

TriBeCa Community School Newsletter

May 21, 2010

General Notices

Upcoming Events: Save the Date

May 31:

Memorial Day- School is closed

June 10 (alternative rain day: June 11):

Our traditional *end of the year picnic*- for children, siblings, and parents- details will follow. Please mark your calendar: **no sessions will be conducted at the school on the day of the picnic.** Lunch will be provided.

June 7-11 and June 14-18:

Sometimes within these days we will be planting at our 'private piece' of CaVaLa Park.

June 18:

RM 6 only: GRADUATION! Please plan to attend your child's graduation. 9:30-11:30. Breakfast will be provided. All the children (including full-day children) will leave at the end of the graduation event.

Classroom Photos:

Jinsey would to give a big THANK YOU to all the GREAT KIDS of TCS by offering a **\$100** discount on a *Kids' Photo Session* to all the TCS families!
Shoot package details on her site:

www.Jinsey.com 212 243 0652 jinsey@jinsey.com

Snack for next week:

Monday: Mixed Dried Fruits

Tuesday: Crackers and cheese

Wednesday: Pretzels

Thursday: Vegetables and Hummus

Friday: Apples

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

FOOD MATTERS NYC

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Room 1

New Growth

Since the last Parent's Workshop, children have been examining and took care of the 6 herbs you, the parents planted that evening. As of this week, only one herb still remains in the classroom- healthy and green. We had watched the other five slowly wilt and turn brown. As a group, we compared the healthy plants to the brown ones- concluding that the latter were "sick," "not healthy" and even "dead".

We, the teachers, had asked the children WHY the plants had "died". Since the children could not come up with an answer, we turned to a few of our favorite books to help us. Looking through Growing Vegetable Soup by Lois Ehlert and The Carrot Seed by Ruth Krauss, we noticed that both sunshine and water were needed to keep most plants growing and healthy. We discussed how we had watered our herbs but that sunshine was not available to us- since there were no windows around our classroom! We decided to continue watering our healthy plants and to sit them in front of a school window regularly, to receive sunlight.

More recently, we have also decided to "start over" with our plants, and see if we can take better care of them. As a group, we took our empty pots and filled them with soil, dug small holes, and filled them with a few zinnia seeds. We covered the holes, watered the pots and set them aside. This week, sprouts began to develop. A few children excitedly noticed that new plants were "growing". Comparing the sprouts to our surviving mint plant, E.W. proclaimed that the new ones were "babies" while J.T. described the older herb as the "daddy".

We look forward to these new growths, and we will update you on our class "garden".

Paper Exploration

Within a small group, we have been investigating different kinds of paper. The children have become more familiar with the tools and media being used, and began using them to represent part of their imaginary world. For example:

I.R. pinched a piece of very light and transparent paper with her scissors and showed it to her friends saying: "I made an airplane Wooooom".

H.D. and Q.P. seemed to like I.R.'s idea, creating their own "airplanes" to roar around the table.

E.W. bent a strong piece of paper making an arch saying, "Here is a rainbow".

J.T. observed the arch that E.W. made, took another piece of paper, and bent it at a sharper angle saying, "It's a mountain, a big mountain" and also "The airplane is over the mountain".

H.D. disagreed: "No, it's a tunnel"

The different elements that the children create sparked interactions around the table. The exploration of the new media helped to sprout further dramatic play all around the class.

It's interesting how the children will give different meaning to the paper depending upon its physical properties. In class, the light paper became associated with flight, while the stronger paper became an element of landscape and architecture. We will revisit this experience as a group, and will incorporate their creations into the building area, so that they can be shared with their peer.

Room 2

Building Area

As the children became more experienced with incline and show a good understanding of the relationship between inclines and the properties of an object, the investigation seemed to have naturally moved into the building area: they were looking to use the ramps as a transportation method for moving cars. The children began to construct connected systems of roads, ramps tunnels, and bridges in the block area. We concluded that the students had grown to be most interested in transportation. To help focus them on building more detailed and complex structures, we asked them to draw maps of what they wanted to build. Last week, VR, OP, KAJ, and WS drew maps and the teacher labeled “points of interests,” on each of their maps.

VR’s map included a slide, roads, the sky, two boxes, and two little beans.

