

# TriBeCa Community School Newsletter

## March 12, 2010

### General Notices

#### Save the Date

Last Parents Workshop of this school year (all 7:00-8:30PM), where we will share the work the children are doing here at the school:

**RM1:** Wednesday, April 14, 2010

**RM2:** Monday, April 12, 2010

**RM3:** Wednesday, April 14, 2010

**RM5:** Thursday, April 15, 2010

**RM6:** Tuesday, April 20, 2010

#### Snack for next week:

**Monday:** Power Packed Carrot Cake (spelt, oat, pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, maple, coconut oil, carrots, cinnamon, eggs)

**Tuesday:** Apples

**Wednesday:** Happy Herbert's Organic Pretzels

**Thursday:** Veggie Crudite with Humus

**Friday:** Oven Dried Veggie Chips..beet, parsnip, carrot

Tricia Williams is an accomplished executive chef, nutrition educator and chef instructor.

**FOOD MATTERS NYC**

[tricia@foodmattersnyc.com](mailto:tricia@foodmattersnyc.com)

#### TriBeCa Family Festival

Please see flyer at the end of this newsletter

## Room 1

### Building the Community

We want to thank the parents of R. S. for sharing their vacation pictures of Arizona with us-- the children in Room 1 were really interested to hear about it! When R.S. told us that she had learned how to swim, the children became involved in a discussion: R.S. "You have to hold your breath." J. T. "I can swim!" A.P. "I go to the swimming pool with daddy". H.D. "You swim like this" (while moving hands in the doggie—paddle motion).

As a class, together, we move our bodies like swimmers. We also tried holding our breath.

It is interesting how this conversation, which took place during the Morning Circle, influenced the children's work. The children inserted the "swim" theme into their storytelling, and also in their pretend play. If you have any objects related to this thread that you would like to share with us, please bring them into school!

### Dramatic Play

Weekly, we modify the dramatic play setting and its' open-ended materials. We try to

select a variety of contrasting materials that result in varying sensory experiences, which will stimulate the children's creativity and pretend play: stones with different texture, a diversity of shells, fabric with different shapes, and various kinds of paper... The changes that we do in this area are intentionally small and slow. We want to give the children an opportunity to work for a long time with the same materials, exploring different meanings and personal interpretations. For example, our pinecone has become a sausage, an egg, a ball, a cake and many other things throughout the year.

It's interesting to notice how children immediately spot the new materials. We always observe their reactions: this is precious information that helps us to plan for future set-ups. If you have any material that you want to share with us, feel free to bring it in!

Last week, we received a new baby high chair that has deeply interested the children. We didn't show them how to use it, and we are observing how they are exploring the different possibilities and positions that this new tool can offer. A.P. tried to fit inside, E.W. experimented with different babies to see which would fit best, and D.S. used it for Puppy (his transitional object). We are eager to see how this new tool will influence their dramatic play over the few next weeks.

### **Outside exploration**

Spring is coming, and we will finally be able to go outside more frequently. Please remember to dress your child with comfortable clothes so that he or she can move freely, and that these clothes allow him or her to dress independently. Thanks!

## **Room 2**

Thank you to all the parents who have volunteered their time to assist in taking the children for a walk. This week WS's mom and NF's dad joined us at CaVaLa Park and their company was both appreciated and enjoyed by the children. The class was very engaged in drawing with chalk and walking along the narrow borders of the grass, as if it was a balance beam.

### **Snails**

Recently, the teachers discovered that the snail in the snail hospital had died. We wanted the children to come to this conclusion on their own and asked them to look at the snail every morning to watch its progress. For more than a month, the snail stayed in the same place and did not eat anything. The children concluded that it was still getting in better. We decided to take the snail out of the cage and compare to the other, very lively snails. Still, they

thought the snail just needed to get better, again offering suggestions that it needed medicine, or as WS said, "a doctor snail." VR, looking through a magnifying glass, asked "But where's its head?" After spraying the snail with water, and observing that he didn't come out like the others, he concluded that the snail has died. This sparked a debate between some of our students. Some students hold on to the idea that the snail will get better if given medicine or a kayak as previously suggested, while others agreed with VR, that if a snail didn't come out of the shell, it was dead. We feel that learning to understand and coping with the death of a pet is an important part of development and plan to, once everyone has accepted that the snail is not alive, ask the children what we should do to "commemorate" it.

