

TriBeCa Community School Newsletter

September 25, 2009

General Notices

- Please remember that school is closed Monday Sept 28, 2009.
- Please verify that your child has a set of extra clothes (clearly labeled with his/her name). Ask your child's teacher where to put the extra set.
- Please note that the first meeting of the day begins at 9:15AM and 1:15PM. If you arrive after the meeting had already started, please wait with your child in the parents sitting area, until you are told that the meeting is done. We do this, because we found that bringing children late, disturbs the other children, and interrupts the flow of the meeting. Kindly bring your child by 9:15 or by 1:15. Thank you!

From Monique, our atelierista:

We have all started out with a wonderful week at TriBeCa Community School! Our three and fours in room six have gotten off to great start in the Atelier with a clay exploration. The children have been collaborating on sculptures as well as exploring on their own with just the addition of water, tools will be introduced after they have experimented enough within what the material can do on its own. The children have begun to roll, flatten, and join pieces together. The children will also begin exploring with armature wire. Many of them had an interest in the material from last year. Room one has also begun with a clay

exploration. The clay has been put on the floor and the children have been given the option for using both their hands and feet for a full tactile experience. A water bucket was added after children brought the clay to their sink area, noticing the changes of the clay. Room two and room three have both set up their mini ateliers for painting explorations. Tempera paints have been used starting out with two colors at a time. Room 5 has added watercolor painting on the light table from the big interest in the water table along with the excitement of the light table. I will continue to develop their mini ateliers and join them in their explorations, while children from room six will continue in their clay and wire development.

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 the Week of 9/28/09, the menu is:

Tuesday: Maple Granola Cookies (Spelt, Buckwheat, Oats, Brown Rice Syrup, Maple, Sea Salt, Butter, Dried Fruits, Sunflower Seeds)

Wednesday: Honey Wheat Carrot Cake

Thursday: Cantaloupe

Friday: Rainbow of Veggies with Humus

Room 1

During this first week we worked to construct a routine that help the children feel confident and welcome in our classroom, and school. Morning meeting is our way to greet each other, share the space and start the day. It is also a strategy that aids in teaching the children to wait, and postpone the exploration of the different areas of the class. Research has proven that postponing gratification aids in learning self-regulation and enhances children's cognitive abilities and social competence. After morning meeting we begin work time. During this time, we have had a number of different explorations going on. Through these investigations, several threads have begun to develop over the past few weeks.

The children have worked to explore the properties and possibilities of clay as well as its connection with water. We have seen them working with and learning from each other, as they share their sensory and fine motor experiences with the material. The children utilize different ways of processing this medium. Sense of sound: dropping or throwing the clay. Sense of touch: smoothing hands over clay, using feet to step on the clay, breaking into small pieces, sticking sections onto the wall. Sense of smell: putting the clay to their nose, and taking a deep breath in. As the children continue to work with the rigid substance, they discover an essential

tool: water. Just as real sculptors do, the children use the water to make the clay softer and more malleable. They recognize the difference in the consistency, as they squish and poke the clay/slip. As we recognize their recent developed skills using just their hands and feet, we begin to introduce clay tools. These tools require precise fine motor movements, and increased collaboration from the children.

The dramatic play area has been extensively used for both active manipulation of open-ended materials, and imaginative play. Here, we have seen a great deal of parallel play as well as social interaction. In this part of the room, the children tend to share not only the material, but also an imaginative game.

The reading area is designed as a cozy niche, where many children like to pick up a book and share it with both peers and adults. This part of the room has also been utilized as a space to socialize. Within this area, there is a large window connecting room one with room two. The children from both rooms poke, and talk into the glass in attempts to capture the attention of their neighbors. The two classrooms have begun to engage in games of hide and seek, toy show-and-tell, kisses and laughter. This spontaneous interest in the neighboring class will be a great resource for the future!

Delay of Gratification in children: <http://adsabs.harvard.edu/abs/1989Sci...244..933M>

Room 2

Class Pet

This week, we exposed the children to the empty cage of our new class pet. We did this to understand how the children would use environmental clues from the physical cage in determining what animal might live in there. They were excited to offer suggestions which included a tiger, an elephant, a snake, a skunk and a bee. Upon hearing these answers, one member of the class proclaimed that we would need a bigger cage. We will continue to talk about the possibility of what our classroom pet could be over the next few weeks.

Writing Center

Our writing center is located under the loft in our room. This week, the children have been engaged creating intentional markings with crayon and white paper. They are beginning to collaborate with each other, sharing space and materials. They have also been paying close attention to their environment, and began to investigate how the hand-cranked pencil sharpener works. They have been exploring the use of this tool by working together: one child holds the pencil while another cranks.

