



News from Learning Circle Preschool

Curriculum Night October 28th 6:30-8:30

Dates to Remember

- Wed Oct 28 Curriculum Night and Pot Luck 6:30 – 8:30 PM
- **Wednesday Nov 11 NO SCHOOL**
- Wed Nov 11 Board Meeting at 7:30, Financial Committee meeting at 7 pm
- Sat Nov 14 Rick Goldin Concert 11 am
- **Nov 25-27 NO SCHOOL**

Please reserve the evening of **WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 28 (6:30-8:30)** for the entire Learning Circle community of adults to get together to socialize and to learn more about the program. At curriculum night, there will be food (pot luck) and informal conversation with other parents and with teachers. We'll also break up into small groups (by classroom) so that you can get to know your own child's teachers, talk about the program for the year, see displays, have your questions answered, and meet the parents of your child's classmates. Representatives of the school's Board of Directors will also be on hand to describe some details about what the Board will be doing this year, and how parents can participate in the program.

We will post a sign up for the pot luck in our entryway. We hope you will all be able to join us!

Social Themes across the Whole School Curriculum

As we begin our school year together, it is important to all of us that we establish a sense of security, support, and safety for every child. Working through transitions and feelings about separation from home are part of this effort, as is assuring that our classroom rules and expectations are clear to the children. We need children to know the boundaries around behavior in school, and we need to assure that children can trust that they are physically safe in school. We also work very hard to assure that our climate offers children a sense of emotional security, so that a sense of trust can serve as a foundation for our experiences together.

This year, we are focusing directly on issues of emotional safety in our environment by beginning a series of small group experiences in every class that will encourage children to talk about their feelings, fine tune pro-social behaviors develop problem solving and conflict

resolution skills, and notice kindness in our interpersonal relationships at school. We have begun our efforts to build a sense of community through music, puppetry, feelings discussions, and the writing and discussing of classroom rules. The process looks a bit different in each classroom and across development, but in each classroom curriculum is well under way to support each child's sense of connection to the whole school community.

In addition, we will be using two formal curriculums in support of social competency. One is called Woven Word, which uses literacy experiences and books to focus on social issues. Another is called Second Step, which is based in picture discussion. More details about these will follow as we move forward this year.

We hope you'll look for how this aspect of our curriculum develops over the whole school year!

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Here are some of the ways that the social skills curriculum will be implemented in our various classrooms in the next few weeks:

- ☞ Feelings faces will be mounted on the wall on a Velcro strip in the classrooms. Have a feeling you'd like to express and/or talk about? Just choose the closest representation on this chart to begin a process
- ☞ In all classrooms, self portraits are encouraged, as children examine their features in mirrors, draw, and describe.
- ☞ In all classrooms, structures are in place to assure that the routine includes singing children's names, and using name cards (encouraging the recognition of one's own and those of others in the class)
- ☞ When strong feelings are expressed, follow up conversations include all children, so that there is both social support from peers and an opportunity to share perspectives (I remember when I was sad...)
- ☞ Many classroom songs include singing the names of classmates, and include space for simple improvisations from each child
- ☞ A kindness bell system has been implemented in the nuthatch and goldfinch room, where children who notice kind behavior on the part of another child can ask that the bell be rung in recognition of the kindness. In the chickadee room, teachers recognize and commend the kind words and actions viewed daily in the classroom, and encourage children to do the same.
- ☞ Puppets representing various feelings will be made soon, to encourage children to develop a feelings vocabulary and to encourage conversation about times children feel happy, sad, angry, disappointed, sleepy, surprised, shy, etc.

Here are a few titles of children's books that feature themes relating to our feelings curriculum:

Alexander and the Terrible Horrible No Good Very Bad Day; Judith Viorst
C is for Curious; Woodleigh Hubbard
Chrysanthemum; Kevin Henkes
Darcy and Gran Don't Like Babies; Jane Cutler
Feelings; Joanne Murphy
The First Day of School; Patricia Relf
The Goodbye Book; Judith Viorst
I Like Me; Nancy Carlson
Julius the Baby of the World; Kevin Henkes
Making Friends; Fred Rogers
Shy Charles; Rosemary Wells
The Story of Ferdinand; Munro Leaf
There's a Nightmare in my Closet; Mercer Mayer
Today I Feel Silly; Jamie Lee Curtis
Too Close Friends; Shen Roddie
Wemberly Worried; Kevin Henkes
Where the Wild Things Are; Maurice Sendak

3 Blue Hill River Road
Canton, MA 02021

Phone:
(781) 828-4800

Fax:
(781) 828-6450

e-mail
info@learningcirclepreschool.org

Upcoming Fall Conferences

We are planning to start fall conferences in November and early December, and will be organizing our schedule soon.

Conferences are times to sit with a teacher for about 30 minutes to talk about your child's initial adjustment to school. Teachers will be happy to discuss any questions you may have about the school year so far and to talk to you about the year's goals and curriculum as they relate to your child. Conferences are also times for teachers to share the beginnings of the portfolio systems that are in place to record your child's growth and development in school this year.

Since there are so many parents to meet, and time is so limited, we ask that you choose your conference time carefully. Please be sure you'll be able to arrive on time and come without children, since we cannot have an extensive conversation with little ones there. And if you must cancel, please be sure to call us well in advance.

You may want to talk with another parent about watching your children for you while you meet teachers if you are willing to reciprocate. We can try to help you coordinate a schedule and a space for the children to play if you decide to do this.

A Note on Parent/Teacher Communication and NAEYC

Good communication and a strong partnership with families are central to our mission at Learning Circle Preschool, and it is an important area to consider in relation to NAEYC accreditation as well. We have many systems in place to accomplish this:

- Daily notes on our doors about the day's activities
- Journaling through creativecurriculum.net or other email communication
- Talking in person with someone from each child's family at arrival and departure times at least once per week, if not more
- Making sure we are available for telephone calls or other communication that you feel we need
- Weekly notes about past and upcoming curriculum themes for each class
- Newsletters monthly with information about points of interest across the whole school
- Documentation of children's work and play via displays in the classrooms, welcome room, and hallways

Are we meeting our goals? Please let us know if we are not reaching your family, so that we can fine tune our systems and assure you are receiving all the information about your child's day at school that you need!