

# The Prouty Voice



## Message from Marisa:



I have been in the special education/early education field long enough to be able to look back at external forces that changed our work in positive ways. In the late 80's and early 90's, integrating children with peers in education settings was the priority. Early education has been the most conducive environment to integrate children. We have the flexibility in environment and curriculum which allows for the blending of specialized instruction into the daily curriculum for the entire group. This ability has been the core of the Prouty Center's practice with children.

Over the past year, I have been learning how early childhood is being pulled closer and closer to "No Child Left Behind". Last month, I attended two trainings; one for NAEYC accreditation and the other, the Family Infant Toddler Director's meeting. Both were similar in that we must validate our early education practice and services. At our three day in-service, we focused on learning the "New Rules" and how we can use these imposed requirements to our benefit.

One benefit to the Prouty Center will have a renewed focus on documentation, which is Reggio philosophy best practice. Through the collection of documentation, we allow children to show us how they are learning and problem solving. We document progress in many ways. Our first step is to take the information we gained from individual developmental assessments/screenings of the child. This information helps us determine the child's current abilities and the areas we can support through play activities in the child's natural environments. We support learning through goals development which provide scaffolding for learning at school and at home. Communication between educators and

parent is important to support the ongoing learning of the child. We will provide evidence about the child's progress through a collection of documentation: photos, work completed by the child, and reassessment to have physical proof of progress.

Over the next few months, the NAEYC will be completed by staff, parents and the administration. This information will provide goals for us to work on as a center including improvement of current practice as well as the development of new practice and other possible program changes to the Prouty Center. This is an opportunity to work more collaboratively. As a team we will review the self-study information and develop a plan of action.

**I am asking for volunteers to be part of the Parent Advisory Team.** This team will assist in the review of the information as well as participate in future planning for the center as a whole. I am looking for representatives from the Family Infant Toddler and Early Learning Center programs. Plans developed by this team will be part of the future strategic planning the Board of Trustees is developing over the course of this year. I look forward to talking to you in detail about this opportunity.

I have two parent meetings scheduled on March 6<sup>th</sup>; one at 9:00 a.m. and one at 5:30 p.m. Please RSVP JoAnn Carew at 257-7852 or by email [wpcpb@sover.net](mailto:wpcpb@sover.net) and let us know which session you can attend. Thank you.

**From the Office of Pat Field:**

So often we send out messages to remind parents of various things. I just want to acknowledge our parents for always making their payments on time. Your timely payments are so appreciated and I want to thank you.

Our upcoming 2007/2008 Registration Packet will be mailed to you this week. **These must be completed and returned by March 16<sup>th</sup>** in order to assure your child’s placement. For children transitioning from the Older Toddlers to Preschool, we have a mandatory minimum of four days whether half or full days. Don’t hesitate to speak with me about any part of the registration process.

“That can’t be a Daddy! Daddies have wrinkles”  
Overheard in our Older Toddler Class.



**Fig. 1: Prouty staff after in-service training**

“I liked sitting on your lap,” said the 3 year old as I put him down. “You’re so nice and soft and round.”  
Comment to JoAnn when visiting another Center

**Announcements & Upcoming Events**

PLEASE remember to bring in snow pants and appropriate winter attire (with names marked)!!! We have too many children unable to play in the snow because of inadequate clothing.

Last call for inclusion in the Prouty Parent/Staff Directory! Please submit whatever information you’d like included prior to March 9<sup>th</sup>. Only parents who have submitted themselves will receive a directory. Thank you.

Unfortunately for all of us, our Parents Night Celebration was snowed out. We will be announcing another opportunity for a gathering and will be planning our first Open House in April or May. We will keep you posted but we’re wanting to avoid bad weather and also take advantage of our entire property for our larger community celebration.

**Time to set the clocks ahead: Just to remind you that it’s daylight savings time on March 11<sup>th</sup>. Don’t forget to change your clocks so that you and your child don’t arrive on Monday an hour too early!**



**Fig. 2: Children enjoying their new space**

## Preschool News

Children are natural scientists, always asking “why” and “what is it called”. We have continued to explore being scientists throughout the month of February in the Preschool. From our interest in amphibians, sparked by the box of materials from the Grafton Nature Museum, questions were raised about turtles and alligators (What are they? Why are they not amphibians?) and so we began to study reptiles as well. (We are still hoping to have some turtle-pets visit when they are available; nothing beats the real thing!) That led to an interest in the first reptiles of all, the dinosaurs.

Our study of dinosaurs led to learning names of the creatures as well as what to call a “dinosaur scientist” (can you say “paleontologist”?). We became paleontologists when we dug “bones” out of a variety of materials: rock salt, wood shavings and more. We tried to put them together like puzzle pieces. We learned what dinosaurs ate. We found their eggs and nesting sites. Library and resource books gave us real life photos to study and even pictures of foot prints and fossilized tracks. (Now that we have snow we are hoping to get out and look for modern day animal tracks and we will try to identify what they are!)

