they share the stories they write in their minds as they

build.

Another impressive feature we are glad to see, now regularly, is the children using their words with one another.

As children interact throughout the morning, we witness them speaking up for themselves and classmates, and defending what they believe in. Furthermore, conflict is being diffused more swiftly, and children are becoming more adaptable in the classroom. This may be a result of feeling closer to an increased number of classmates at this point in the year, or managing their own conflicts and feelings, without asking for increased assistance from teachers. For example, the other morning in the block area, when one child grabbed a block from another, a third child said “Don’t do that to him; he’s your friend.” On another morning, when two children argued over a book both reached for at the same time during Independent Reading, both said to one another “I don’t like that.” They continued to talk about who had the book first, but ultimately, worked it out, and sat next to one another, amicably, as they read separate texts. As we watch the children transform into individual personalities with voices, we are proud of their growth and the feelings, ideas, and sentiments they

continue to express.

Room 4: Atelier

Room 1

Room 1's continued interest in tempera paints has evolved. The children will be introduced to tempera paints in their own mini-atelier next week. They will continue working on the wall of their studio with watercolors as they have been exploring a new concept of mark making within the material. For further work in clay, small groups will begin coming to the atelier.

Room 2

The children of room 2 have continued their study in color mixing, offering new portraits as inspiration has proven their focused work within the formal language of color and line.

Room 3

Coming back into the swing of things, children in room 2 have reengaged with working with clay, wire and clay tools. They are consistently focused on working with the tools and wire, which could lead to

sculptural experimentation with wire and wire tools without the addition of the clay. Children have also been fully engaged in painting at their easels with watercolor paints. This week they have begun communicating about each other's work while they are painting.

Room 5

Continued experimentation with tempera paints has led them in experimenting with yellow and white. Next week they will have the addition of another color along with the white for further mixing investigations.

Room 6

Small groups have continued working with portraiture using mirrors and drawing materials. The afternoon children have been meeting in small groups in their mono printing process. They have begun exploring new colors, painting materials and inventive ways of creating marks.

Room 5

The Mail System

Thank you to all of the families that sent Room 5 mail while they were away. The children have been receiving new postcards and letters everyday and we take them out of our parent-made mailbox during meeting time. The letters come from different cities, states and countries and often talk about the adventures that occurred on these trips. Many times a letter will include a picture of a place or family member, and the children enjoy sharing their mail with their friends.

Even if your family doesn't travel, we always welcome new mail and the children

appreciate receiving personalized letters. Send a letter from work or home and we'll share it together at our next meeting! Also, we are looking for families to donate: checks, menus, business forms, stationary, paper, a variety of pens and pencils, stamps and envelopes.

Sensory Table

This week, we introduced mud in our sensory table. This provocation came as a logical next step, after working with soil for the last few weeks. We wanted to expose the children to the changing texture of the soil, and thought that a wet week like this would be the perfect time. We set up the sensory table with only mud this week, removing the tools the children had previously used. This was done in order for the children to really focus on the texture of the material. We found that touching the mud took many children out of their comfort zone. Some children said “it’s yucky” and others exclaimed, “it’s wet”. Some children were curious but very cautious when working around the table, while others became engaged right away. We want to continue to challenge the children, questioning their ideas about the mud and eventually exposing them to the process of creating the transformation. Next week, we will allow the children to add their own water to the dry soil. Be sure to ask your children about this experience and feel free to share any ideas they have expressed to you.

Glue Exploration

In Room 5 we have begun a glue exploration. We chose a small group that showed an interest in working with glue. They had been exposed to it once before in the mini atelier in the classroom and during our small group time, we reintroduced it. We decided to start our exploration using glue on black paper to create contrast and so that the children were able to pay more attention to the media. When we first introduced glue to the children they discussed what they thought it was. Here are some of the ideas the children had:

Child 1: “Glue – white. I think it’s paint”.

Child 2: “It’s glue”.

Child 3: “Like peanut butter and jelly”.

Child 4: “Clay... Well, it’s glue. I put my color and it feels... It smells like marshmallows”.

“Creativity seems to emerge from multiple experiences, coupled with a well-supported development of personal resources, including a sense of freedom to venture beyond the known”.

-Loris Malaguzzi

We are looking forward to sharing more glue experiences with you.

Room 6

Light and Shadow

We have moved moon sand from the sensory table to the light table. We have noticed that several children have begun creating three-dimensional shapes with this material. We are also continuing our work with the light projector.

Mini Atelier

In the beginning of the week, we continued our work with watercolor paints with

droppers. On Thursday, we reintroduced paintbrushes and were curious to see if the experience with droppers lead to more careful and deliberate work with the brushes. So far this has been the case.

Mysteries

The newest mystery in our classroom is focused on ghosts. The children involved in this investigation have been using flashlights, mini notebooks and magnifying glasses to track and study the behaviors, motives, dwelling places and physical

characteristics of possible ghosts in the classroom. So far, theories include that the ghosts live in the bathroom and that they live up in the pipes around the ceiling. On Thursday, several children visited Room 2 to ask them questions about the ongoing ghost investigation in Room 2 and compare findings.

Classroom Pet

Thanks to a generous gift from H.R.'s family, we now have two African Dwarf frogs in a small aquarium. Through careful observation, the children are beginning to notice some of their defining characteristics. The frogs live in water, but frequently rise to the surface to breath because they have lungs, not gills. They have four webbed feet and eyes on the sides of their heads. We are feeding them food pellets twice a week.

Caring for animals is an excellent way to develop empathy as well as sense of responsibility. It is a great introduction to one of the key components of kindergarten science, characteristics and habitat of

organisms. We are also excited about the opportunity to use the frogs to expand our observational drawing thread that has been active since the beginning of the year.

We have begun the process of brainstorming names for the frogs. Once we narrow the selections down to four or five, we will begin voting. There has been some debate about how many names the frogs will have. M.R. suggested that the frogs be given three names, a first, middle and last name. We will determine that with a vote as well.

Concepts About Print

Our new classroom pet has led us to introduce non-fiction science books. We will use books about frogs as well as other animals to explore and better understand this format, including locating the table of contents and the concept that these books are generally read for specific information and not always from front to back like a storybook.

ANNOUNCING DEFINEUM'S REALMOMS PROGRAM



JOIN US FOR STRAIGHT TALK ABOUT MOTHERHOOD!

Are you interested in exchanging advice and sharing feelings about the joys and challenges of motherhood in a supportive, fun and energizing forum? Looking for tools and resources that can make life as a mother feel more balanced and fulfilling? Want to develop meaningful friendships with other moms? Sign up for Defineum's RealMoms program and join us in talking straight about motherhood in a forum that's finally all about you!

In a series of twelve weekly meetings, we'll explore a set of topics that focus on what being a mother really feels like, how it impacts you as an individual and how it fits into your broader life dynamic. The program is designed for moms with children of any age and is limited to twelve participants per program. Babies are welcome to join.

Body & Mind Builders
Tribeca - 78 Reade Street
Beginning March 16
Tuesdays at 10am & 2pm

Poets House
Battery Park City - 10 River Terrace
Beginning March 18
Thursdays at 11am & Fridays at 2pm

Price: \$300

- Groups of 4 or more registering together receive a **25% discount** (\$225)
- HRP Mamas members receive a **20% discount** (\$240)
- RealMoms participants receive a **15% discount** off all Body & Mind Builders services

We invite you to join a powerful community of women sharing ideas, inspiration and support!

To register or for more details, call Carol Morley at 212.696.6787, email carol@defineum.com, or visit www.defineum.com.



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