OP began describing what he drew by the color of crayon he used. “The yellow is the ocean. The yellow is where all the boats are. The black is the fish.” Soon, the map seemed to take on a Disney-theme: “This is where you go on the roller coaster. This is where you have to see the good pirates. And the pirate ship. This is where you go on the teacup.”

KAJ’s map consisted of “fishes, and boats, and water,” and “The bumpy, polka dotted road. And some more polka dotted of the

polka dotted road.” WS drew a single lane road with a “really big car,” driving on it.

These maps became the inspiration and blueprint for the building area the following week. The teachers chose a variety of open-ended materials (boxes, shells, wall paper, fabric, seed pods and many more items), and created a list of elements the children had included on their maps. The intention of the list was to break down the map elements in smaller pieces so the children could create in element in stages. After reading the list to the class at morning meeting, OP, AG, HH and VR chose to construct the rollercoaster first. They constructed a “mountain” out of plastic cylinders and wooden blocks, with two tracks coming down, representing the tracks of the ride. OP placed fabric at the foot of the rollercoaster so that “you can slide” on the roller coaster and a yellow cone place on top of the mountain where you wait for your turn.

The work inspired the class and refreshed interest in the block area. JO and NF drew their own maps. NF’s included a lot of food related elements and JO’s had a locked door next to an ocean. The class also seemed to have great respect for the work their peers did; they conversed and inquired about various elements of the structure at reflection meeting with attention that is dedicated only to the most interesting books and topics.

Room 3

There have been many eventful happenings in our room this week. New, transparent light pieces and magnets at the light table, finger puppets in the reading area, discovering and verbalizing new memory-related game board strategies in the loft, and color wire in mini-atelier, highlight some

of these. But perhaps the most exciting part of the week was a visit from a Room 3 grandparent. In an effort to celebrate and share in the spirit of Norway's Independence Day, J.J.'s grandmother joined us at TCS to deepen children's understanding of Norwegian (and global) culture.

Dressed in traditional Norwegian celebratory garb, both J.J. and her grandmother sat with the class, showing

pictures, distributing flags, and even preparing a traditional Norwegian snack for the children to experience. We were really impressed by her planning and insightful judgment to use visual and tactile provocations for the children to respond to. The children had a wonderful time, and still mention the "mountains", "skiers" and "jelly" from Monday's session.

Fortuitously, this month's NAEYC publication, *Young Children* May 2010, has an article on the value of intergenerational interaction between children and seniors: Among the article's exploration of intergenerational relationships in Japan, it also discusses more generalized suggestions for promoting positive interactions between children and seniors. Some of these highlights are:

- Encourage children and adults to ask

questions and respond to each other. Then point out differences and consistencies in their answers.

- Hold back and allow the children and adults to figure out how to engage each other, share knowledge, and solve problems. Step in when they need guidance to communicate effectively.
- Help the children and older adults learn about each other's talents, and guide them in translating their discoveries about others into discoveries about self.
- Facilitate clear communication between children and adults. Help older and younger generations to express themselves effectively and gauge the intent behind each other's words.

Use humor. Silly poetry, songs, and dance are wonderful tools for creating shared laughter and a sense of well-being.

Room 4: Atelier

Room 2

Room 2 kids have been engaged with working in the tree group. The children collected materials from more of our neighborhood trees. In small groups, the children analyzed their leaves. Next week, they will be working from observation to draw the leaves, using a variety of art materials such as paint, clay and wire.

Room 3

The children continued engagement in working with wire and beads has been an exciting thread in the classroom. Searching for new materials to further their development, open ended materials would be added to incorporate weaving and threading.

Room 5

The painters continued working with their flower provocations, making trips to the market for new selections. On one of the trips the children were very intrigued in looking at the fresh fruits. Next week, we will continue our trips to the market, and pick out a variety of fruits to observe and draw.

Room 6

We added the squeeze bottles for color mixing in the min-atelier. The children have demonstrated their learned skills and independence, as they were ready for the added material to continue their process of painting. I have also continued to work one on one with the students of Room 6 in

drawing their portraits. Beginning with a warm up rough draft, I ask the students to

further the experience by using a mirror to examine their facial features.

