



JUNEAU CO-OP
PRESCHOOL

newsletter

January 2016

Looking backwardforward

Winter Break Woodworking
Lanterns Lunar New Year
Shadows Valentines
Bird Feeders

Hello Preschool Families

Welcome back to preschool. Because of the break, there is not a great deal of news to report since the last newsletter, but there are several things worth noting. At the end of last year we welcomed the families of Hazel Himes and Santiago Hoff to the Tuesday/Thursday class, and Lukas Hensch to the Monday/Wednesday/Friday class. If you have not had the chance to meet them yet, please introduce yourself. I have already heard a request for a playdate with at least one of these new friends. Congratulations to Fisher and his family on the birth of his sister, Stella, who was kind enough to wait for the break to make her grand entrance into the world.

While many of the adults are still recalibrating to the quicker pace of regular routines following the winter break, the preschoolers have returned with full steam and we are rallying to keep up with them. Extended breaks often bring with them growth spurts, physically as well as socially and emotionally, and with the New Year has come new and shifting friendships among the preschoolers. Children who formerly chose to play alone or maintain a safe distance from group play are now finding friends to join in play scenarios. Others who often needed the security of a particular friend are branching out to play with new children or follow their own interests independently. The more options a child has for playmates, the easier it is for them to negotiate preschool, so let us know if we can help facilitate a possible friendship you hear about from your child, and we will do the same. You can read more about friendships elsewhere in this newsletter.

We only had a week of making lanterns, but the children continue to enjoy incorporating the small electric lights into their forts, houses, shops and dens in the climbing room. We anticipated hanging bird feeders in the preschool neighborhood, but most of the children wanted to take them home. Thanks to Kayla's dad, Riley, we have a lovely bird ID poster at preschool if you would like to identify birds visiting your feeders at home. Outside at preschool, the children have managed to take full advantage of snow, ice, rain and dirt. The real metal shovels have proved, at times, to be even more attractive than the balance bikes on the play yard. The shovels are available at Home Depot if you want to add it to your list of preschooler gift ideas.

Next month will bring Valentine celebrations, which we like to see as an opportunity for literacy at preschool. Some of the first words children show interest in writing are their own names, mom and dad, and the names of family members and friends. Watch for class lists and details about how we do these celebrations at preschool as we get closer to the holiday.

As always, thanks for all you do at preschool.

Mary, Rhonda, and Kathleen

Mike (Berci's dad): "Here's a penny. Will it sink or will it float?"

Errol: "Neither. It's for paying."



Crosby (helping Mary plant the amaryllis bulb):
“I just love the smell of the dirt.”



Apple Millet

Millet is highly nutritious, easy to digest, gluten free and versatile! Enjoy it fluffy like rice or creamy like this porridge... or in baked goods! Millet's mildly nutty flavor lends itself to all manner of sweet or savory recipes.

- 1 cup Millet
- 1 cup Frozen apple juice concentrate (thawed)
- 2 cup Water
- 1-2 Apples, roughly chopped (the preschoolers loved doing this part!)
- pinch or two of salt

Put everything in the pot and bring it to a boil, then simmer for 20 mins or so. There is no need to stir, unless you have a little cook who wants to “help.” You might want to add more liquid... sometimes millet is extra thirsty!



Odds and ends

Thank you Gracias Merci

To everyone for your generous holiday gifts to the teachers.

Riley Woodford for the bird identification poster.

Buck Willoughby & Jasmine Himes for feeding the teachers.

Saturday Morning Movie support:

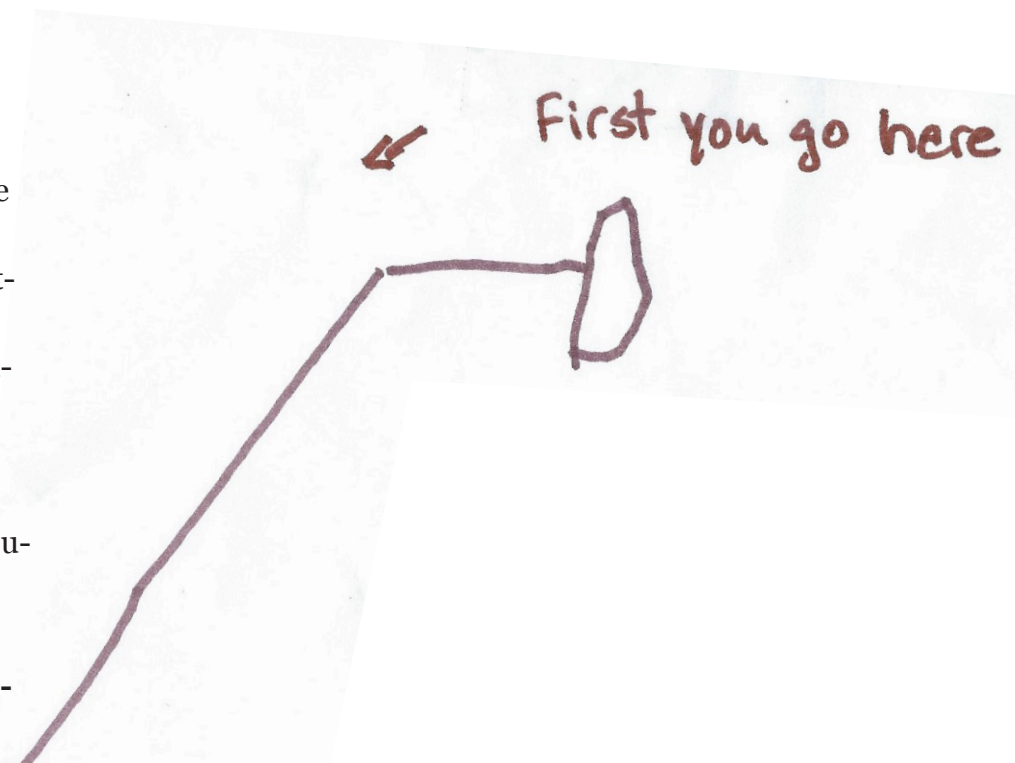
Shannon Seifert, Buck Willoughby, and Maressa Jensen for the production and distribution of posters over the break.

