

November 2019



**Dates to Remember**

- **Wed Nov 15<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting at 7; Discussion on Program Options and Kindergarten Readiness Issues starts at 8 p.m.**
- **Thurs. Nov 15<sup>th</sup> drop in discussion 8:45-9:30 a.m. - Program Options and Kindergarten Readiness Issues Discussion continues**
- **Saturday Nov. 16<sup>th</sup> Open House 9-10:30 a.m. (please spread the word!)**
- **Saturday Nov. 16<sup>th</sup> Good Hearted Entertainment presents Word Play at 11 AM**
- **NO SCHOOL Wed. Nov.27- Fri. Nov.29: THANKSGIVING**
- **Wednesday December 11th: Whole Board Meeting at 7p.m. with Discussion Beginning at 8 p.m.**
- **Friday December 14<sup>th</sup>: Drop-in Discussion**
- **Friday December 20<sup>th</sup> FAMILY DANCE 11 a.m.**

## Thanks for Your Support of Our Program

We feel very lucky to have such a strong community of support working on behalf of the children here at Learning Circle Preschool.

Thanks to many of you, children have been appreciating and enjoying the support that comes from parents helping in the classrooms – whether it’s cooking, organizing craft projects, sharing a skill, or just coming to spend some time. Thanks to all who have already helped in the classrooms and thanks to those planning to join us in the future – you are all welcome.

Thanks to all those parents who have generously contributed time, services, goods, or funds to our school. We depend on your on-going support to help us keep tuition costs as low as possible and the quality of each child’s experience at a maximum.

A special thanks from all the teachers for the delicious lunches and supply of chocolates to help us through our day.

Thanks too to our very active Board of Directors. Committees are underway, where Board members will be working with any interested parents on behalf of the children and the program. We hope everyone will check for news often, and will find ways to share ideas and enthusiasm to this essential work.

## Program Evaluation

Your feedback is an important component of our annual evaluative processes here at LCP. We are beginning to prepare surveys now that will be available for you to fill out in early December.

Questions include opportunities for you to offer feedback about all aspects of the program – from your interactions with teachers, ability to collect information about your child’s experiences, ways we can better support families, to the workings of the current Board of Directors.

We hope you’ll look for this survey when it’s ready and share your perspectives with all of us. We use your feedback as we fine tune our goals for the year.



### Good Hearted

**Entertainment** creates performances that combine puppetry and clowning to educate and delight young audiences and the young at heart. "Word Play" was inspired by founder Honey Goodenough's experience learning to manage her own dyslexia and literacy challenges. The show was developed in 2016 as part of Puppet Showplace Theater's "Incubator" program for new works. Originally created with fellow clown and educator Harry LaCoste and musician Paul Watkins, "Word Play" combines puppetry with many other art forms to bring words to life in new and exciting ways!

### Drop in Discussion Thursday

Nov. 15<sup>th</sup> 8:45-9:30 a.m.

We'll talk about the program options here at LCP and what to think about as you make decisions about next year's experience for your child. We'll also talk about kindergarten readiness issues for those who have questions or concerns.

## Good Hearted Entertainment Saturday Nov.16<sup>th</sup> at 11 AM

Plan on joining us for a children's puppet show on Saturday November 16<sup>th</sup> at 11 a.m.

We appreciate contributions of snack items and drinks for this event. There is a signup sheet in the welcome room.

"**Word Play**" uses clowning and puppetry to take audiences on an adventure through the alphabet. Words come to life in the hands of two skilled performers, who clown around with sounds and letters to create dozens of interactive characters and imaginative scenes. Audiences can make friends with vowels, teach tricks to a "C-A-T" and "D-O-G," and visit a whole ZOO full of surprises. It's the perfect blend of education and entertainment—a play on words, literally!

You should have received a flyer with details about the performance via email. Please tell your family and friends to save the date – all are welcome.

