



Upcoming...

...Preschool Class Photos April 10 & 11.

Spring has sprung...

As the weather continues to warm up, we will spend more and more time outside. You can help us (and your child/ren) by making sure they:

- wear a jacket if it is chilly in the morning.
- wear socks and closed toe shoes that fit properly. No flip flops or Crocs—these are dangerous when children are running and using the climbing equipment.)
- apply sunscreen, if needed, before coming to school.

Thank you for helping us make our time outside safe and fun!

Donations requested...

How many stories have you heard recently about the birds and squirrels around our Nature Explore Classroom? Our nature friends are encouraging children to capture them through sketching, song and dance. If you are interested in helping us continue to encourage this interaction, here are donations we would welcome:

- Flower Pots
- Medium sized bird feeders
- Bags of multipurpose bird seed
- Low bird bath (not plastic)
- Adult-sized wheelbarrow or yard cart

Safety Reminders...

For the safety of your children, please **do not leave younger children unattended in your vehicles** when you drop off or pick up your child here. This is important! Also, please make sure that when you drop off or pick up your child, you park your vehicle in a parking spot (**not in front of the steps or garage, etc.**). This is also for the safety of the children as well as to minimize the risk of accidents.

Toddlers have fun exploring their beat!

By Theresa Frey, Teacher

On a cool, clear late winter morning, Toddler B friends toted a variety of percussion instruments to our Nature Explore™ Classroom. The stump jumpers seemed like the perfect place to perform.

The past few weeks, teachers and children have been exploring drums and other percussion instruments during Music and Movement. Older toddlers have been focusing on big “pow-wow” drum sounds on authentic drums and some homemade versions. Helping children establish and keep a steady beat in a variety of rhythm patterns supports language development, fluency and syntax. All of these skills are essential as a young child makes early attempts at reading. Studies show that children who can hold a steady beat and repeat rhythm patterns also do well in mathematics.

So, the next time your young



L-R: Helen J., Mac P, Henry W., Andrew B. and Eric B.

child starts drumming on the pots and pans, get a wooden spoon and join the fun. Who knew that something so simple could support so much learning!!!

Tip: Make a homemade drum with some clear packing tape over the opening of a 5 gallon bucket for a “big” pow-wow drum sound. Make mallets by drilling into a rubber ball and inserting a dowel. Secure the rubber ball with a



Keira S. finds the beat.

Squirrel sighting leads to multiple learning opportunities for children

By Kathy Tichota, Teacher

Ever since a cold day in December, when Ava looked up into the oak tree that stands in our



Squirrel documentation by children, teachers.

outdoor classroom, and saw a squirrel looking back at her, we’ve been excited about SQUIRRELS! We have observed squirrels, read books about squirrels, written a group story about squirrels titled “Squirrely and Bobby,” shelled corn to feed to squirrels, drawn squirrels, took squirrel spotting walks and charted the number of squirrels we saw, moved like and pretended to be squirrels, and built squirrel nests with blocks and fabric. Ava provided us with our nickname for squirrels: Squirrely.

These are some of the things we’ve observed and learned about squirrels:

“Squirrels jump and climb. Their tails keep them warm.” Jena
“Sometimes squirrels jump from tree

to tree.” Kai
“Squirrels like to snuggle in their snuggly nest.” Sophia
“Squirrels run really fast when there is danger.” Henry
“Squirrels can use their tails to balance.” Jessie
“Squirrels live in a tree. They can live in a hole in a tree or in their nest. They find their acorns in the snow.” Connor
“Squirrels like to play outside.” Ava
“Squirrels can hold their paws to their mouth, so they can eat their food.” Sawyer
“Squirrels like to eat acorns. They dig the ground and put the acorns inside the ground. They can smell them under the ground.” Savannah
“Squirrels act really silly. They scamper around. They’re funny. They go ch ... ch ... ch ... ch ... ch ... ch...” Nolan

Worm adventures in the Greenhouse

Last week we went to the greenhouse and observed the changes in the marigolds that we planted a few weeks ago. Some had already come up and children were able to sketch the little shoots. After sketching, they went to the worm tank and became very interested in looking at the worms. Some of the children held the worms while others expressed fear that the worms would bite them. To help the children learn a little more about worms we read *A Not So Ugly Friend* (a book about worms) and then spent more time observing and sketching the worms.

contributed by Tami Britton, Teacher

Children have been busy in the Greenhouse this month. They have been sorting through the worm bin: sorting worms, seeds that have sprouted, roly-polys and



Beckham R. and Claire S. are sorting worms.



Mrs. Britton's class searches for worms in the worm tank.



