

September 2022



Dates to Remember

- Sat. Oct 1st: October tuition payments are due
- Sat. Oct. 1st : "Fun Raiser" at Houghton's Pond 2-4 p.m.
- Mon. Oct. 10th: NO SCHOOL
- Wed. Oct. 12th: Virtual Whole Board Meeting at 7:30 p.m. with Discussion Beginning at 8 p.m. on – Social-Emotional learning and Second Step
- Tues. Oct. 18th: Virtual Discussion 9:30-10:30 a.m. – Taking Opportunities to Support Social Emotional Learning at Home and at School
- Thurs. Oct 20th Curriculum Night 7-9
- Fri. Oct 21st School celebration of National Food Day (details to follow)
- End of Oct. and beginning Nov. Family Conferences with teachers begin to be scheduled

Getting started in the Classrooms

At the beginning of each school year, our main focus is on helping children feel comfortable in their new classroom, and in getting to know each child as an individual. There are new classroom routines each year that all of us need time to adjust to. Here are some of the ways we begin this adjustment process:

1. We talk with the children about the specifics of what happens in a school day: what they can expect. For example, we may remind the children "after meeting it's time to play, then we'll have snack, clean up, and look at books..."
2. We encourage children to make independent choices when that's appropriate. If you take a look around the classroom, you'll notice the diverse materials available to the children from which they can choose.
3. We'll help the children develop a sense of how long the school day will last. For example, we remind them that after we play outside it will be time to go home. We also help children make connections with classmates as they become ready to do so, so that we can all get to know each other and start to feel a sense of community around the classroom.

Curriculum Night October 20th 7-9 p.m.

Please reserve the evening of THURSDAY OCTOBER 20th (7-9 p.m.) for the entire Learning Circle community of adults to get together and to learn more about the program. This year we'll meet together person at the school, though we'll try to include a virtual component that family members who can't attend may be able to connect to.

At curriculum night, we'll reserve time for some informal conversation with other parents and with teachers. We'll also break up into smaller groups (by classroom) so that you can get to know your own child's teachers, talk about the program for the year, see displays, and have your questions answered,

Representatives of the school's Board of Directors will also describe some details about what the Board will be doing this year, and how parents can participate in the program.

We hope you will all be able to join us!

***The first two months of school are very busy!
Please check our website often for detailed
information on the many opportunities for families
to join us. Details are on the website's calendar too!***





Do you have a complete change of clothes in your child's cubby?

Have you filled out all forms completely and returned them?

Please Remember that LCP is a peanut and tree nut – free zone!

Did you know that there is a family discussion at every monthly Board meeting?

Come for the Board meeting itself, or come at 8 pm for the discussion.

Discussion on Social Emotional Learning and Second Step Wednesday October 12th at 8 p.m.

During our virtual discussion on Wednesday October 12th (8 p.m.) we'll

talk about some of the ways we use a curriculum called Second Step in each classroom to support social emotional learning.

Second Step organized activities using puppetry, picture discussion, games and open discussion to support development in keys areas of social learning in a school setting:

- Skills for learning including welcoming, listening, following directions, letting someone know your needs and wants
- Empathy and identifying feelings
- Managing emotions
- Friendship skills and problem-solving

In our discussion we'll meet some of the Second Step puppets who regularly visit the classrooms and talk together about supporting social emotional learning and the development of self-regulation helps children gain confidence and security in school settings.

Please bring your questions about what we do at school and why to this discussion, along with your ideas about how the same opportunities might come up at home!

Discussion on Ways to Take Opportunities to Support Social Emotional Development at Home and at School Tuesday October 18th 9:30-10:30 a.m.

As a continuation of Wednesday night's discussion, we'll talk about some of the areas of learning supported by a focus on social emotional learning and talk about how we can all take spontaneous opportunities to support children's learning in these areas.

We'll reserve time to share specific ideas for language and strategies that might be helpful as we help children gain confidence expressing themselves and solving their own social problems.

Please bring your questions, successes and challenges from home to this discussion!

Please Remember that LCP is a peanut and tree nut – free zone!

Please remember that Learning Circle Preschool is a peanut free and nut free environment. Please do not send any foods to school that contain any nut products. Children will not share foods at snacks or lunch in school.