## Outdoor Play

We are going outside each day at school, and ask that you assure that children have the appropriate layers for comfortable play. Extra sweaters, warm coats, hats, mittens, and socks should always be on hand. If there is a chance that outdoor play spaces will be muddy, then boots are necessary too. And shoes should be good for active play – with non-slipping soles, backs, and ties.

If everyone in the group has appropriate gear, we go out at least for a walk to get some fresh air.

You may wonder about whether or not children with a cough or lingering cold should go out.

In general, if children are well enough to come to school, we have to assume that they are well enough to play outdoors. We are unable to arrange for children to stay inside when the group goes out, since teachers need to keep the group together for safe outdoor supervision.

If you have concerns about outdoor play after your child has been ill, please do talk to your child's teachers. We don't want to unduly stress the child's recovery, but do want to be clear with you about the adaptations in our day that we can, and cannot, accommodate.

## Let Us Know What You Think

Your feedback is important to us! We've tried to be consistent about the curriculum notes and classroom information parents are receiving about their child's program. And we've tried to be sure that you've received newsletters, snack menus, and other program information in a timely way.

Are you getting the information about your child's program that you need? Is there anything you wished you told us at your child's conference or in other conversations with teachers?

We hope you'll let us know what you think. In early December we'll be distributing questionnaires about our program to help us collect feedback from everyone. The forms we use are those required by NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) but you are always welcome to add your own comments and ideas on these questionnaires



## Family Dance Friday December 20

Please join us for our annual family dance on Friday December 20th, 11:00 AM – departure time.

We'll set up snack, sing songs, and try a few circle and line dances. All are invited – parents, grandparents, all family and friends.

Since the experience is new to many of the children, we do ask that each adult support their children as they figure out how to join in a dance, watch, sit for a snack, or join our whole group singing.

If you can't come, we understand. Teachers will be spending time with the children who can't have family representation.

We hope many of you can come.

## Thanksgiving

As Thanksgiving grows closer and plans are being made for the celebration, it's useful to think about the holiday from the perspective of young children.

Holidays and traditions are important parts of our lives, and they are opportunities to reflect, feel connections to our histories, and share experiences with our families and friends.

When planning a meaningful Thanksgiving celebration with preschoolers, conversations can help them:

1. Express their feelings and ideas about family gatherings
2. Begin to develop an understanding of history and the passage of time
3. Find out specific information about the past and make connections between the past and the present.

A focus on personal feelings, family gathering, sharing, helping, and working together, giving thanks, and making and giving gifts to others is of primary importance for young children.

## Changes in Routine

In many families, plans for Thanksgiving celebrations have already begun. Along with the happy expectation of a holiday gathering with family and friends, come changes in our usual routine and often some pressure to prepare and meet deadlines. As the holiday draws closer, changes may include increased shopping trips, extensive hours spent in the kitchen selecting and preparing just the right recipe, possibly re-arranging furniture to accommodate guests, and purchasing or preparing holiday clothing for the day or packing and planning for an anticipated trip.

Children are often affected by change. For young children especially, consistency and an understanding of what's happening next can be an important foundation in their sense of security. When young children notice changes in routine they may feel anxious or insecure. They may exhibit negative behavior, seeking attention, as a signal that they need some help with these feelings.

To help alleviate potential stress or insecurity, and to assure that the holidays offer opportunities for young children to grow and feel connected, it's important to find ways to help children feel involved in the preparations.

If you will be traveling, talking with your child about family plans is important. Allowing children to make some choices about what to take, and remembering favorite items, helps children with the transition of getting ready. If the trip includes visits to family, children can be encouraged to bring something meaningful to them as gifts, such as drawings or paintings.

If you are planning a gathering at home, it is helpful to involve children in planning and preparations for the day. Children can contribute to decisions about what to wear, may be able to help decide seat placement at the table, or may help prepare a simple recipe, such as cutting fruit or preparing a salad.