February was also the month of Valentine’s Day and in the Preschool we got into it in a big way, preparing for it with our pink mailbox and classroom decorations days ahead of time. Although the storm which provided the snow we’ll enjoy in March interrupted our festivities, when we returned on Friday we distributed our cards and special snacks and had an all school sing.

Our teachers spent in-service days redesigning the classroom space, getting new library books, and making plans for adding music and dance and story telling/acting “specials” to our curriculum. We will be having two new students (Grace and Lucy) begin their visits and we said “farewell” to Ben. We hope you enjoy the new areas we have created for our classroom.

*Nan, Bob & Kate*

## News from the Younger Toddlers

The Younger Toddler Group is growing ever more independent! Our changes in the room arrangements reflect that the children are demonstrating abilities to use the materials in more mature ways. We have a variety of baskets and bins of materials located under the windows that the children may take by themselves to the tables to work on during free choice times. At the beginning of the year, they would all have been dumped!

Odd as it is to mention, a popular part of our curriculum right now is the trip to the potty—a social event since usually two children go together with a teacher. They learn from each other.

February brought us lots of glue and glitter projects and the start of a bigger classroom project: the farm diorama. We completed painting and decorating some boxes and Marie cut doors and windows so our toy farm animals would have homemade barns. To come next month: a landscape for our animals, and this group’s first exposure to paper mache, a fantastic messy sensory/art experience.

It is a classroom tradition to plant seeds for the first day of spring—can it really be coming soon? Seeds are fun to count and sort, and mud is great to create. We love watching the progress of our little plants. In the meantime, we have that wonderful sensory material snow, and at last we hope to do lots of exploration with it. We may also be sending small groups over to Memorial Park to enjoy sledding in the snow.

March is National Nutrition month and we will feature vegetable exploration as a curricular highlight. *We ask that families bring in some vegetable that they particularly enjoy at home to share with the class.* Certain of the hardier veggies will spend time in the house corner or at the sensory table before being prepared so the children can examine or pretend to cook them before they actually do. Who knows, maybe they will even want to eat some they have never eaten before!

*Susan, Lindsey, Marie, Kathy*

## What's happening: Older Toddlers

### Working and Playing

The children continue to engage with the puzzles on a daily basis. All of the children have experienced putting together the floor puzzles and the more challenging table top ones; the puzzle play has led to wonderful partnerships. It took some time and teacher facilitation, but the children have become not only independent but also more collaborative with their peers. Often, a couple of the children will put together a floor puzzle without major interpersonal conflict. They are working hard to listen to each other and share their space. The children have become such a caring and wonderful community. There are partnerships blooming everywhere! The children were creating clay structures during a small group activity, when a pair decided they were going to make a house together. Suddenly, the other children wanted to partner as well! It was fantastic and the children really worked together to make a collaborative piece. After, the partners were proud of their work and showed some of their peers their art work.

The dramatic play area has become more "house-like" and the children have responded by re-creating their own experiences. As we continued with our unit on families and houses, the children began playing with the dollhouses and dolls; they began playing different roles with each other and using props to indicate these differences and they were able to work together. We brought in a small table, plastic food, empty containers of food, a telephone and play clothes. Suddenly, the dramatic play area was a whirlwind of activity! One child used the flat surface of the structure as his kitchen counter and proceeded to prepare fresh fruit salad and other delicious meals! Another group seemed to be more interested in creating a TV area. The pair found a corkboard, leaned it in a position where they could "watch" the television, then got some blankets and sat on our mat "couch."

They engaged in this play for 20 minutes. Other children were more interested in the pretend clothes and then using the telephone to talk. It was amazing to watch how they utilized the different materials. They all have rich experiences that they then brought into the classroom and proceeded to recreate with their friends!

**(continued on next page)**

## News from the Family Infant Toddler Program

The Family Infant Toddler Program staff will be attending "Building Bridges within the Transition Process from FITP to EEE programs. This workshop will examine current practice, identify stumbling blocks, and create solutions. The staff has coordinated with our local EEE districts for day long in-service in Burlington, Vermont on March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

### In-Service Day Event

The first day of in-service week, the FITP staff organized an all staff field trip to several early care and learning settings all over Windham County. The programs chosen were based on programs that run during the February school break.

The experience was such a nice reminder to each of us that our mission statement rings true to us in our daily work with all the children and families we serve and teach. Once we returned, we gathered to share similarities and differences in philosophy, classroom environments, hours of operation and other stories. I think we all came back with something new we would like to try or incorporate in our work. Many visited centers welcomed us, gave background or history about their program and answered questions.