Remembering the Values of Play

We parents are all aware at some level of how important play is to children, and we look for ways to support playful experiences for our children. But it's also true that in our culture it's getting harder and harder to "justify" children's time at play. We may be worried about our child's skill development, and about readiness for future academic requirements. We may be worried that our children will miss an important "window of opportunity" for learning in the areas of literacy or music. We may come to believe that if an activity is marketed as "enrichment" it is necessarily more enriching than experiences children are capable of creating on their own in play. And, in our interest in connecting with our children, we may feel unsure about how to best join our child's play, and wonder whether or not our joining is a valuable use of time.

There is more and more research supporting the value of open-ended, creative play where children must find ways to work together and solve social and other cognitive problems. Language development, self-regulation, the ability to communicate one's ideas, the ability to sustain attention without distraction to realize ideas, physical development and more are supported through playful engagement in experiences that are personally meaningful to children.

Right through our school year together, we'll feature articles and books to share some current thinking about play, and will highlight how imperative quality playful experiences are to each child's growth and development. I hope that we can give you some insight into how teachers here join and support play, and that you will be inspired to take similar opportunities to follow your child's lead at home. And, I hope we can all be reminded that play is for grownups too!



NAEYC , Accreditation and Assessment

Learning Circle Preschool achieved NAEYC re-accreditation successfully for another cycle because of the collaborative efforts of teachers, Board members, and families, along with plenty of hard work on the part of the staff documenting some of the many valuable experiences for children here in any given school year. In fact, we were commended for meeting or exceeding nearly 100% of the hundreds of quality standards reviewed. A big part of accreditation is collecting information from families about how we are doing and how you feel about our program. We've developed a great deal of written information over the years to keep you informed, and have a variety of systems in place to communicate with you regularly about your child's experiences at school.

Please help us keep you informed by reading newsletters like this one, classroom notes, emails, etc. regularly. Also remember to refer to your Parent Handbook, which has a review of just about all our policies and systems, and has extra copies of many important communications you have received.

In addition, we hope all of you have accessed Teaching Strategies. If you haven't, please let your child's teacher know ASAP so that we can begin an exchange about your child's school experiences, and share photos and observations from the classroom.

Later in the fall, we will distribute a family survey that we ask you fill out as part of our self-assessment process. It has some general questions about your experiences here at the school. We hope that we will have 100% participation in this survey process, so that our conversations accurately reflect family views about our program. In each newsletter I will try to highlight some aspect of the accreditation process that is important to us. This newsletter's focus is on building Parent-Teacher Partnerships.



Parent-Teacher Partnerships

At Learning Circle Preschool we take communication with families seriously, and want to do everything possible to assure that everyone feels connected and has good information about what's happening at the school. Our mission statement speaks to this commitment:

Founded on respectful and nurturing interactions between teachers and children, and building on each child's curiosity and creativity, we come together as a classroom community whose goal is to inspire a lifelong love of exploration, thought, and learning. ...We work in partnership with parents, communicating closely, encouraging family involvement in the program and offering support and education on issues relating to child development and early childhood education.

Keeping you informed is only one part of good communication. Our challenge is to help facilitate two way communications, so that we can develop your child's program informed by your insights, intuition, and values.

As you look through our Parent Handbook, you'll see many ways that we try to achieve on-going, meaningful communication with families. Whether it's the informal chat as you bring your child to school, your participation on a Board committee or at a discussion, an email you send to alert us to an issue your child is facing at home, the history forms you thoughtfully fill out to give us some ideas of how to support your child at school, your virtual or live participation (reading, storytelling or doing a project) for your child's classroom, or an invitation to use our online portfolio and journaling systems for communication, we hope that over time you will feel comfortable sharing your perspectives, even if you think we will not agree. When we work together on behalf of the children wonderful things can happen!

Every year one of the essential questions we ask ourselves is "How Do the Principles Developed in Reggio Emilia inform our relationships with children and families?" We will explore this question beginning in our fall curriculum, and hope that you will all find ways to contribute your ideas.

NAEYC has launched an updated website for parents at <https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/for-families>. You'll find great articles on a wide variety of subjects relating to parenting and the development of young children. It's a terrific resource!

Our best outreach efforts are the result of families like yours sharing your experiences here with neighbors and friends. Thanks to all of you who support our program in this way! The enrollment process for the 2022-2023 academic year begins this fall. If you know of anyone interested please let them know! We can share written materials, participate in a zoom meeting to collect information, watch our virtual tour on the website and, if interested arrange to visit the school.