

TriBeCa Community School Newsletter

December 11, 2009

General Notices

Parents- Teachers Conferences:

This is a friendly reminder that on Wednesday 12-16-09, the school is closed for children. Throughout that day, parents will be meeting with their child's teachers to discuss their child progress with us.

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 next week, the menu is (snack may change without notice):

Monday: Dried Fruit Medley

Tuesday: Green & Red Grapes

Thursday: Jennifer's Market Selection

Friday: Apple-Berry Oat Bars

Here's a quick and easy color guide to get children to understand why it is important to eat a rainbow of colors of fruits and veggies each day.

Green (broccoli, kale, etc.) is good for bones.

Red (tomatoes, beets, etc.) is good for the heart and blood circulation.

White (garlic, onions, cauliflower, etc.) is good for protecting us from colds.

Orange/Yellow (carrots, cantaloupe, etc) is good for our eyes.

Purple (blueberries, plums, eggplant, etc.) is good for memory.

For more information on the importance of eating the colors of the rainbow:

<http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/pubs/yf/foods/fn595w.htm>

Room 1

The Box

Since the beginning of the year, many children have been working under the loft- turning the lights on and off and opening and closing the curtains. They seem to enjoy controlling the amount of light and darkness within the space. Parallel dramatic play connected with

the concept of day/night; awake/sleep also began to blossom.

We wanted the children to continue exploring these concepts of open and close, light and shadow, clarity and darkness. In addition, we wanted to add a material which promoted collaboration, communication, and intentionality.

Therefore, we introduced a new provocation, the box.

Over the last week, a large cardboard box has occupied the central space of Room 1. The box offered a cozy and safe place to explore amidst the company and support of fellow classmates. We cut some holes in the box- ones big enough to let a small hand fit through. We wondered how the children would respond to the effect of the light streaming through the holes, and if they would use the holes to communicate from the inside of the box to the outside. The first few days, the children explored the box using their body: they went back and forth between the inside and outside and spied from the holes, familiarizing themselves with this new small space. The flashlights have been offered in order to help them continue exploring darkness and “shapes of light”.

In addition, the box can host about 5 children, and has become a strong social stimulus. The limited and dark space drives the children to work together: opening and closing the box, synchronizing active movements inside, coordinating communication through the holes, and working the flashlights.

Outside Exploration

Although the cold has arrived and winter is quickly approaching, we are still planning to explore our neighborhood as often as possible, taking advantage of the rich, natural world and the manufactured and synthetic

Superheroes

The students’ dramatic play has evolved from an interest in ghosts to an interest in superheros. The children reported

contributions of the city. During the last two weeks, we have taken the children to explore many different places- encouraging them to explore the environment using all of their senses: smelling, hearing, tasting, looking and touching. We introduced the children to the subway, observing the trains arriving and departing. The children listened closely to hear the trains approaching, celebrated the loud noises and verbalized their excitement as the train neared and departed.

We also observed the First Precinct’s horse stable next to our school, where we meet Sargent and Liberty II- two friendly horses that the children were able to pet and observe closely. The direct contact with the horses and the workers created an opportunity for the children to learn respect and care for nature, and to make connections to locals in our neighborhood.

We have walked to the local foot bridge/overpass to observe the local traffic from a different point of view. Another day we visited the nearby GranDaisy Bakery to purchase hot chocolate. This treat helped us to warm up after experiencing these cold winter days.

Reminder

Please: since we are still going outside, remember to leave a warm coat, hat, scarf, mittens and shoes for your child!

Room 2

that the ghost is no longer in the storage closet and took to wearing capes around the classroom. We decided that we would open up the thread to following the dramatic play of our students. Many

of the children have been discussing “bad heroes.” When asked what bad heroes do, the students have said that they fly and have demonstrated their fighting movements. We have been working on making pretend fighting safe between superheroes, which has proven to be a good way to fulfill the need for physical contact during play.

Additionally, the children have been demonstrating that they are growing in their understanding of the relationship between roles and props. H.H for example was looking for a sword to fulfill his superhero role when another child approached him to play parent, baby, and doctor. H.H replied that he would need to take his cape off “because parents don’t wear capes.”

Painting

We began to feel that the watercolor had run its course in our classroom. With the school’s atelierista, Monique, we decided that introducing tempera paint would be a natural progression for the children. Currently, Monique is working with a small group on mixing and creating new colors. The children experiment with different combinations with the goal of creating a color that they do not already have. This week the color “blue-green” (as O.P described it) and orange and brown were created from the primary colors.

Tree Group

Recently, we had the opportunity to take all the children for a walk to collect leaves. They were asked to look at the

details of the leaves and pick only the ones that appealed to them. The children seemed to be very engaged in this process. Some students really took their time in selecting their leaves while other enjoyed throwing handfuls of leaves and frolicking in them. It was a wonderful tactile experience for the students.