All who rallied and made baked goods to sell.

Deanna Ewing, Kristin Lee, and Lori Thomson for working at the door and concessions.

Special thanks to **Collette Costa** this month for stepping off of a plane and coming straight to the theatre to run the projector.

The January Nickelodeon movie and bake sale bought in \$578. Thank you for participating.



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Ways you can help

Fostering friendships

The ability to form and maintain friendships is an important component of the surge in social-emotional growth that occurs during the preschool years. Satisfying friendships are important to both children and adults; naturally we want our children to be able to form them. Here are a few things to consider when looking at your child's social development.

Attachment history: Every child needs an unbreakable bond with at least one adult who loves them unconditionally. It sets the stage for all future relationships. By the time they reach preschool, children either have or have not experienced secure attachment. Subsequent experiences may mitigate but cannot alter the effects of that fundamental first. Most children have also experienced friendship through proximity most commonly because their parents have friends with kids whom they are experienced in playing with. Others have formed proximity friendships in child care. These friendships are real; the more time children spend interacting with each other, the better they get at it. Upon entering preschool however, most children encounter a wider circle of unfamiliar peers.

Temperament: is an inborn nature or character of a person that tends to be a lifelong trait. "Intense", "slow-to-warm", and "flexible" are the terms currently used to describe the most common temperaments seen in infants and young children. Obviously your child's temperament is going to influence their approach to new people and situations. Some children come to preschool and jump right in with the expectation that they will like others and be liked in return. This approach often becomes a self-fulfilling prophesy. Others enter more cautiously, needing to form a secure bond with a teacher or a known playmate before they enter the larger fray of unpredictable peer relationships. For some of these children the best defense is a good offense and what looks like aggression may actually be the child's attempt to alleviate anxiety. Children with intense temperaments may be anywhere on the extroversion-introversion spectrum but wherever they are, they're going to be there, well, intensely. Respect your child's temperament and do not force them to go faster or farther than they are ready to go. As loving parents and teachers we can model friendly behavior and facilitate situations in which they are likely to experience success in peer interactions. What we shouldn't do is go against or try to change a child's inborn temperament. Let your child decide when they want to initiate or respond to play-date invitations. Some children are perfectly happy to spend most of their time with siblings and family. Some love having one, or two or more friends over every day. Some prefer to spend free time alone. If circumstances require they be at day care all day, look for a good fit. A wise provider will create a time and space for an introverted child to take a break from constant social contact as well as opportunities for intense extroverts to socialize in active play.



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Fostering friendships

Age: Three year olds who don't know each other will often come together over a shared interest in playing with desirable toys. Sometimes they will play side by side, peripherally aware of what the other is doing but each playing on their own. They are often happy playing alone with a toy and parents shouldn't worry if they seem more interested in stuff than in their classmates. Playdates at this age go better if there are enough materials for all players since they are not yet proficient at sharing and taking turns. Older four- and five-year olds will form friendships based on similar interests and are more likely to collaborate with each other. Socio-dramatic play at this age is intensely rewarding for children when it goes well, and, though they still love stuff, the shared story is more important whether it's superheroes, princesses or playing house. Children engaged in this kind of play are more apt to take turns, exhibit impulse control and, sometimes, give up their own agendas for the sake of the play.

Once you've taken into account your child's age and temperament, be alert to emerging friendships and provide opportunities for them to grow. Playdates outside of preschool are a good way to do this. Keep them short at first and end them while things are going well. Sometimes meeting at a neutral location such as a beach or playground eliminates conflicts over the host child having to share their turf. It's also a solution for the times when you feel your house isn't clean enough for company. Don't take an introverted child to a gym or bouncy house where children are already involved in rambunctious play and tell them to "go play" though. It's not going to happen.

At preschool you can help children on the margins of play by either helping them find a role within the play scripts of others: "I wonder if these superheroes have seen your lost cat?" or by linking solitary players: "Shall we make your road go to his construction site so he can get a delivery?" Playing together is the beginning of friendship. Don't push too hard though. Some children need to just watch for a bit. If you sense your cautious child is intimidated by the climbing room, talk to a teacher about bringing him early, before the room has become crowded with players.

Preschool children are still learning about emotional self-regulation and appropriate communication required for reciprocal friendships. If you notice patterns that concern you or your child seems discouraged, reading books about friendship is a good way to encourage discussion. Ask us for recommendations if you need them and know that we are paying attention to all the friendship permutations that are going on. Every child's process is unique but the impulse to connect is strong and persistent.

