



September 2005

First-Plymouth Early Education Programs

DIMENSIONS
Educational Research Foundation
dimensionsfoundation.org

NEWS

Executive Director's Message

by Nancy Rosenow

A Great Beginning to the 2005-2006 Year... Thanks to Your Support!

What a wonderful start to our new school year we've had together. Each child, each parent, and each staff member brings something unique and valuable to our shared experience. Already we've seen so many examples of people's supporting each other and working together to make our programs the very best they can be. That's something to be celebrated!

You'll notice that throughout the year we hold many social events for families. These events serve two purposes: First and foremost, we hope they give children a chance to experience an "extended family" feeling during fun times when they can interact with other adults and children who care about them. Secondly, the events provide some much-needed funds to our program to supplement our tuition. Providing quality early education programs that are still affordable to most families is very difficult to do through tuition payments alone. Our program must raise over \$100,000 each

year in order to keep our program going at the quality we know young children deserve. So...when you attend our family events we hope you gain in two ways – by having lots of fun, and by feeling good about the financial support you are providing to help all of our children.



Our first social event – A Pancake Breakfast and Garage Sale — takes place on Saturday, October 1st. This year we'll not only enjoy a fun breakfast together, pick up some "new" toys, clothes, books, etc., but also enjoy a Mini-Farmer's Market and fun outdoor activities on our new Outdoor Classroom space. Please be saving any donations you might have for our Garage Sale to bring to school on Thursday, September 29 or Friday, September 30. Thanks so much to everyone who is able to work on committees to make these social events possible! See the attached flyer and ticket order form about this event.

Bulletin Boards

Please take a moment to stop and take a look at the bulletin boards in the hallways.

If you are looking for your child's schedule or would like to know the faces of all the Early Education Programs' Staff, look on the Bulletin board labeled **Staff and Schedules**.

Make sure to look at the Bulletin Board labeled **Daily Information**. This is where you can find information that you will need to know each day.

Also, watch the **Information** bulletin board for events and happenings that will be coming up in the near future.

AND, don't forget to take a look at **the other bulletin boards** with all the great children's artwork. These will change throughout the year and will also have some documentation of great projects or events in different groups.

Staff Birthdays

Kristin Holmes 9/15

Infant/Toddler News Have You Seen These Signs?

We are incorporating sign language into various parts of our day.

Have fun practicing these signs with your children!

(These signs come from www.lesstutor.com)



bird



cow



horse



pig

Thoughts for Parents Helping Children Cope with Frightening Events

In her **Parenting Exchange** article, "Helping Children Cope in the Wake of Tragedy or Disaster," Karen Stephens offers practical tips for parents and caregivers. Here are some that apply in our current situation with the tragedy of Hurricane Katrina:

- *Limit children's exposure to graphic details of crisis.*
Children often personalize information. They believe a crisis will affect their immediate family, even if it's actually happening miles away. Whenever possible, reassure children that they are safe...
- *Explain disaster-related terms children hear.*
Describe what is happening in language children can understand...
- *Spend time together so questions can be asked.*
Children may understand some facts, but be confused by others. Listen carefully and clear up misconceptions to reduce anxiety...
- *Respond to children's questions calmly in language geared to your child's age and understanding.*
Giving too little information can confuse children. On the other hand, giving them too much information can overwhelm them.
- *If children of any age are hesitant to ask questions, don't assume they aren't worried.*
From time to time, ask an open-ended question to encourage communication.
- *Don't belittle children for expressing fear; accept it as a rational reaction to something out of their control.*

Thoughts from Staff About Our Art Program

by Ann Watt, Art Specialist

The Art program at First-Plymouth Early Education Programs is based on the following beliefs:

- ☞ Children are competent.
- ☞ Children are capable of taking an active role in the learning process.
- ☞ A child learns with his whole body and expresses himself in many verbal and nonverbal ways.
- ☞ Experiences with movement, music, dramatic play and the visual arts are crucial to the development of the brain and, if we are observant, to the discovery of the knowledge each child possesses.

Art is a visual means of communication. It is important for us to focus on the process not the product. Placing the emphasis on art appreciation, rather than artmaking, supports the cognitive learning process in the following ways:

- ☞ By allowing children ample time to explore materials and processes
- ☞ By enriching the environment with different kinds of visual images
- ☞ By encouraging children to make observations and to look at things from multiple perspectives
- ☞ By teaching children to ask questions
- ☞ By providing children with multiple languages through which they may express themselves

By planning activities that are based on children's interests and that relate to previous activities, we offer children a variety of opportunities to make connections and discoveries for themselves. Simplicity is important. Clear, concise objectives are key.