Incline Exploration

Due to an interested in moving objects up to the loft space and then back down, we introduced materials for the children to investigate movement concepts. The children were presented with various round objects, wooden chair rail to be used a track and a collection of materials that could be used to elevate the tracks. Without telling them exactly how to use each element, we asked them to move a ball from one end of the track to the other. Very quickly, they realized this could be done by creating an incline. The collection of materials to be used for elevation would allow them raise one end of the track about two inches or less. The children used some of these things, but soon realized that by propping one end of the track against the walls of the loft, they could create a MUCH steeper incline, which allows the balls to roll drastically faster and farther.

OP and AG began to use these materials for games. OP created a version of golf, while AG shouted “I win!” every time the ball made it to the end of the ramp. This investigation will allow our class to explore the relationship between the rate of incline, weight of materials, shape and texture of objects and speed. Other physical science concepts maybe be explored as we add new provocations based on how the children respond to the materials.

Room 3

Room 3 has experienced some exciting developments since we've returned from Thanksgiving break.

In the atelier, paints have been switched from tempera to watercolor. We've noticed the children are still using many of the skills they developed while working with the tempera paint: filling individual water canisters, cleaning their brushes with water, and sharing materials with one another. We've also noticed some changes with the introduction of the new paint type. Children are using more circular brush strokes, instead of linear strokes, and speaking more as they paint. They talk about the deep-colored hues on the table, how they look lighter on paper, and how much they enjoy them. To further enhance their experience with the watercolors, we have replaced the wood table with the light table, so that the transparency of the paint is

highlighted.

Because the light table is now in the atelier, the original painting table is being used for work with clay. Small groups of children are exploring clay, telling narratives as they work with their clay designs, together.

Mirrors have been placed in the writing area, where children have been using

pen and paper to carefully note detailed observations of their faces, and then draw what they observe. These self-portraits are a process, whereby children revisit their sketches, reevaluating the small details of their faces. For example, we are encouraging children to notice slight curves or bumps in their noses, freckle shapes and placements, or how their profiles look different from the front view, versus the side.

During work time, we've also started to let children tell us short stories. When work time is over, we re-tell their stories, word-for-word. We keep copies of these stories, and are hoping to see children revise- and add to- their original stories as the school year progresses. As they begin to connect more closely to their narratives, they may even be able to act them out, adding dramatic play to literacy.

Also in Room 3, we've begun to sing some new songs, as well as read new books. This week children have enjoyed Pinkalicious and Where the Wild Things Are from our book basket. Songs you may hear the children sing at home are "Bubblegum" and "Taxi". Teachers have been glad to notice that the children are responding more to rhyme and alliteration through both mediums than in previous months, as noting word parts and sounds relates to literacy readiness.

Room 4

Room 1

Over the last several weeks Room 1 has continued working in both clay and

watercolors. Last Friday we decided to add a new provocation to their mini atelier. We constructed a mobile to

hang above their clay table to see while working. The mobile was made with all the materials they have been using to work with in the clay. The sculptural work has created new energy for working in the clay and new ways of looking at the relationships between materials.

Room 2

In Room 2, the children started working with tempera paints again in their mini atelier. As a class, the children have taken several trips outside to visit their class tree. The tree group has given the rest of the class information regarding the changes of the tree. In small groups the children have begun a color investigation to deeper their ideas on mixing paints reflecting the changing of the leaves. The children have been brainstorming what colors create what while working in primary colors and white.

Room 3

As Room 3's painting progression continues, we added the light table in their mini atelier. Transparent shapes were also added during their painting process so they can compare and observe the painting transparencies within the watercolors and the light reflection. As an additional three-dimensional material, clay has been introduced this week. Exploring the properties of the clay alone, the children

shared important ideas and ways of working the clay. The children have already begun the build and stack the clay along with seeking materials to create new textures.

Room 5

Room 5 has continued working with clay in their mini atelier. Over the last several weeks they have been working with different sized wire and open-ended materials. We reintroduced the clay in a larger context and the children have been attaching the wire upright and through the clay. The children have continued using their hammers and tools while constructing the clay and wire materials.

Room 6

As Room 6 clay study progresses, we have a new small group coming the atelier. The children have continued with their own idea of building up to the ceiling and how they can do this with clay, wire and natural materials. In the afternoon, the wire group has moved on creating freestanding sculptures using added provocations creating them to bead and wrap new glass and wood materials with their wire. The afternoon watercolor group has continued exploring the paints and how to create color by overlapping and has recently begun working in a crayon resist process from their growing interest and experiences in drawing in their journals.

