

News from Learning Circle Preschool

October 2017



Dates to Remember

- **NO SCHOOL MON. OCT. 9:**
COLUMBUS DAY
- **Wed. Oct. 11 Board Meeting and Parent Discussion**
- **Friday Oct. 13 at 8:30 am Early Bird Parenting Drop-In**
- **Wednesday Oct 17 Curriculum Night 6:30-8:30**
- **Fri. Oct 27 National Food Day Celebrations**
(details to follow)
- **Conferences Begin in November**
(check details with your child's teachers)
- **Saturday Nov. 18 community puppet show at 11 AM**
- **NO SCHOOL FRIDAY. NOV 10:**
VETERAN'S DAY

Please check our website, including the "Current Parents" sections, often. There is something new just about every week! It's also an easy way to link to the Bird's Nest Blog. And please forward information via social media too!

Curriculum Night Oct. 17th 6:30-8:30

Please reserve the evening of TUESDAY OCTOBER 17(6:30-8:30) for the entire Learning Circle community of adults to get together to socialize and to learn more about the program. At curriculum night, there will be food (pot luck) and informal conversation with other parents and with teachers. We'll also break up into small groups (by classroom) so that you can get to know your own child's teachers, talk about the program for the year, see displays, have your questions answered, and meet the parents of your child's classmates. Representatives of the school's Board of Directors will also be on hand to describe some details about what the Board will be doing this year, and how parents can participate in the program.

We'll post a sign up for the potluck in our entryway soon. We hope you will all be able to join us!

Drop-In Parent Discussion on Fri. Oct. 13, 8:30-9:30 a.m.

Our first parenting discussion this year will be held on the morning of Friday October 13 between 8:30-9:15. Drop in for coffee (no need to be right on time or stay the whole time) and a conversation. This month's topic will be **Talking with Children About Race and Diversity**. We'll follow up on our community

presentation on Talking with Children About Race and highlight some beginning approaches for this year's LCP anti-bias curriculum from the classrooms. We will also encourage family members to share perspectives on their priorities for future discussions, as an anti-bias curriculum approach is embedded in every aspect of curriculum and classroom interaction, including proactive conversations about race and ethnicity, learning styles, gender, class, and more.

We'll also talk about topics you'd like to include in future meetings.

Hope you'll join the discussion!

We will have a sign up form in the welcome room. Although you don't have to sign up to come, letting us know your plans will help assure we have chairs and food for all!

This year we will have informal coffee and drop-in times every Friday morning. Katrina or another teacher will be around to talk about whatever you'd like, and will occasionally bring articles or other materials that relate to things happening around the school. We'll start by following up on one parent's request to think together about things to do with children at home that connect to school experiences and conversations.



Magpie Puppets performs "The Three Little Pigs" Nov. 18th at 11 a.m.

Magpie Puppets will perform "The Three Little Pigs" at Learning Center Preschool on Saturday, November 18th at 11:00 A.M.

Mama Pig has had quite enough of cleaning up after her fully grown little pigs! She sends them off with affection and money to make their way in the world. Which little pig will build a house that can withstand the powerful puffs of the Big Bad Wolf—surfer Georgie, farmer Jeremiah or Amelia, the avid reader? Children share their favorite sports, veggies and books with the puppets.

Magpie Puppets have been dramatizing favorite children's stories in schools and libraries throughout New England for many years. Each show features a musical introduction, colorful hand puppets, lively humor and plenty of audience participation.

Upcoming Fall Conferences

We are planning to start fall conferences in November.

Conferences are times to sit with a teacher for about 30 minutes to talk about your child's initial adjustment to school. Teachers will be happy to discuss any questions you may have about the school year so far and to talk to you about the year's goals and curriculum as they relate to your child. Conferences are also times for teachers to share the beginnings of the portfolio systems that are in place to record your child's growth and development in school this year.

Since there are so many parents to meet, and time is so limited, we ask that you choose your conference time carefully. Please be sure you'll be able to arrive on time and come without children, since we cannot have an extensive conversation with little ones there. And if you must cancel, please be sure to call us well in advance.

You may want to talk with another parent about watching your children for you while you meet teachers if you are willing to reciprocate. We can try to help you coordinate a schedule and a space for the children to play if you decide to do this.

Food Day Celebration October 27th

We hope that many of you will join us on October 27th as we celebrate Food Day again this year. **Food Day** is a nationwide celebration of healthy, affordable, and sustainably produced food, and a grassroots campaign for better food policies. It builds all year long and culminates on the October 24. This will be our ninth annual food day celebration at the school!

The goals of the National Food Day program fit well with Learning Circle's use of the Early Sprouts Curriculum and emphasis on nutritious snacks, and science investigation. Parents will be able to participate in activities with their children for all or any part of our morning. And we'll have a sign up in the welcome room for 6-8 parents who are willing to help us by spending the morning helping organize activity centers and supporting children as they participate.