Children's Activities

Making New Friends...Singing Together...Discovering our Greenhouse...Celebrating Traditions

Children of all ages have been finding new friends during these last two weeks. We've been singing "name songs" like "Hickety Tickety Bumblebee, Will You Say Your Name for Me?" This is fun way of learning everyone's names.

Children have also been discovering the wonders of our greenhouse. Again this year children of all ages will get to work with Charuth Loth from Shadowbrook Farms as she helps everyone explore the wonders of nature. Stay tuned for more information soon!

This year as part of our Arts Are Basic integrated music and art experiences, we will be focusing on traditions. (This will include traditions each family enjoys and also traditions our school has developed over the years.) One tradition we have is singing a song our school calls "The Peace Song." Here are the words:



Packing Lunch

Small children may not eat very much at one sitting. Pack appetizers instead of a large sandwich and whole banana. Include more choices if the quantity of each is smaller. Fill a mini muffin tin with small amounts of foods, wrap with foil, and pack into the lunch box.

Small foods are easier to handle and more fun to eat. Cut sandwiches into smaller pieces, use tiny tortillas for wraps and small sandwich buns, serve baby carrots and peel and cut fruit into smaller pieces to interest your child in the foods you pack.

Instead of plain bread, try crackers, mini waffles, rice cakes, mini croissants, pita bread, mini muffins, small bagels, tortillas, focaccia, raisin or cinnamon bread.

If your child wants the same thing day after day, go ahead and pack it, as long as the overall meal is nutritious and you are sure your child eats it.

Study the prepackaged lunches in your grocer's refrigerated section. These appeal to kids, but aren't very nutritious. You can pack the same types of snack foods, but use healthier choices for more kid appeal.

Salsa, hummus, bean dips, or fruit dips with baked chips and veggies or fruit are good lunchbox choices, since these foods contain more vitamins and fiber.

Think about food safety. Freeze juice boxes or small gel packs and place in the bag to keep other foods cool. Use an insulated thermos for hot foods like soups and stews, and cold salads too.

If you make your own snack mixes, you can include healthy additions like dried fruits, unsalted nuts, pretzels, and baked crackers.

Cereal bars can pack a lot of nutrition into a food kids love to eat. Include raisins, currants, or other dried fruits in the recipe for additional flavor, color and nutrition.

Include something fun - a sticker, cookies wrapped in plastic wrap with a ribbon tie, sandwiches cut into playful shapes, or meats and cheeses or fruits threaded on a caramel apple stick.

- A general guide for lunch portion sizes:
 - 2-3 ozs. of meat or cheese
 - 1-2 slices of bread OR 1/2 c. grain or rice
 - At least 2 different fruits or vegetables
 - 1 c. milk or dairy product

Snack Information

Check the bulletin boards in the Preschool hallways and the Infant/Toddler Rooms for snack sign-up sheets. If you would like to sign up there are snack suggestions listed on the sheets. However, we welcome any healthy snack!

Here is a partial list of some of the healthy snacks we serve:

- Animal Crackers & Juice
- Apple Slices & Cheese
- Applesauce, Raisins & Crackers
- Bagels with Jelly & Juice
- Bananas & Vanilla Wafers
- Carrots & Crackers
- Celery, Crackers & Juice
- Cheese Cubes & Orange Juice
- Cinnamon Bread with Butter & Juice
- Cottage Cheese & Pineapple Tidbits
- Fruit Salad & Crackers
- Goldfish Crackers & Raisins
- Grapes & Muffins
- Mini Muffins & Fruit
- Mini Rice Cakes & Fruit
- Orange Sections & Wheat Crackers
- String Cheese & Crackers
- Sliced Meat & Crackers
- Sliced Peaches & Bread Sticks

In & Around Our Community

Saturdays

Farmers Market, Haymarket

Through Oct. 23

World's Largest Corn Maze, Benson Farms

Folsom Children's Zoo

Sept. 24... Bug Bash

Oct. 8... Meet & Shriek! w/Nasty Nelly

Junior Jam

Sept. 19, 25, Oct. 3, 10, 17...

Eiseley Branch Library

Sept. 21, 28, Oct. 5, 12...

Anderson Branch Library

Pioneers Park

Sept. 19, Oct. 3, 17... Critter Tales

Sept. 23 & 24, Oct. 1, 7, 8, 15...

