

Important Events Coming Up In the Next Few Weeks...

Classroom Volunteer In-Service and Events Volunteer Meeting August 23 or 24

If you volunteered to help in the classroom or with any of our Family Events this year, this meeting's for you! It will take place from 9:15-11:00AM in the Resource Room beginning with the classroom in-service and followed by a brief meeting of all those who agreed to serve on the Pancake Breakfast Committee and the Teacher Appreciation Committee.

Pancake Breakfast and Garage Sale – September 29

Our first event of the year features a pancake breakfast (with fun pancake toppings) and a garage sale. Each year we ask families to donate outgrown toys or clothes so we can share our resources 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.

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

September 1 – Payments Due No Later Than Today

(Did you find the payment envelope in your child's cubby?) If you have any questions about payments, please speak with Linda Maack, our Financial Director. We so appreciate your timely payments. They help us very much. **Note: Please make sure to make your check out to Dimensions.**

No School – September 3 (Labor Day)

From the Dimensions Foundation Executive Director

Dear Families,
Welcome to the 2007-2008 school year. We are looking forward to wonderful adventures ahead and very much invite your ideas, suggestions and active involvement throughout the year.

I want to thank Sue Erdkamp and Michelle Zimmer, our co-directors of our Dimensions First-Plymouth Early Education programs, and all teachers and administrative staff who have worked so hard to prepare for a new year. I commend each and every person for the level of dedication, commitment and professionalism that they bring to this important

work. And, I want to thank all of you for sharing your very precious children with us, and supporting all of our efforts to provide the very best early education experiences possible.

We are excited about all of the wonderful resources for children that we are developing through our on-going research. And we are excited about partnering with the Arbor Day Foundation to take our Nature Explore™ program to teachers, children and families all over the country.

I commend all of our teachers for their on-going professional growth as they support and observe

children daily; engage in on-going research and field-testing; participate in focus group interviews; or present workshops to our own staff or other educators. As I watch all of our teaching staff, I see such a commitment to children's individual needs and interests. And, I see teachers sharing their own unique gifts with the rest of the staff for the good of all children.

Each year, families also share gifts with us in many ways. We couldn't do what we do without you. Thank you for partnering with us. Together we are all better! Here's to a great year!

Nancy Rosenow

In-Service Week for Teachers Ends with Nature Explore Workshop

Dimensions' teaching staff completed a busy week of preparation for the new school session by participating in the Nature Explore Workshop. This workshop is just one example of the professional development that the Dimensions' staff experiences throughout the year.

The workshop, facilitated by Julie Rose, Denise Topil and Theresa Frey, led the teachers through experiences children have in the major areas of our Nature Explore Classroom. These

include areas for Messy Materials, Music and Movement, Nature Art, Gardening, Building and Climbing and Crawling.



Nature Explore™ Family Club . . . Reconnect with Nature and Each Other



Throughout the 2007-2008 school year we will be offering a fun way for children and families to make deeper connections with each other and with the wonders of nature.

Each month we'll offer a chance to gather and enjoy a fun family activity together. Activities will range from outdoor scavenger hunts to visits to nature centers and other natural places of interest. Fishing at Holmes Lake and visits to Pioneers Park, Spring Creek Prairie and Nebraska City were highlights during the Club's first year. Contact Chris Kiewra at chrisk@dimensionsfoundation.org if you have questions or would like additional information.



Enjoying the Wonder of Childhood and the Right to Play

One of the most wonderful things about our work with children is that we get to be reminded each day that the world is a miraculous place! Children take such delight in things that we adults often forget to enjoy – a walk through a peaceful park . . . a ladybug on a bright green leaf . . . the way clay feels when we squish it through our fingers . . . the exciting sounds an African drum can make . . . how much fun it is to dance to various kinds of music (and how great it is to not worry about what we look like when we're dancing!) How many times do we adults sing with abandon, laugh out loud at poetry rhymes, or shout with delight as we blow bubbles? We as teachers and staff are fortunate that our children remind us to do these things with them each day. And . . . we hope that we bring in enough new and exciting experiences that we can help our children learn that the world is alive with possibilities . . . and that a

lifetime isn't long enough to discover all of the world's gifts.

Together We Are Better

We can't thank you enough, parents, for all the support and encouragement you give us in our work with children. We hope to return the favor and encourage you as you go about the most important work you will ever do – raising your children. We know how much each of you cares and how hard you work to do what's best for your children. Today's world – with its fast-paced schedules,

scary images on tv or in movies, and frightening news stories – doesn't always make parenting or teaching an easy job. That's why we all need each other. We look forward to talking together at conference times and other informal times throughout our year, and we look forward to working together to be sure that the very precious children we all care so much about gain the best early education experience possible.

"There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle, the other is as though everything is a miracle."

-Albert Einstein

I have come to the frightening conclusion ... I am the decisive element in the child's life. It is my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher or a parent, I possess tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous; I can humiliate or humor; I can hurt or heal. In all situations it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated ... and whether a child will be humanized or dehumanized.

– Haim Ginott

Reminder . . .

Infant/Toddler Program Entrance: **use the West Entrance only** (this is a change from past years). Please park in the cut-out or along the street for drop-off and pick-up. (The door by the northwest parking lot will be locked for safety reasons; use only to exit through.)



Staff Birthdays

Tara HildAugust 7
 Kristi ReitzAugust 13
 Chris DickhautAugust 16
 Sue ErdkampAugust 17
 Jason KellyAugust 17
 Ann WattAugust 19

Photographs contributed by Chris Kiewra, Dana Miller, and Beth Pauley.

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