We'll set up learning centers on the school's playground (weather permitting) to use between 9:30 and 11 am including gardening, arts, and science activities. The focus of each activity will be on healthy food choices, where food comes from, investigating the science of some familiar vegetables, and planting.

Social Themes across the Whole School Curriculum

As we begin our school year together, it is important to all of us that we establish a sense of security, support, and safety for every child. Working through transitions and feelings about separation from home are part of this effort, as is assuring that our classroom rules and expectations are clear to the children. We need children to know the boundaries around behavior in school, and we need to assure that children can trust that they are physically safe in school. We also work very hard to assure that our climate offers children a sense of emotional security, so that a sense of trust can serve as a foundation for our experiences together.

This year, we are focusing directly on issues of emotional safety in our environment by beginning a series of small group experiences in every class that will encourage children to talk about their feelings, fine tune pro-social behaviors develop problem solving and conflict resolution skills, and notice kindness in our interpersonal relationships at school. We have begun our efforts to build a sense of community through music, puppetry, feelings discussions, and the writing and discussing of classroom rules. The process looks a bit different in each classroom and across development, but in each classroom curriculum is well under way to support each child's sense of connection to the whole school community.

In addition, we will be using two formal curriculums in support of social competency. One is called Woven Word, which uses literacy experiences and books to focus on social issues. Another is called Second Step, which is based in picture discussion. More details about these will follow as we move forward this year.

We hope you'll look for how this aspect of our curriculum develops over the whole school year!

Here are some of the ways that the social skills curriculum will be implemented in our various classrooms in the next few weeks:

- ☞ Feelings faces will be mounted on the wall on a Velcro strip in the classrooms. Have a feeling you'd like to express and/or talk about? Just choose the closest representation on this chart to begin a process
- ☞ In all classrooms, self portraits are encouraged, as children examine their features in mirrors, draw, and describe.
- ☞ In all classrooms, structures are in place to assure that the routine includes singing children's names, and using name cards (encouraging the recognition of one's own and those of others in the class)
- ☞ When strong feelings are expressed, follow up conversations include all children, so that there is both social support from peers and an opportunity to share perspectives (I remember when I was sad...)
- ☞ Many classroom songs include singing the names of classmates, and include space for simple improvisations from each child



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- ☞ A kindness bell system has been implemented in the nuthatch and goldfinch room, where children who notice kind behavior on the part of another child can ask that the bell be rung in recognition of the kindness. In the chickadee room, teachers recognize and commend the kind words and actions viewed daily in the classroom, and encourage children to do the same.
- ☞ Puppets representing various feelings will be made soon, to encourage children to develop a feelings vocabulary and to encourage conversation about times children feel happy, sad, angry, disappointed, sleepy, surprised, shy, etc.
- ☞ The chickadee class has begun using two classroom puppets (Lisa and Charlie) to help with feelings about the transition into school and making friends, and to help with picture discussions about feelings. This is one part of the Second Step curriculum used in each classroom.

Here are a few titles of children's books that feature themes relating to our feelings curriculum:

- [Alexander and the Terrible Horrible No Good Very Bad Day](#); Judith Viorst
- [C is for Curious](#); Woodleigh Hubbard
- [Chrysanthemum](#); Kevin Henkes
- [Darcy and Gran Don't Like Babies](#); Jane Cutler
- [Feelings](#); Joanne Murphy
- [The First Day of School](#); Patricia Relf
- [The Goodbye Book](#); Judith Viorst
- [I Like Me](#); Nancy Carlson
- [Julius the Baby of the World](#); Kevin Henkes
- [Making Friends](#); Fred Rogers
- [Shy Charles](#); Rosemary Wells
- [The Story of Ferdinand](#); Munro Leaf
- [There's a Nightmare in my Closet](#); Mercer Mayer
- [Today I Feel Silly](#); Jamie Lee Curtis
- [Too Close Friends](#); Shen Roddie
- [Wemberly Worried](#); Kevin Henkes
- [Where the Wild Things Are](#); Maurice Sendak

A Note on Parent/Teacher Communication and NAEYC

Good communication and a strong partnership with families are central to our mission at Learning Circle Preschool, and it is an important area to consider in relation to NAEYC accreditation as well. We have many systems in place to accomplish this:

- Daily notes on our doors about the day's activities
- Journaling through email communication
- Talking in person with someone from each child's family at arrival and departure times at least once per week, if not more
- Making sure we are available for telephone calls or other communication that you feel we need
- Weekly notes about past and upcoming curriculum themes for each class
- Newsletters monthly with information about points of interest across the whole school
- Documentation of children's work and play via displays in the classrooms, welcome room, and hallways

Are we meeting our goals? Please let us know if we are not reaching your family, so that we can fine tune our systems and assure you are receiving all the information about your child's day at school that you need!

Another note about NAEYC: We are beginning our ninth year as an accredited program. During our last accreditation visit and evaluation, the school was recognized as having achieved 100% of criteria in 9 of 10 categories, and in one category the school achieved more than 90% of all criteria. Our next naeyc visit is due in the fall of 2018.