



February 9, 2006

First-Plymouth Early Education Programs
Dimensions Research Classrooms

DIMENSIONS
Educational Research Foundation
dimensionsfoundation.org

NEWS

Executive Director's Message

by Nancy Rosenow

We're Glad You're Part of our "Family"

How fortunate we all are to have each other here at First-Plymouth Early Education Programs. As I watch parents so generously sharing their time, resources and ideas with us, teachers supporting each other's work, and children forming strong bonds of friendship, it reminds me of why I love to be here with everyone. It really is like being with family....and it's a family that gets along!! I hope most of you will be able to join us for our Family Night event on February 17. (See the enclosed information.) It really is a wonderful way to celebrate our relationships not only with our own children, but with our extended First-Plymouth clan!

For the rest of my column, I've asked teacher Julie Rose to share a few of her thoughts about what it really means to be a developmental program.

More about "Developmentally Appropriate Practice"

by Julie Rose

Ok, so you've read the term developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) in past newsletters or somewhere else but you're still not really sure what it means. I can remember being a parent in our program many years ago when

my three children attended. Even though I taught Kindergarten at the time, developmentally appropriate practice was fairly new to me.

This November I had the privilege of presenting a workshop for our families titled "Raising Children Who Love to Read." One of our parents, Jennifer Brinkman, responded with a letter she contributed to the newsletter. She said, "It was like a light went off. High/Scope believes that children will learn as concepts are incorporated into their own meaningful experience. Just like each of us learns in our own way – some are visual, some are textual, etc., - so do our children." She goes on to say, "The rote method or direct instruction does not encourage children, especially preschool age children, to retain knowledge or pursue independent learning." We couldn't have said it better ourselves. More importantly, it was so exciting to have a parent speaking to all of us about her understanding of our methods.

So how does developmentally appropriate practice tie into all of this? It's important to understand that DAP is an approach to education. Using this approach we focus on children as individuals. We plan together weekly at our staff meetings and on our own (as well as with your child) to create

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A Reminder about our Registration Process

Registration forms for the 2006-2007 school year will be in children's cubbies February 21 and 22. Be sure to turn your forms in right away before they go out to the general public. This will help to ensure that you receive your choice of session(s).

Registration for our Summer Programs will go out in cubbies on March 9 and 10. These are the dates and themes for our summer sessions:

- Everyone's an Artist... June 5-9*
- Adventures in the Greenhouse... June 12-16*
- Super Structures... June 19-23*
- Fantastic Food... June 26-30*
- Celebrate!... (closed July 3rd & 4th) July 5-7*
- Art is Everywhere... July 10-14*
- Lights, Camera, Action!... July 17-21*
- Sports & Games... July 24-28*
- Outdoor Explore... August 7-11*
- Story Magic... August 14-18*

SHARE YOUR FAVORITE WINTER TRADITION WITH EVERYONE!

Use this cap and/or mitten to tell us about your favorite tradition, you can even add a picture if you'd like (make sure you write your name on the back if you want it returned to you).

Cut the cap out and return to school by February 16th. We will hang them up to share with everyone who joins us at Family Night!

Would You Like to Create a Basket for Family Night?

If you would enjoy creating your own basket for our Family Night basket auction, fill out one of the forms in the hallway and put them in the black payment box. This will let Heather Guess know how many baskets to plan for. Thank you!!

Weather Reminder:

Please remember that if Lincoln Public Schools close for weather-related reason, we will be closed as well.

If Lincoln Public Schools happen to be closed on February 17...Family Night...we **WILL POSTPONE FAMILY NIGHT** to another time.

"Developmentally Appropriate Practice"

(Cont. from page 2)

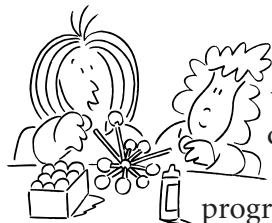
experiences that are meaningful. We take each child where they are in their development and expand their learning. We want all children to love learning and develop the skills they need to become successful life-long learners. It sounds simple but it is a responsibility we take very seriously. Here are some frequently asked questions about DAP taken from Basics of Developmentally Appropriate Practice by Carol Copple and Sue Bredekamp.

Is "Developmentally Appropriate Practice" a curriculum?

No, DAP is not a curriculum. It is a set of guidelines that can be used to help educators make decisions about curriculum as well as teaching strategies.

Are developmentally appropriate programs unstructured?

