

Pancake Breakfast, Garage Sale and More!

Our pancake breakfast (with fun pancake toppings) and garage sale is coming up September 29, 8:30-11AM. Each year families donate outgrown toys or clothes to share with each other. This is a great way to find a "new" toy or outfit for your child(ren).

First-Plymouth's "God's Kitchen" will take place concurrently with recycling activities. Tour the Recycling Truck and learn what you can do to recycle or purchase a canvas bag to decorate and use for future shopping. Play recycling games.

Mark your calendars for this fun chance to get to know other parents and enjoy a low-key morning with your family.

Nature Explore™ Family Club Kicks Off New Season

More than 100 families will be enjoying family activities and a deeper connection with each other and nature this fall!

In conjunction with the Dimensions' Pancake Breakfast and First-Plymouth Church's God's Kitchen Recycling Fair our season will kick off with a variety of activities including a Nature Explore Family Club activity in the neighborhood. Activities include digging into hands-on composting, making paper, playing games and touring a Recycling Truck to learn how to reuse and recycle.

Contact Chris Kiewra at chrisk@dimensionsfoundation.org if you have questions.

Bookshelf

Caps for Sale by Esphyr Slobodkina
The Cheerio's Animal Play Book by Lee Wade
Color Zoo by Lois Ehlert
Concise American Sign Language Dictionary by Elaine Costello, PhD
The Dot by Peter H. Reynolds
Dots, Spots, Speckles, and Stripes by Lana Hoban
Harold and the Purple Crayon by Crockett Johnson
I Love Mud by Vicki Stephens
I Spy Shapes in Art by Lucy Micklethwait
Lines by Philip Yenawine
Museum Shapes by Gisela Voss
Ten Black Dots by Donald Crews
Thomas Knew There Were Pirates Living in the Bathroom by Beth Parker

Fall Session Begins with Focus on Dots and Lines

Infants have been using a variety of materials to explore dots and lines in Small Group time:

- Dot painting, using their fingers to make dots (Bingo markers)
- Magna doodles
- Wire bead mazes
- Pipe cleaners, shape makers
- Taped lines on the floor (infants walked, crawled, laid down)



We read books like *Color Zoo* that combined colors and shapes to make animals. Another book, *The Cheerio's Animal Play Book* used circles throughout.

We continued the exploration outside when the infants went on Nature walks. We helped the children collect nature items that showed lines and dots and made nature collages. They also looked at worms that made curvy lines, played in the sand and made lines in the sand.

Our Look-Move-Build-Sketch experience has been:

Looking at lines and dots in our environment

Moving along a path, (e.g.,



tape lines on floor)

Building with pipe cleaners
Sketching with dot markers to make dots and lines

During Music and Movement time bee puppets and buzzing noises accompanied the Hickety Tickety name song. One of the children's favorite activities during this time was using shakers with the Train Song.

Contributed by Joleen Podtburg, Denise Topil & Kris Sieckmeyer-Hajney



Our first two weeks in Toddler A have been all about finding, collecting and making dots. During a nature walk, children found dots in trees, sidewalks, leaves and flowers. Nathan said "There's dots everywhere." We

splashed water, and used markers and sidewalk chalk to create our very own dots.

Sam found dots on his shoes and Brooklyn wore a dress with dots. Liem kissed her puppy and said, "Look, I'm giving him dots." *Dots, Spots, Speckles, and Stripes* was a favorite book to look at. Miss Joy brought in two caterpillars to share with the class. They made their chrysalis and we are patiently waiting to see butterflies emerge!

Contributed by Joy Ritchie & Chris Dickhaut

Benefits, and Signs, of Sign Language Shared with Staff

The use of Sign Language (the third most used language in the United States) in our early education program has many benefits for the classroom.

During a recent round of staff meetings teacher Amy Jensen shared some of these benefits with staff and also taught some basic signs and strategies for incorporating Sign Language into the classroom.