Family Hayrack Ride

Sept. 24... Primitive Rope Making

Sept. 24-25... Harrington Trail Hike

Sept. 30... Pioneers Park History Hayrack Ride

Oct. 1, 8, 15... Bird Banding

Demonstrations

Oct. 1... Build a Bird Feeder

Oct. 1-2... Bird Migration

Oct. 8... Primitive Fire

Oct. 8-9... Fall Color

Oct. 15-16... Fleming Woods Hike

Sept. 23

Wilderness Campfire, Wilderness Park

Sept. 24

Family Fun Festival, Lincoln Children's Museum

Sept. 24

Mother of All Garage Sales, Lancaster Event Center

Sept. 30 – Oct. 2

Care Bears Live "Caring and Sharing Friends", Pershing Center

Oct. 1-2

Greater Lincoln Dog Agility, Lancaster Event Center

Oct. 6-9

Library Book Sale, State Fair Park

Oct. 8

A Tribute to the Prairie Seasons: Nature Journaling for Adults, Spring Creek Prairie

Oct. 8-9

Kaleidoscope of Krafts, Lancaster Event Center

The Hand

At first it sounded like a Thanksgiving story, but the more I reflected on it, the more appropriate it seemed for any time of the year. The way I heard it, the story went like this:

Thanksgiving Day was near. The first grade teacher gave her class a fun assignment – to draw a picture of something for which they were thankful.

Most of the class might be considered economically disadvantaged, but still many would celebrate the holiday with turkey and other traditional goodies of the season. These, the teacher thought, would be the subjects of most of her student's art. And they were.

But Douglas made a different kind of picture. Douglas was a different kind of boy. He was the teacher's true child of misery, frail and unhappy. As other children played at recess, Douglas was likely to stand close by her side. One could only guess at the pain Douglas felt behind those sad eyes.

Yes, his picture was different. When asked to draw a picture of something for which he was thankful, he drew a hand. Nothing else. Just an empty hand.

His abstract image captured the imagination of his peers. Whose hand could it be? One child guessed it was the hand of a farmer, because farmers raise turkeys. Another suggested a police officer, because the police protect and are for people. Still others guessed it was the hand of God, for God feeds us. And so the discussion went – until the teacher almost forgot the young artist himself.

When the children had gone on to other assignments, she paused at Douglas' desk, bent down, and asked him whose hand it was. The little boy looked away and murmured, "It's yours, teacher."

She recalled the times she had taken his hand and walked with him here or there, as she had the other students. How often had she said, "Take my hand, Douglas, we'll go outside." Or, "Let me show you how to hold your pencil." Or, "Let's do this together." Douglas was most thankful for his teacher's hand.

Brushing aside a tear, she went on with her work.

The story speaks of more than thankfulness. It says something about teachers teaching and parents parenting and friends showing friendship, and how much it means to the Douglasses of the world. They might not always say thanks. But they'll remember the hand that reaches out.

By Steve Goodier

First-Plymouth Church Events Open to the Whole Community

September

Food Drive. Lincoln's hungry need your food donations especially pasta, beans, peanut butter, diapers. Leave your items marked "Food Drive" at the East or West entrances.

Sept. 30

Abendmusik: Lincoln concert series : Rush Hour Concert, 5:30 PM featuring PianoFOURte - two pianos, four talented musicians. Tickets \$25/adults & Sr. Citizens; \$13/students. Call the Music Dept. 476-9933 for more information or to reserve tickets.

Learn How to Feel Better from Head to Toe

Exercises for the mind and body, Oct. 12, 19, & 26, 6-7:30 PM in Calvert Parlor. To enroll, email Addie at addie@firstplymouth.org

Grief Recovery Workshop

If you have experienced a loss of any kind join us Tuesday evenings from 7-8:30 PM, Oct. 4-Nov. 22 in Classroom A. Cost is \$50 and includes workbook. Limited enrollment. Please call 476-7550 to register.

Following Your Intuition to Balance Your Chakras.

Join us to explore how to access the power of the body focused energy centers for your personal growth and well being. Thursdays, Oct. 6, 13, and 20 at 6:30-8:30 PM, follow-up class April 20th. Cost: \$15. To register, send check to First-Plymouth Church, Attn: Balance your Chakras.

3rd Annual Chili Cook-off & Silent Auction

Fundraiser for: First-Plymouth Early Education Programs, the Church's Youth Mission Trip, Friendship Home and for Hurricane Katrina Relief.

Sunday, Oct. 16, 5-8PM, First-Plymouth Church, Mayflower Hall (west side, lower level). Tickets \$5 in advance, \$7 at the door (free for children under 5). Tickets can be purchased at the Preschool office. Bring the whole family and taste 10 different types of chili, (plus cinnamon rolls, veggies and tea) and bid on some fantastic items. Come see the Preschool Staff booth!

