

# TriBeCa Community School Newsletter

## November 13, 2009

### General Notices

#### ALL ROOMS:

Please make sure that your child has a set of weather- appropriate changing clothes

2009. All staff will be attending the NAEYC Annual Conference in Washington, DC.

#### NAEYC Conference: School Closed:

This is a friendly reminder that as you can see from the school's calendar,

We will reopen as usual on Monday November 23, 2009.

school will be closed Monday November 16, 2009 through Friday, November 20,

To learn more about NAEYC, go to: <http://www.naeyc.org/>

### Room 1

Thank you to V.C's family for coming in to celebrate a birthday. The children smiled as they connected and danced to V.C's favorite music during morning meeting. We then had the opportunity to get to know V.C. through images of him as a baby, and baked a fruit and yogurt cake.

#### Baby Dolls

For the past few months, two life-like plastic baby dolls have shared the dramatic play area- along with a crib, blankets, "bottles" (made of open ended materials), and diapers. The children of Room 1 have become increasingly interested in the dolls. One child in particular took a strong interest in the babies from the beginning, and was a large influence in teaching the other children how to work with the babies. The children "feed" the baby with

materials found around the room. We have also seen them "putting the baby to "sleep" (in the baby crib), "washing" the baby in the sink, changing his/her clothes, and trying to "change its diaper" at the changing table. More recently however, we have noticed that the children have seemed to bring the babies to life, integrating them socially into the classroom community. We have observed the children bringing the babies to the snack table, sitting the baby on a chair, and eating beside him/her. One student has tried to fit a marker into the hand of a doll, and support him/her as he/she made marks on paper. The dolls have been incorporated into our morning meeting. The children often bring them and sit them down beside them. When we pass our ball around to greet each other, they help the doll to catch the ball

and say it's name, and then throw it to another child.

Based on this growing interest, we have since introduced two large cloth dolls that are much more flexible for the children to manipulate. We continue support the children's relationship with the dolls, as they become part of our classroom community.

### **Outdoors**

An important element in the Reggio Emilia Philosophy is the connection between the school and the community, between the child and the city. Children are considered capable individuals. They are able to interact, modify, and interpret reality, and, "For the children the city is above all an existential place where one's own identity is developed in a relational experience with things and others. The city, the street corner, the house are the world".<sup>1</sup>

Because we share these values, it is our intention for the children to be an active part of the city they live in. This week we started exploring our neighborhood. We have been taking walks to CaVaLa Park.

During this trip, we invite the children to focus on the sounds of the city and on the traffic rules (the stop and go lights). At the park the children explored the large water fountain, they investigate the movement and the direction of the water through observing the floating pattern of leaves and small sticks.

Through our trips to CaVaLa park, the children had the opportunity to interact with nature: the children smelled and picked up flowers, they observed the bees gathering pollen, and attempted to catch the small nearby birds.

Our experience with the outdoors has been an opportunity for the children to challenge their motor skills: the children were free to run together, climb and test their balancing skills.

Our outdoor experiences have been both rich and meaningful. We plan to continue our exploration of the neighborhood for the remainder of the year.

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<sup>1</sup> From "Reggio Tutta, A guide to the city by the children", Reggio Children Publication

## Room 2

### Water Color

To inspire a focus on the details and color of the leaves we are studying in the tree investigation group, we scanned 3 large leaves and projected them onto the wall in the mini atelier. We noticed that the students were not as connected to this projection as they were to the projection of the tree that they visit. Perhaps this is due to the fact that they took no part in creating the photo and it was never specified that the projection was a scanned image of actual leaves, much like those that they collected last week. E.L however, did paint an image that resembled the shapes and colors of the 3 leaves but never specified what she was painting.

To continue bringing in the tree groups experiences to the entire class, we plan to take the students on another walk to the tree to look at its now changing leaves, have them take photos of it for our next art provocation, as well as have them decide what colors are needed to continue painting the tree.

### Ghost Investigation

We noticed that in the children's dramatic play they portrayed monsters and ghost in much of the same way. This led us to wonder how the two constructs differed to the children. When asked W.S said "monsters get scared". O.P corrected him saying that the "monsters" get scary." It seems that the children have accepted ghost as friendly where as monsters are more frightening to the children. Due to the fact that the children are in the stages of symbolic play, it is difficult to determine how much

of these constructs they perceive as reality.