Room 5

Light and Color Investigation

The investigation of light and color continued in our classroom this week, and the children experienced many new materials and provocations. One major change to the light area was the addition

of an overhead projector. The projector was placed on the floor directly opposite the light table and mirrored wall, which allowed the children the opportunity to adjust the focus and angle of projection. The teachers continued the work with

colored vinyl by using the yellow vinyl to cover the glass on the overhead projector, creating a yellow projection. In other areas of Room 5 there was green vinyl added to the block table platform, blue vinyl added in the dramatic play sink, and red vinyl covered the large boxes in our newly created "Box City". The light table was presented with markers on top of a covered clear sheet with new natural materials. The teachers observed the children experimenting with both the markers and the overhead projector. The children were excited to draw directly on the light table, as opposed to the paper they were formerly working with. They expressed interest in the materials presented on the table with comments such as, "Look, I'm adding blue to this feather." The children are

still forming an understanding of how the overhead projector works and are beginning to develop theories as they explore and experiment.

Box Play

Recently the room 5 teachers have introduced cardboard boxes as a provocation on the round rug. This decision came after carefully observing the children's efforts to find a private and intimate space. Since the introduction of the boxes we have observed various forms of play on the round rug. Filling and dumping has continued with these boxes, and an emphasis on transportation has begun. One child climbed into a large box, sat

upright and using his index finger drew a round circle on the cardboard piece in front of him. He said "we're going, we're going to grandma's house. Beep, Beep". We have also observed "sleeping" in the boxes, and have provided large and small boxes to foster various types of play and to support the children to challenge their bodies to fit into a multitude of boxes.

Open-ended materials such as boxes support children's imagination and provoke meaningful play. We are excited to see how the children continue to use these boxes in the future!

Toilet Learning

By now most of the children in Room 5 are being toilet learned and some of them are by now able to go to the restroom with minimum or no assistance. This experience have once again taught us that toilet learning vs. toilet training supports children's independence and awareness for themselves and the world around them. Furthermore we believe that by having the children's thoughts, ideas and interest as a starting point for this experience have continued to keep them and each other engaged. 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

Grocery Store

Our grocery store/dramatic play area

has become a very interesting place to work in our classroom. Following a trip

to Jin Market on Hudson Street two weeks ago, the children became interested in the gelato (or ice cream) section of the market. The teachers drew the children's attention to the different sized cups and asked about pricing. RG: "You need big money for the big things and small money for the small things." FS: "But sometimes you need big money for little things and small money for the big things." Later FS said, "But the medium size is almost as small as the small one, so they would be the same." We are beginning to explore the idea of volume and what may fit in the different sized ice cream cups and how this may change pricing.

Interest has arisen in terms of pricing orange juice. With the availability of oranges in the grocery store, KA explains that the half-gallon carton of orange juice is \$2 and the half-gallon plastic jug is \$5 because, "because this needs only two oranges and that needs five oranges, to make it." We will be working with this theory as well as others on how different quantities of oranges may create different amounts of juice that fits in certain containers.

Block area

We have added more large hollow blocks to the block area, along with various fabric squares and recycled foam materials. The children have been experimenting with balance as they have created several structures that are built while leaned against the wall. HR and CD began this work with a leaning structure. The following day, CD, HR, RG, and HL worked together to recreate this type of structure. When their structures fell, they continued to work at figuring out an angle that works. Over

the course of three days, these leaning structures became a study of angles and balance as the children worked together.

Floating and Sinking: Using the Scientific Method

As we continue to study how various objects may float or sink in water, we have been following the scientific method to experiment with these objects. We ask the children to make predictions about certain objects and justify their prediction. Following this, we have started to test the objects in a bin filled with water. After testing each object, we record our data on a large chart. After testing a number of objects, a small group sat down and placed the objects in a Venn diagram created by two large hoops (with space to place the objects that either float, sink, or float AND sink). The children analyzed the data from the chart to figure out where to place these objects. For further analysis, we tallied the number of objects in each category. The next step will be to look more closely at the objects in each group to discuss the similarities and differences among the objects in order to come to conclusions about which objects tend to float or sink.

Games

An emerging thread in our classroom has become the creation of rule-based games by the children. We are in the process of compiling the children's game ideas (directions, rules, how to win/lose) in a binder for children to refer to during work time. It becomes a wonderful way for children to teach each other and negotiate how they follow the created rules

Reminders

We want to remind you to please check your child's extra clothes bag in our bathroom to make sure that their change of clothes is weather-appropriate and includes a shirt, pants, socks, and underwear.

For our grocery store, we are looking for different sized orange juice containers, so if you have any at home, please bring them to our store!