No, to be developmentally appropriate, a program must be thoughtfully structured to build on and advance children's competence. For this reason, a developmentally appropriate program is well organized in its schedule and physical environment and uses a planned curriculum to guide teachers as they assist children to accomplish important learning goals. In the course of the day, children participate in a variety of learning contexts, such as large- and small-group times. In all of these contexts, the teacher is intentional in using the environment, materials, and teaching strategies to enable children to acquire important knowledge and skills.



Someone told me that in DAP Classrooms, all children do is play. Is that true?

Research shows that self-initiated, teacher-supported play benefits

children in many ways. When children play, they engage in many important tasks, such as developing and practicing newly acquired skills, using language, taking turns, making friends and regulating emotions and behavior according to the demands of the situation. This is why for young children play needs to be a large part of the day – and part of a DAP



classroom. Teachers closely observe children and help them use their play as a way to continuously learn and grow. Teachers work with children as they play to extend learning and help children gain new understandings and skills.

Is it true that academics have no place in developmentally appropriate early childhood programs?

Not at all. Academics is a term that is widely used but rarely defined. If academics are understood to mean important foundational skills and knowledge in early literacy, mathematics, science and other subjects, then academics definitely are an essential part of developmentally appropriate early childhood programs. It is when academics are defined very narrowly as a set of specific facts and when these facts are taught by "drill and skill" or other such methods pushed down from older grades that they are less relevant to young children's overall development and learning. The rigid "drill and skill" approach actually robs children of the chance to learn in the way that best prepares them for later life learning.



If you have any questions about this article or you would like to know more you may email me at aejrrose@aol.com or place a note in my box at school.

Thoughts for Parents

A Few Safety Requests

For the safety of your children, please do not leave them unattended in your vehicles when you are dropping off or picking up. If this is difficult because of sleeping children, please let your child's teacher know and we will try to help work out a solution.

Please do not let your child play or walk down the ramp in the Preschool Parking Lot. The ramp goes directly into the parking lot and sometimes children do not know when to stop or cannot stop because they are running too fast. We have had some close calls and need your help to make sure that everyone is safe in the parking lot. Please read the sign that is posted at the bottom of the ramp to your child and help them to understand that this is a "rule".

Parent-Teacher Conferences are Coming on March 15 and 16

Be sure to sign up for a conference with your child's teacher when the sign-up sheets go up on February 15. We love having the chance to fill you in on all the wonderful learning your child is experiencing, and we love hearing more about your child's experiences at home.

Upcoming Events

Family Night – and our Silent Basket Auction is Coming! Mark Your Calendars for February 17. (Have you sent in your reservation form yet? There's one in this newsletter.)

Open House

Children are excited to invite you to attend Open House on March 2. They would love to have the chance to show you their classrooms and the recent activities they've enjoyed, take you to our greenhouse, and introduce you to friends and teachers. We hope you'll mark your calendars and plan to drop by for a visit.

Hold this Date – March 31 – for our annual "Family Concert and Children's Arts Festival." This year's concert is "Sorcerer's Apprentice" with Bob Hall and the Plymouth Brass.

Children's Activities

Spanish Experiences

Jen Smith will be visiting all of our classrooms on February 9 and 10, so be sure to ask your child about his or her experiences. (Or, feel free to talk with your child's teacher for more information.)

Moving and Drumming

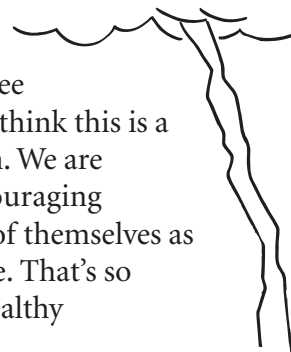
Music specialist, Tina Reeble, has been leading children in some wonderful full-body experiences with drumming and dancing. Children are having the chance to explore making music on all kinds of drums, and they are having the chance to create dances that go along with the drum beats. It's wonderful to see children express their creativity so exuberantly!



Tree Doctors

Children of all ages have the chance to help care for the trees and bushes on our Outdoor Classroom spaces. They check the soil around the trees to be sure it is moist, and water the trees when the soil begins to get dry. They also make sure the mulch is just right around the trees.

Many children have begun referring to themselves as "tree doctors" and we think this is a good description. We are happy to be encouraging children's sense of themselves as nurturing people. That's so important for healthy development.



VALENTINES DAY FUN

Your child is invited to bring valentines for friends on Valentine's Day! We hope these amounts will help you to determine amounts if you choose to send Valentine's.