## Talking Together About History and the First Thanksgiving

Many preschoolers have a variety of ideas and impressions about the first Thanksgiving, Pilgrims, and Native Americans. Quite a few of these impressions are inaccurate. The Thanksgiving holiday offers an opportunity to talk about features of past cultures in ways that connect to the children's present lives and interests. It is important that whatever information is shared with children be accurate historically.

Young children may be interested in talking about how:

1. People live in all kinds of houses now, and did in the past as well. All people need shelter. (If children are interested, comparisons can be made between the materials traditionally used in the past for housing among both Native Americans and early European settlers, and with modern materials used for housing.)
2. People make and use tools, now and in the past.
3. People farm, eat, and use a variety of foods, and prepare them in a variety of ways.
4. People need clothing and wear a variety of clothing styles and materials.
5. People from different cultures have their own ways to celebrate holidays and may celebrate different holidays as well. People enjoy a variety of games, and have a variety of customs, but these customs often serve similar purposes.
6. People help each other when they share ideas and work together.
7. The places people live now did not always look the same way as they do now.
8. There are Native Americans now, as there were in the past; modern life is different for all of us.
9. Relatives of the Pilgrims live now; we live now and have relatives who lived in the past; and modern life is different for all of us.
10. Not everyone celebrates the same holidays we do.

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## How does our approach to holidays relate to NAEYC criteria about history and social studies?

Children's understanding of social studies themes and of history begins from personal and family experience, and then extends to the larger community. There are a number of NAEYC criteria that directly relate to our approach to holidays in general, and Thanksgiving in particular.

### NAEYC criteria 2.L - Curriculum Content Area for Cognitive Development: Social Studies

.01 Children are provided varied learning opportunities that foster positive identity and an emerging sense of  
**a.** self and  
**b.** others.

Talking about personal experiences in relation to seasonal events, then hearing from other children about their own experiences, strengthens each child's sense of self at the same time as exposing them to the diversity of family experiences in our community. Not every friend has the same family experiences, celebrates the same holidays, or thinks about shared holidays in the same way.

.02 Children are offered opportunities to become a part of the classroom community so that each child feels accepted and gains a sense of belonging.

School activities focus on what we have in common and on a strong sense of community within each class and across the school. Sharing songs, cooking together, making "give away" gifts for all the children in school whether we know them well or not, and preparing, then sharing a seasonal "feast" all strengthen a sense of community and connection.

.03 Children are provided varied opportunities and materials to build their understanding of diversity in  
**a.** culture,  
**b.** family structure,  
**c.** ability,  
**d.** language,  
**e.** age, and  
**f.** gender  
 in non-stereotypical ways.

.011 Kindergartners are provided opportunities and materials that help them link learning about their hometown, their state, the United States and their country of origin to previous learning, as a foundation for learning geography, history, and social studies.

As children talk about family experiences, family members, and their celebrations, we consciously include language that is inclusive of the diversity of experiences among families. For example, we might say, "Your family....(another child) told us they.....at their house.....some families.....")

Additionally, is important to us at Learning Circle that when we do talk about an historical context for holidays like Thanksgiving, we do not perpetuate myths about history and that we attempt to present a diversity of perspectives about that history.

### Books in our library that directly support these themes:

Squanto and the First Thanksgiving  
1621 A New Look at Thanksgiving  
Secret of Saying Thanks, The  
It's Thanksgiving  
Thanksgiving is for Giving Thanks  
Giving Thanks  
Gracias the Thanksgiving Turkey  
Over the River and Through the Wood

Celsi, Teresa  
Grace, Catherine  
Wood, Douglas  
Prelutsky, Jack  
Sutherland, Margaret  
Swamp, Chief Jake  
Cowley, Joy  
Manson, Christopher

### Some other related themes:

Travel and family trips, airplanes, airports, car trips  
Visits from grandparents, trips to visit grandparents