Everyone wants to examine the worm!

wonderful black dirt. (This dirt is used as planting soil in the greenhouse.)

Children also have been writing their garden plans while examining seed packets. The seeds have turned us into scientists. We sorted the seeds by color and size. Next we noticed the stages of seeds sprouting (seed, roots, losing seed coat, leaves, etc.).

Children have been sketching their seeds or worm tracks in the Greenhouse, too. The worms and roly-polys are always a source of discovery and storytelling for us.

contributed by Joyce White, Teacher

Bookshelf

The Caterpillar and The Polliwog by Jack Kent

Feathers for Lunch by Eric Carle

Hello, Squirrels! by Linda Glaser

I Love Our Earth by Bill Martin Jr.,

Michael R. Sampson

Little Cloud by Eric Carle

Nature's Children: Squirrels by George

Peck

Not a Box by Antoinette Portis

Not a Stick by Antoinette Portis

Sometimes I Dance Mountains by Boyd

Baylor

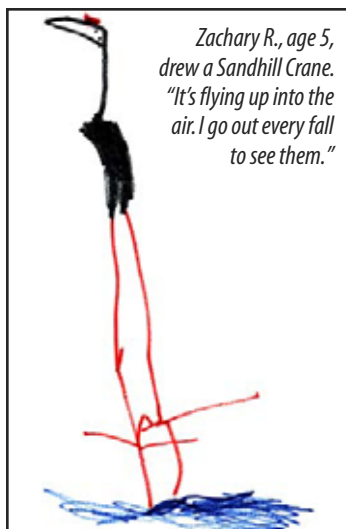
Squirrels by Brain Wildsmith

The Way to Start a Day by Boyd Baylor

Newsletter photos by Tami Britton,

Theresa Frey, Beth Pauley

and Joyce White



Zachary R., age 5, drew a Sandhill Crane. "It's flying up into the air. I go out every fall to see them."



"It's tail is brown and his wings are brown."

"They're bluejays."

"It's my baby and his name is Cardinal."

"His beak is orange."

eight birds

"It's a little one."



Quintin H., age 4, built a high-rise birdhouse and placed plush toy birds inside. Working with Ms. Murdoch, Quintin counted the birds and wrote a number - 8. He carefully selected marker colors to represent each bird as he added to Ms. Murdoch's pencil sketch of his block structure. The plush birds are part of a very popular interactive science table that offers real nests, feathers, and books about birds.

Infant Room Notes

by Denise Topil, Joleen Podtburg and Kris Sieckmeyer-Hajny

Even the infants are antsy for spring. We put on our jackets, loaded up the "Bye-Bye Buggy" and two double strollers...and everyone headed outside! The sidewalk on the block where our program is located has just enough sun along the way to keep the chill off.

Along the way we listened to our Toddler B friends as they had an impromptu instrumental "jam session" on the Infant-Toddler Nature Explore Outdoor Classroom. Children and teachers enjoyed opening milkweed pods and watching the seeds float away on the breeze.

Many of our children were excited to see the squirrels chasing each other around the trees. They loved following them with their eyes. We showed them how to sign the word "squirrel."

Walks outdoors are great for young children to explore the wonders of nature and to experience using all of their senses. We can't wait to go out again!

Sign for "squirrel"



Digging in sandbox yields treasures

Harry: 'Mrs. Britton, come look what I found.' Harry takes me to the sand box.

Max: 'A new treasure.' (The children are digging in the sandbox.)

Dalton: 'Look what I found.' (holds up a stick)

Josie: 'I found a treasure. I found it.'

Dalton: 'A treasure.'

Mrs. Britton: 'What is it?'

Dalton: 'A stick.'

Josie: 'I can find a treasure. Can you pretend you're a captain?'

Tate: 'We have to bury it so someone can find it.'

Max: 'We have to bury it.'

Tate: 'We have to bury it.'

Max: 'I almost got treasure.'

Audrey came over and threw in a big rock.

Max: 'Hey, look a treasure. If any treasure is round dig it up. I found a treasure and it is a pirate treasure.'

Kaitlyn: 'I found two treasures.' (holds up a feather and a wood block)

Josie: 'Aye, Aye captain. Kaitlyn, we found more treasure. Captain, look what we found (holds up wood). A map.'

Tate: 'The treasure is heavy.' (Tate works on picking up the big rock from the sand)

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contributed by Tami Britton, Teacher

Nature Explore® Classrooms are part of a national initiative involving the partnership of Dimensions and the Arbor Day Foundation.

Newsletters and Program information can be found on-line ...
www.dimensionsfoundation.org or www.firstplymouth.org