If your child is in...

- Preschool
22 (+2 teachers)
- Kindergarten
25 (+2 teachers)
- Toddler A (everyone)
20 (+2 teachers)
- Toddler A (your child's class only)
12 (+2 teachers)
- Toddler B (everyone)
22 (+2 teachers)
- Toddler B (your child's class only)
12 (+2 teachers)

Generosity and caring about the feelings of others doesn't always come naturally. Many children learn these traits over time through play and holiday traditions, which is why Valentine's Day is so great. With all the greeting cards and classroom activities, it's easy to teach your child the value of sharing, giving and compassion.

Our emergency clothes supply has been depleted.

If you have borrowed any clothes/shoes, or underwear, please wash and return as soon as possible. We are especially in need of:

- boys & girls underwear
- boys & girls long pants

Donations

Preschool & Kindergarten

Needed for upcoming activities:

- ⊙ Oil pastels
- ⊙ Shoe strings
- ⊙ Small paper sacks
- ⊙ White paper plates

On-going Donations:

- ⊙ Tape
- ⊙ Kleenex

Donations

Infant & Toddler

Needed for upcoming activities:

- ⊙ Formula scoopers

On-going Donations:

- ⊙ Bounty paper towels
- ⊙ Wipes

Birthdays

Amy JensenFeb. 1

Mark Your Calendars...Upcoming Events & Important Dates!

Friday, February 17

Annual Family Night (Children's Activities, Spaghetti Dinner and Basket Auction)
We've been having fun collecting items to use in making our themed baskets for the silent auction these past few weeks! Our auction will have both the baskets that appeal to all ages, as well as items that are geared just to adults.

Inserted in this newsletter is another flyer with the dinner reservation form. If you haven't already turned yours in and are planning on attending, you can still turn in the form in the Black payment boxes or in either office.

We're looking forward to spending time with everyone next Friday! See you there.

Thursday, March 2

Open House

Friday, March 31

Annual "Family Concert and Children's Arts Festival."

Hold this Date – for our annual "Family Concert and Children's Arts Festival." This year's concert is "Sorcerer's Apprentice" with Bob Hall and the Plymouth Brass.

Community Events Held at First-Plymouth Church Open to Everyone!

Grief Recovery Workshop coming

Explore the dynamics of grief and recovery from a loss of any kind. Topics include *Staying Open to Grief, Grief Recovery: How Does it Work? Confusion About Stages, When Is It Time to Begin to Recover? Myths about Dealing with Grief, Not Knowing What to Say, and Participating in Your Own Recovery.* Nine Tuesdays, April 18, 25, May 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, June 6, 13 from 7-8:30 PM, Calvert Parlor. Cost \$50, includes workbook. Led by Becky Walkowiak, RN, LMHP and Laurie Reinsch, LMHP.

Tower Club II (Young Families/Young Couples)

Want to have fun and meet other couples with young children? Each month a group at First-Plymouth Church called Tower Club II meets for fun, fellowship and outreach to the community. If you would like to receive up-to-date information about events, please sign up for our e-messages. Please contact Staff Liason, Addie Powell at 476-7550 or email addie@firstplymouth.org

In & Around Our Community

Pioneers Park Free Hikes

Feb. 11-12: Tracks and Traces Walk

Feb. 18-19: Antlers and Horns Walk

2006 Open Harvest Cooking Classes

You may register at Open Harvest or with a credit card by phone, 475-9069. Your payment secures your seat. No walk-ins, please. 1618 South St., Lincoln, NE, (402) 475-9069.

Febr. 13: Cinnamon Rolls 101. Just in time for Valentine's Day! Learn how to make old-fashioned cinnamon rolls for your sweetheart. Jackie Barnhardt also includes instructions for caramel rolls and butter cream icing. Recipes and samples included.

Febr. 21: Soups, Stews, and Quickbreads. Heart warming, body building, hearty soups and stews will satisfy your soul. Instructor Jody Hoover also demonstrates cheese crisps, flatbread, and cornbread. Recipes and samples included.

Febr. 23: The Art of Sandwich Making. Are you tired of take-out food? Sandwiches are a great way to eat tasty, healthy foods on the go. Kris Bohling shows easy ways to make regular old sandwiches special, using vegetarian ingredients. Meat lovers are welcome! Samples included.

Newsletters and Program information can be found on-line ...

www.firstplymouth.org or dimensionsfoundation.org