Reading

We have been doing a lot of reading this week. The children are working on caring for books and sharing them with classmates. Sharing books has allowed them to work on social skills and

collaboration, whether it's asking someone to look at a book with them or negotiating where they should place the book so that both children can see. We have also been reading the book *A Bear and His Boy*, by Sean Bryan as a group. This rhyming book (the *-ack* sound) follows a bear, who wakes up with a boy on his head, around town as they run around town completing a list of errands. The children are beginning to discover new terms for objects they are already familiar with: a kayak instead of a boat, a flapjack instead of a pancake and a lilac instead of a flower.

Blocks

The children began working collaboratively on building tunnels and train tracks. This common interest among our students led them explore books about trains and share their experiences on the subway. O.W said: When Cha-Cha comes to get me we will go on the subway! V.D said: I take the train with Mommy!

Reminders

Please remember to complete your family albums over the weekend so we can begin to share them.

Additionally, as mentioned in previous emails, we are asking for donations of toddler clothing for our classroom. Anything you can contribute would be appreciated. Please be aware that they will not be returned.

Room 3

Children in Room 3 are off to an exciting start of the school year! Many returned to Tribeca Community School and

reunited with friends from last year. In addition, there are new friendships with children who have joined us for the first

time. This has been particularly apparent during snack time, where last year's students have helped the newcomers to learn to pour their own glasses full of water, and help themselves to healthy treats, served family-style for small groups to share together.

Children in Room 3 have been involved with paint, and have shown progress-even since the first days of school- in creating more focused and deliberate designs. Students began painting on one large surface, sharing water and paint. Now, students are working with smaller, individual pieces of paper and water canisters. We've also introduced sharing paints on a Lazy Susan, where students are carefully rotating the paint of his or her choice around the table, taking turns with classmates for different colors. Students' designs have become increasingly more streamlined, and tables are much cleaner! As they paint, they are beginning to speak about the colors they are making, and excitedly report to their classmates whenever a new color- not on the Lazy Susan-

appears as they clean their individual water canisters and brushes at the sink.

All students in Room 3 have also personalized their workboxes, where they are beginning to place meaningful pieces of work they create during class. Many of these pieces include drawings and pictures they have made in the writing area. Also in the writing area, students have enjoyed working with inkpads and stamps. They've learned to pull the cylindrical stamps from their individual holders and match the labels, independently, when they are ready to return them. In addition, students are becoming increasingly more self-assured and responsible in opening and closing markers without the help of their teachers.

Students have been excited to share their family books, and look forward to reading and book talks, daily. Dramatic play, building with blocks, and the light table are becoming increasingly more interesting to many of the students, and will be a topic of further exploration in the next few weeks.

Room 5

Room 5 started off the new school year with water exploration in the sensory table. The teachers observed the children's interest in playing in the sink, and using the water as a material for interaction between each other. The children were offered funnels, jars for pouring and different mediums such as soapy and colored water in the sensory table. The teachers noticed that interactions at this table built connections and relationships.

Monique, our Atelierista, observed the children's interest in water and suggested that the children explore

watercolors on the light table. The class was introduced to blue, yellow and red watercolor, and different sized paintbrushes. The children interacted while painting and shared their strategies. Please visit Room 5 and see the display of the children's work over the light table. The teachers organized the hanging work to provide the children with inspiration for future work and examples of different strategies used.

Room 6

Atelier

This week, the children have been exploring a variety of materials in the atelier with Monique, our Atelierista. They have been working primarily with clay and with wire. The clay has been an engaging experience for the children who have been using their hands to pinch, pound, roll, push, mold, and sculpt.

After an initial open-ended exploration of wire, the children are discovering more of the ways that wire can be manipulated. For inspiration we are beginning to look at images of wire art by Alexander Calder.

Grocery Store

We now have a grocery store in our dramatic play area. Upon discovering empty food containers and baskets in the area, the children have begun expressing the workings of a store. FS said, "I'm going food shopping...OS, will you buy these for me?" The concept of purchasing and where money comes from will be an essential part of our investigation.

CaVaLa Park Exploration

This week we made several visits to CaVaLa Park (at the intersection of Canal, Varick, and Laight). We brought several pieces of wood to observe its motion in the fountain. The children stationed themselves at various points around the fountain and carefully observed the motion of the wood. LG

said, "it went down one waterfall and then down another and then I caught it at the end." GG said, "the board went down under the water, but then popped back up...it was like a big wave on top of it."

On Wednesday, we brought pennies (since the children noticed several at the bottom of the fountain) and the wood back to the water to experiment. When it was discovered that the pennies did not flow to the end of the fountain as the wood had, we asked them why. RG said, "because they don't float." JN said, "because they sink and don't move." HR said, "because it doesn't do anything." When asked about why they thought the pennies sank, RZ said, "because they are very small." RG said, "because there is a lot of pressure." We will continue to discuss and explore our developing theories.

Reminders

Please bring any family binders that you have at home. We need them all in by the end of the week.

We welcome empty food containers and packaging from meals that you have shared as family. These items will help to create a personal and meaningful atmosphere in this area. If possible, we would love to have multi-cultural foods with labels in different languages.

We are looking forward to an exciting new week and new school year.