### **Baby Investigation**

Continuing the small group investigation, we decided to discuss caring for babies. As a vehicle for discussion and exploration, the children will be asked to care for the babydoll, as if it were a real baby. It seems that, through the snail investigation, some members of our class have developed a theory that kayaks can make people and animals happy. It seems though, that understanding of what a kayak is varies, as NM said that babies don't like kayaks, and *"if they eat them, they will have to spit it out."* MM and AG said that babies need milk to be happy. HH replied that babies drank water, to which AG firmly responded

*"No! Only big boys drink juice and water. Only not babies."*

### Inclines

Seemingly influenced by their work with the inclines ramps, BC and ND brought some of the long gutters down from the loft and propped them up on various surfaces, sending matchbox cars through them. The cars shot down the ramps and across the floor. Perhaps tired of chasing them, the children found boxes and positioned them at the end, catching the cars as soon as they emerged from gutter.

## Room 3

Room Three has had a number of new, exciting happenings in the class this week.

After observing children's curiosities, imagination, and collaborative efforts with wire and clay-related tools at the clay table over the last few weeks, we have added wire and wire-cutting tools to the classroom. As with the clay, children are bending, twisting, and attaching the wire pieces. In addition to this, they are using blunt cutting tools to determine various wire lengths to work with. As they explore these tools, they better develop their fine-motor coordination (a skill necessary for later writing). While observing the children, we noticed two children brought paper to the table, and began to try to cut it with the wire cutters, using them much like they would scissors. We explained to the children that wire cutters are not scissors, but that we understood and appreciated their comparisons. While children drew with crayons, they talked about adding different types of "glittery" and "shiny" color to their drawings. As a result, we took them to the atelier, where we offered them to choose a selection of large fabric and paper scraps to cut and add to their drawings, in order to

achieve the colors and designs they were visioning. At home, please offer your child a pair of age-appropriate scissors (and paper/material scraps to cut) at home to make individual and personal collages. Simple activity such as this flex children's creativity, develop their fine motor skills, and provide a forum for discussion where you can ask him or her about what he or she is creating and why.

In the mini-atelier, we have replaced watercolor with tempera paints, which we used in the beginning of the year. When using watercolors, we noticed that the children would paint with very broad and fanciful strokes, and let the paint run down the paper. We wanted to observe the children using upright easels with more viscous paints, and deeper color hues. We've observed that with tempera paints, their brush strokes move completely over the paper, versus using water to propel the color around. We also began to use black paper, which adds an intensely artistic and stark contrast between colors and brush strokes.

# Room 4: Atelier

## Room 2

The snail group from Room 2 is in the process of assembling a clay snail environment. Before introducing paint with the dried clay pieces, we began expressing the colors on paper first. Next week they will begin painting their snail objects for their cage. The painting group has continued communicating shapes and shades of color in their atelier.

## Room 3

Children from Room 6 have begun explaining how to operate the wire tools in the wire exploration to Room 3 children. A student from Room 6 began suggested ideas on what he has learned about attaching pieces of wire together. The students have been very engaged with using the new wire tools and exploring how to manipulate the material. All week the students have been working with black paper using tempera paints in their atelier. Tempera paints has enhanced their assertive attitudes while painting at their easels. Next week a small group will begin coming the atelier to work on a concentrated observational painting study.

## Room 5

### Music and Movement

Recently, we have introduced a number of new songs to the children during morning meeting. These include more complex songs that work on a call and response level. Songs like “Who stole a cookie from the cookie jar” and “The telephone song”

Room 5 has continued working on their painting investigation, this week we introduced a new color with their mixing

process. As the children in both morning and afternoon classes develop their painting techniques have exposed visible styles and patterns in their working techniques. The children in both morning and afternoon classes have become very serious about the work they create while painting and their independence shows through their documented process.

## Room 6

Students in Room 6 have been developing their observational skills while working on their portraits. The students are at many different levels of communicating their mirror images. Their work has become very collaborative and investigative its approaches. Both morning and afternoon classes have been meeting for painting explorations with tempera paints. As the students become more intentional with their painting procedures they are beginning to create representational imagery along with versatile forms of abstraction.

# Room 5

challenge children to listen and respond to the questions asked. With practice, these songs have become part of our daily routine, and the children really enjoy them. If you are familiar with these songs, sing them at home, and if you know any others

that are similar, we would love for you to share them with us!