Sign Language:

- is a natural way of communicating
- fits in with our visual-spatial philosophy
- gives children the ability to express important needs and thoughts
- promotes development of language skills
- reinforces language skills

already developed

- reduces frustration from not being able to express needs
- increases the speed of spatial reasoning development
- develops understanding of language for communication of emotions
- gives children a sense of accomplishment when successfully signing
- encourages creative thinking
- may help with discipline
- increases IQ for little ones
- teaches how to start and participate in conversation
- can help to reduce noise in the classroom
- can help to reduce stress and frustration for both

children and teachers

Ms. Jensen noted that a natural way to use sign in the classroom is during Music and Story times. She encouraged staff to think about words or colors that are used repeatedly and to combine them with their respective signs.

Contributed by Amy Jensen



The infants (and teachers) enjoy their new transportation!

Nature Explore Area Provides Variety of Spaces to Explore and Share

Children walk through all the areas before making their plans on the outdoor classroom. They choose from the Sand Area, Digging Area, Building Area, Messy Materials Area, Garden Paths or Climbing Area.

They gather at the Greeting Area to make their first plan. Alums at Dimensions-First-Plymouth Preschool help make their new friends feel at home.

Alum Atticus walked with Emma through the garden paths. He made sure she didn't miss the big orange pumpkin under the leaves.

"This is going to be a



pumpkin," he told her as he pointed to several yellow flowers.

"Then it will be green and then orange," he continued as they rubbed their fingers gently over the orange pumpkin.



Another alum, Lucio, made a new friend with butterfly expert Ray. They were digging in the messy area when a beautiful butterfly caught their attention. Can you see how closely they are



observing the butterfly and how respectful and patient they are? Ray is holding out his finger for the butterfly to come to him.

Ms. Ragland and Valerie found a very large writing space. Valerie practiced making all sizes and shapes of letters with Ms. Ragland's help.

Contributed by Joyce White

Preschoolers Discover Dots and Lines Can Be Found Everywhere

Art Specialist Mrs. Watt read a book to our class about lines with pictures of modern art to examine. Children used their bodies to make dots and lines around the small group room. As the children left the room they began to notice lines and dots on the floor and the wall and everywhere else they looked.

Spend some time with your children to find lines and dots as you look around your home and

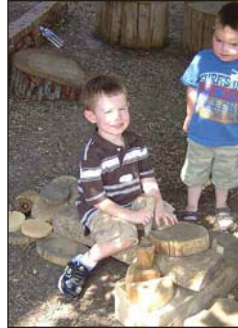
neighborhood.

Cooper made beautiful music on the amandina (similar to a marimba.)



Lauren and Poppy played the split log

drum and the amandina. They took turns on both instruments to harmonize together.



Gavin created a car out of planks and tree cookies and let Sam drive his car!

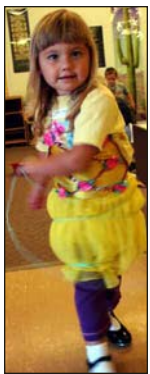
Contributed by Kris Van Laningham



"This is me, this is my house, and the sky." Braeden, age five.

We have been looking for dots and lines around school.

We walked straight and curvy paths, we moved our arms and pretended to make lines and dots in the air.



Sophie cut a piece of string and began comparing straight lines to curvy lines using her string as an example.

Soon we all had pieces of string. As we

walked around school matching our string to lines we found. We discovered that moving our bodies in the shape of lines was more fun.

We could zigzag, twirl, curve, loop and move in a straight line. We constructed lines using peg boards. Then we created dot pictures using paint and paper.

Can you identify the lines and dots we found around our school?

Contributed by Joyce White



Children enjoyed using their very own purple crayons after listening to Harold and the Purple Crayon!

We explored dots and lines through pegboards, art materials and items found on the Nature Explore Classroom.

Contributed by Cindy Heinzman



John, age five in September

Our class enjoyed making lines in the air with our finger markers. We built on that experience by using watercolors to paint different kinds of lines.

When John made his swirl line he used an 'ooo' sound to help him draw.

Contributed by Katie Sharp

Anna, age five in December



Photographs contributed by Cindy Heinzman, Kris Van Laningham, Joy Ritchie, Kathy Perry, Joleen Podtburg and Joyce White.

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