We, in turn, have invited their staff to feel welcome to visit our program. Programs visited included:

- \* Putney Head Start
- \* Brattleboro Center for Children
- \* The Family Garden
- \* Kids in the Country (E. Dover)
- \* Growing Circle (Dover)
- \* Canal Street Head Start
- \* CABA Evening Care
- \* Bridge Nest Early Head Start

### FITP Wish List:

Clean, boppy pillows  
Bean bag chairs

*Martha, Mary, Kathy & Joanne*

## **Older Toddlers (continued from page 4)**

### **Exploring and Experiencing**

This past month the children explored and experimented with liquids and matter. Since it's been frigid and cold, the children spent time exploring ice. We focused on the process as well as the end product. The children filled a shallow container with clear water; then they got to choose different materials to put into the water. They placed the container outside and then the following morning they got to see what happened to the water. The children were fascinated with the ice and being able to see the toys and materials but unable to touch them! The children also were able to watch the ice melt throughout the morning. It was wonderful to watch how the children tried to problem solve getting the materials out of the ice! Some children used forks to dig through the ice, while others simply waited and would incrementally check the melting process.

During the week, the children added different colors to the water and changed the materials. Other children got to add water to different sized bottles and freeze them overnight. When asking the children, some thought the frozen water in the bottles was different water while others seemed to get the concept of water getting so cold it gets hard! The children also got to explore using ice as an art medium. The children painted with different colored ice; they understood that the ice stick was not a popsicle! They really enjoyed not only painting with the colored ice but also watching it melt as they continued to use the ice cubes! At the end of the project, it was clear everyone had been working with colored water and having fun!

The children also engaged with gelatin; this art and sensory activity was a nice bridge to the ice exploration occurring simultaneously. We made two gelatin molds and the children used eye droppers to squeeze watercolor onto the mold. The children then watched the watercolor permeate the mold. All of the children watched in fascination! It was only 15 minutes later, that they figured out they could touch and smooch the gelatin. We discussed how it felt and what it looked like. The children then placed the gelatin outside and got to experience frozen gelatin the next day. They did this activity several times and the children really enjoyed the texture of the gelatin!

**(continued in column 2 on this page)**

## **Older Toddlers (continued from 1<sup>st</sup> column)**

The week before vacation, we poured rock salt into the sensory table. Some children were completely focused on the sensory element; pouring and scooping; while others looked at individual pieces and noticed how they looked like jewels. The children then colored the rock salt. Once the salt was dry, then more of the children thought they looked like jewels! Not only was the rock salt beautiful but it made great sound when being poured and scooped. Many of the children also used their hands to touch and explore the rough texture.

And then. . .it snowed! The children had so much fun in the snow. It was wonderful to watch the children on sleds (pulling and then being pulled) and climbing the different mountains. The children did a wonderful job putting on snowsuits and boots. It's a lot of work, but they persevered.

### **Valentine's Day**

During circle time, we discussed Valentine's Day. The idea of giving cards was abstract, but we discussed how many of them like making cards for their parents and how they could make cards for their friends too! One child shared how she's made her cards with her mother and how she'd gone about doing them! After, we set up a card making table and the children could choose what to put on them. The children have become amazing cutters; many tried to cut out hearts and designs. It was great practice for fine motor control! The children also were excited when they saw the different cards in their cubbies. One child took a Valentine out of his cubby and began shaking it, then exclaimed, "it's candy!"

The idea of "giving" is so powerful and the children really seemed to enjoy making these small card gifts! They also liked looking in their cubbies and finding these small "gifts" given to them by their friends. Several of the children got to put their cards in each child's cubby all by themselves—and they were so proud to have been able to identify their peers' cubbies!

*Ana, Sherri, Katrina*



**Fig. 3: Big & little children at play**

**It's the little things we CAN do:**

A little boy and his mother were walking along a beach during their vacation. As they walked, the child noticed lots of beached starfish along the water's edge.

He stopped and began tossing them back into the ocean. Some time later, as he continued to keep up his efforts, his mother realized how many hundreds of starfish there were. She said, "Honey, what possible difference can you make to all these starfish?" Her son thought about it for a minute, bent over to retrieve another and tossed it far out into the water. He then turned to his mother and replied, "I made a difference to that one."

**Staff:** **257-7852**

**Administration:**

Marisa Duncan-Holley Ext. 11  
Executive Director

Patricia Field Ext. 25  
Business Director

JoAnn Carew Ext. 10  
Office Manager

**Playroom** Ext. 18

**March Birthday Wishes to:**

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**Family Infant Toddler** **258-2414**

Joanne Shaw  
Martha Healey-Nelson  
Mary Coogan  
Katherine Hallock

**Early Learning Center**

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**EL 2 – Older Toddlers** **E**

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**EL 3 – Preschool** **E**

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