The children continue to enjoy running, jumping, climbing, and challenging their bodies in any way possible. Throughout the winter months we have been working with various objects in the parent seating area, but now that is getting warmer we hope to spend more time outdoors with the children. Bearing this in mind, please remember to send your children in weather appropriate clothes and shoes. This week we explored the park space in front on the Citi building on Greenwich Street. The children enjoyed running in this space, and made observations about the sewers that are placed in the middle of the grass. They collected sticks from the park and placed them inside the grates saying, "it's gone" and "it goes down there". We are excited to explore more places in the TriBeCa community as the spring arrives and as always, parents/caretakers are welcome to come along!

### **Glue Exploration**

This week we have continued our glue exploration. When the children finished working with glue on black paper (see last week's newsletter), they put it on the shelf in the mini atelier in the classroom. During our small group time, we revisited the experience by showing the children a video of them working with glue. One of the children said: "That's me at my school". After watching the video, we picked up their work from the shelf and the children felt the texture of the dried glue on the paper. One of the children looked at her work and said: "It's "gluey" on the paper, but it's not". The teacher asked the children what they thought had happened to their work? They came up with different theories of what happened to the glue. Here are some of the children's ideas:

Child 1: "It fell up in the air. Look... I got it" (Child 1 pretended that she caught the glue in hand).

Teacher: "Where would you like to put the glue?"

Child 1: "Here". (Child 1 put her hand on the paper).

Child 2: "The glue is in the air".

Child 1: "The glue fell off. It's up in the air. It will go off. It will go away".

Child 3: "A memory".

Child 4: "A memory... I think it's something we send to "child A". A postcard from Angelina Ballerina".

Child 4: "Yesterday it felt like marshmallow. Today, not sticky. It dried... It dried so fast on the shelf. The shelf dried the painting".

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

### **Light Investigation**

The investigation of light continued this week with the addition of eight new flashlights. Some of the flashlights needed to be twisted to work, while others had a button that turned them on and off. The children explored the new materials together and discovered how to manipulate them with trial and error. We turned the lights off during class time to allow the children to experiment with light in the most conducive environment possible. The teachers have also started taking small groups outside of the classroom with the overhead projector. The children used the light table pastels directly on a clear sheet on the overhead and noticed their strokes projected on the wall. The small groups are also beginning to recognize shadows by playing with light and movement. During the next few weeks the light area in the classroom will be blackened out for total darkness during light exploration and we look forward to new discoveries.

# Room 6

## Student Teacher

We now have a student teacher named Rose who will be working with us on Mondays from now until the end of the year. Rose will be assisting us and learning about all areas of the classroom and we look forward to her help and collaboration.

## Light and Shadow

As an extension of our work with sculpting three dimensional shapes with moon sand and play dough on the light table, we have introduced a third material. To continue exploring the play of light on positive and negative space, but with flat objects, we have introduced plastic cutout stencils to be used for this purpose. In addition to the stencils, we have set up construction paper and scissors on the light table and many of the children have begun cutting in their own original ways to explore on the light table. This allows the children to take an active role in the preparation and presentation of materials for their explorations of light and shadow.

## Concepts About Print

The process of making original books has been successful and popular. Several children have been sharing their books at meetings and we will continue to work on them. On Friday of last week, RG's mom came in and read a story at morning meeting to the class. If you are interested in sharing a story, photos or anything else of personal significance with us during the day, please get in touch with us by email.

## Games

Our selection of games in the classroom is rapidly changing and developing. Several new games were created last week and this week, and old child created games have been revisited and

revised. The game involving jumping over pieces of fabric while other children keep it moving and raised in the air has evolved into tug of war. When tug of war is played, players are reminded by the student administrators of the game to not jump of the fabric, but to stay on opposing sides of the carpet and tug in opposing directions. Children have also been looking at games in the game book, playing them, and making revisions.

## Frogs

The list of possible frog names has been narrowed down by a vote and now includes the following names that each received six or more votes: Frog Frog, Jilly Frog, Scooby Doo, Scrappy, Owie, Zoe, ABC, Cat, Dog, Puppy and Ghost. We have collectively decided to give each frog three names, including a first middle and last. This will allow more name choices to be used.

## Mathematical Concepts

We have been working on small groups with math games focusing on number sequencing as well as basic addition with manipulatives. The children create original stories about the manipulatives. Next week, we will begin to explore the concepts of odd and even numbers and continue to do so in an integrated and meaningful way.

## Reminders

Please check your child's extra clothes bag. A pair or two of underwear, socks, shirts, and pants are necessary to have at school. Thanks!