Room 5

Building

The children continue to explore and be engaged in the building area of our classroom. We have observed the children wearing the construction hats, goggles, and other costumes, and really taking on these roles. Thanks to the families that have donated dramatic play props for this area. We also observed the children using the cones in a variety of ways. MU and GS worked together to turn the cones into "horses" and "rode" them around the classroom. Other children have been stacking the cones and climbing on them, and OD has been using the cones to "block" off certain areas of the classroom. We have continued to see the children utilizing their imaginations and look forward to see where this play will go in the future.

The Community- Police Station

"I understand myself through my interactions with people and objects around me and the way I am reflected in the eyes of other people."

-Loris Malaguzzi

Throughout the year the children have been exploring the community around the school. We have been taken several trips visiting community helpers such as the people at the police station and the fire station. The children have especially showed an interest in the horses at the police station. Often when we go for walks in the community they have expressed verbally that they would like to go a visit the horses. The children have also been developing a close relationship with the people taking care of the horses at the police station. Among other things we have been invited inside the stable to watch the horses taking a bath, giving us apples to feed the horses and let us pet the horses. Here are some of the

children's thoughts and ideas about the horses:

Child 1: "Where do the horses sleep at night?"

Child 2: "When the horses eat they spit everywhere – like pruhhhhh".

Child 3: "The horses are going home to play with their friends and babies".

Child 4: "The horses are hiding – we can't see them".

When we went to visit the firefighters at the fire station one of the children looked at the empty garage and said:

Child 1: "Where are the horses?"

The firefighter told the children that they once used horses at the fire station, but that was about 80years ago. He also said that they now only use fire engines.

We look forward to share more community experiences with you in the future.

Wire Work

The children continued exploring wire in the classroom's mini-atelier this week. Thin silver wire and beads were presented as a provocation, and wire was also arranged on the overhead projector for the children to manipulate. During small group time, some of the children went to the atelier and searched for new wire to work with. They discovered thin colored wire, fatter electrical cords and colored string wire. After learning how to work with the wire's textures and capabilities, the children brought this information back to the class at our reflection meeting. The small group also worked with wire that glowed, and experimented with shaping the wire in the darkness available in the kitchen. Please bring in any wire materials you have at home that would benefit this investigation.

Room 6

Mixed Age Grouping

This week we have been collaborating with Room 5. Several children have been writing books with Room 5 children in mind, and then bringing them to their classroom and reading them out loud. On Thursday and Friday, the afternoon class hosted the Room 5 afternoon class for meetings, sharing songs and meeting routines. Room 5 taught us Alligator Farm and Wake Up Little Bunnies. Room 6 taught Room 5 Barbara Ann, Five Little Pumpkins, Ram Sam Sam and Fishy Fishy in a Brook. We have been guests in Room 5, working with their materials and following their afternoon classroom routine.

Gross Motor

We have been playing several exciting running games in Room 7. Favorites include Red Light, Green Light 123, Fruit Salad, Secret Leader. On Friday O.S. taught us Following the Leader.

Reading Area

We have been rediscovering the HarperCollins Treasury of Picture Book Classics, a gift from J.L.'s mom. Favorite books in it include Caps for Sale, Harold and the Purple Crayon and Pete's a Pizza.

Block Area

Children have been continuing work on ghost traps. They are now big enough to take turns going inside. There has been more interaction between the dramatic play area and the block area. Several children have been bringing restaurant materials into the block area to create dining centered structures. Other children have been preparing food in the dramatic play area and serving it to those working with blocks.

Conflict Resolution

An important part of our philosophy is allowing children to have the space and opportunity to learn how to resolve conflicts independently. Instead of avoiding conflicts or solving them for the children, we see them as important opportunities for developing autonomy, confidence and a sustainable atmosphere of mutual respect. As teachers, we provide children with strategies and ideas for solving conflicts instead of stepping in and solving them for the children. For example, if one child takes a material from another, we would not step in and demand that the material be returned. We encourage children to speak up for themselves and express their desire for the material to be returned. We find that this practice allows children to discover that they are capable of solving interpersonal problems with their skills and eliminates the tendency to passively wait for help. It is important for children to develop confidence in their ability to both stand up for themselves and to yield to the desires of others. We step in when necessary, while being careful not to overpower the situation as adults. As the year comes to a close, we have noticed that all of the children have become more confident in their ability to be confident and respectful conflict solvers.