### Music

A Room 2 parent suggested that we provide an opportunity for families to share music that is important to them with the class. We think this is a wonderful idea and would like to invite you to share a favorite song or CD with us to use during our music and movement time. It could be something popular on the radio today (clean version, please) or something more unique to your family's taste, like opera, jazz or music that is representative of a particular culture. You can burn us a CD or let us borrow the original copy for a week or two.

### Parents' Workshop

Thank you to all the parents who attended our first parents' workshop this week. It was a pleasure to share your child's work with you. The traces you left behind for them to find the next day brought great joy. Many of the children kept the notes in their cubbies and have continued to look at them from time to time. For those of you who were not able to see the presentation first hand, we are offering an opportunity to the view it on a laptop that we will set up in the parents seating area. If you would like to view it, please schedule a time with us when you child is not with you. It was worked well for many parents to view it in the morning immediately after drop off.

## Room 3

This has been the first week we have seen real dialogue in the atelier as students paint. Students have been speaking about the colors they are mixing or making, or the images that inspire them. In particular, students have been working with three colored flowers they chose themselves on a classroom walk through the neighborhood. When the flowers were presented the following day at Morning Circle, children enjoyed touching, smelling and talking about the flowers. These observations continued when students arrived at the atelier to begin painting. They focused on mixing colors-on their papers- from the paints they had mixed throughout the week, to achieve a color they were pleased with. The paintings the children have made are beautiful, and being prepared to adorn the walls of the classroom so that they have an opportunity to view, admire, and talk about each other's work.

Another bustling area in the room during work time is the building area. New building photographs are projected daily on the wall adjacent to the blocks, where remarkable designs have been built by the children, to mirror their perception of what they are looking at. From the Empire State Building, to architecture in the Far East, students have been finding similarities in open-ended materials, from packing foam to cardboard pieces, to build images with design features

comparable to what they observe in the photographs.

This week, Room 3 also had its first collaborative work session with Room 5. Room 5 teachers and students traveled to Room 3 to spend work time with us. Room 3 children proudly showed the younger Room 5 children their buildings, paint projects, and workspace. The two rooms worked incredibly cooperatively with one another, and we're looking forward to creating increased opportunities for future collaboration.

Some songs you may hear children singing at home are "Baby Shark," "Squiggly Fish," and "Five Little Pumpkins Sitting on a Gate". There are small movement exercises that accompany these songs. Ask your child to teach you the song, and let him or her show you how to move along. Songs with repetition and word patterns will help children develop phonemic awareness, as well as enhance cooperative engagement in activities.

Next week, all teachers at Tribeca Community School will be traveling to Washington DC for the NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) conference. We're so honored to have this opportunity, to absorb as much new information and research as possible, and to report back to all parents in next week's newsletter.

# Atelier

## Room 1

Clay and watercolors have continued in room 1. The clay area has gained interest from the children after the addition of open-ended wire materials were added. Their process of painting has continued to be explored and closer attention has been displayed within the mark making and to the colors themselves.

## Room 2

The children in room 2 have continued working on their tree investigation. After adding leaves into the classroom, the tree group examined them with magnifying glasses in the atelier and responded with colored pencil drawings from their observations.

## Room 3

At the end of last week, room 3 took a trip to the grocery store to pick out some flowers to paint from in their studio. The children began observational painting with the colors they have been working on in class. At the end of this week, they will have new jars for mixing specifically for the added flower provocation.

## Room 5

In room 5, both morning and afternoon classes have continued working in the clay. Towards the end of the week the children started a new approach of stacking the clay. While this new process took place the children began working together building higher pieces.

## Room 6

This week in room 6 we continued our investigations in clay and wire and began a new exploration in watercolor painting. The new medium was introduced in the afternoon class. On Thursday the afternoon class introduced the material to the morning class. The children were able to explain the process of watercolor painting and how to use the materials. As the exploration has taken off, the children have been very involved with color mixing. The wire exploration group has worked on creating freestanding sculptures. They have focused on what makes them stay upright. On Thursday they examined images of Calder's freestanding works for problem solving while working with the material.

# Room 5

## Exploring the TriBeCa Community

The children are beginning to explore the TriBeCa community by taking daily walks outside together. The class is delighted to explore the neighborhood blocks surrounding the school, and so far we have visited the horses at the

police station, the Food Emporium and the new toy store next to school. The children also visited the small sitting area across from the school and played with the large leaves on the floor. They spent the time running and crunching

the leaves with their shoes shouting, “crunch, crunch, crunch” while laughing together. This experience provided the children with an opportunity to further explore the texture of leaves together, but in a different environmental setting.

So far, our favorite place to walk to is the exit only side of the subway turnstile.

The children get to watch four trains coming and going on their tracks, and they listen together to hear the sounds of the subways approaching and departing. These shared experiences are documented, and the children will often show their friends photos and videos about the subways at our reflection meeting back in the class.

The subway trips also spark an interest in working with the train tracks in our block area and reading “Freight Train” in the reading area. Our walks provide the children with opportunities to explore and take pride in their community, as well as introduce the children to the places and people that inhabit TriBeCa.

On walks we frequently run into people we know such as parents and other students, and have made many new friends in friendly police officers, mail carriers and shop owners. In order to ensure that these experiences can continue to go smoothly, please remember to label all your child’s clothing and dress them in weather appropriate attire. If any parents would like to join us for a walk, please talk to the teachers about what time works best.

### **Toilet Learning Process In Room 5**

This week we have noticed that more children have begun to be engaged in the toilet learning process.

We have noticed that the children have become more and more familiar with the daily routines regarding the toilet

learning process and are able to carry them out with a minimum or no assistance.

We have quite a few children in class that will approach the teachers by own initiative and let us know when they have to go to the restroom.

Furthermore, we have observed that the children really have begun to help each other if they notice that their friends have forgotten elements in process of being toilet learned. Here is a conversation between two children that took place in the restroom.

Child 1: “X you need to go and sit on the big potty”.

Child 2: “I will make pee pee here (child points to the toilet)”.

Child 1: “Did X make pee pee in the big potty?”.

Child 2: “Yes, look”.

Child 1: “X needs to wipe yourself with toilet paper. Here (hands child 2 a piece of toilet paper)”.

Child 2: “Thanks”.

Child 1: “X flush the toilet”.

Child 2: Flushes the toilet.

In the dramatic play area we added toilet paper and underwear as a provocation for the children’s toilet learning process. Here are some of the quotes of how the children responded to the provocation:

“The baby wears underwear. No diaper”.

“The toilet paper is for here – (child demonstrates how to wipe you bottom on the doll in the dramatic play area) and for the nose”.

Please continue to send your children to school in “Wash and wear clothes”, pants with elastic and shoes/boots with

Velcro.

We really appreciate you sharing your toilet learning experiences with us, so

we can make a consistent environment for the children both at school and at home.

## **Room 6**

### **Mathematical Concepts**

One-to-one correspondence, one-to-one tagging and cardinality, all of the prerequisite skills for counting, continue to be present in many areas of our classroom. On Tuesday, we attached the 35th construction paper link to our chain, marking our 35th day together at school. During set-up, children are given opportunities count the number of children involved with the material and then set up the corresponding number of items.

### **Block area**

There have been very interesting and tall towers being constructed in our block area. The towers are typically built with hollow blocks first to provide a stable structure with smaller unit blocks, recycled foam materials, and small fabric pieces added to provide detail and texture to the structures. The structures take a long time to build, thus, there has been an effort to preserve them over a period of time. In order to do this, the children have begun making signs for their structures that read, "don't break it" or "don't touch." We encourage literacy in all areas of our classroom and provide opportunities to experience print.

### **Sensory Table**

This week we added dry rice and beans to our sensory table. We have provided various types of containers that allow for filling, dumping, and sifting. CD and FS noticed that certain beans were not fitting through the holes in some sifters. FS hypothesized, "The rice fit through the cracks, but the beans did not...they were too fat."

As an additional provocation in the sensory table, we added sequins. This open-ended material was provided in order to stimulate the children's pincer grasp as they were encouraged to pick out the sequins for sorting. This grasp is needed for a stronger pencil grip, which will allow for more intentional writing and drawing.

### **Thinking Critically about Books**

This week we re-read the book "We're Going on a Bear Hunt" by Michael Rosen. On the last page of the story (as the family runs away from the bear they found) the children noticed that the bear seemed "sad." When asked why, they had some interesting theories. LG: "because he wanted to be their friend." GG: "because he wanted to eat the family." RG: "because he wanted to go on the bear hunt." FS: "because he wanted to have a sleepover." FB: "because he wanted to have a camp out." We will continue to discuss these

theories, but may never reach a conclusion!

### **Conflict Resolution Skills**

It is our classroom policy to allow children to develop conflict resolution skills and become prepared to stand up

for themselves to peers and advocate for themselves. We encourage children to work out conflicts as independently as possible so that they have the chance to practice those skills.