

# The Prouty Voice



## News from the Younger Toddlers

The younger toddler class has been working on lots of challenging concepts within the room: turn-taking, especially with some new circle time games, deliberate choice for free play, especially getting out table materials by themselves and putting them away, and identifying feelings, especially when someone is sad or mad.

The concept of solids changing was explored in many ways: with ice, snow, and even gelatin. The opposite was explored also: our messy sensory project of paper mache dried solidly enough for everyone to help paint it for our landscape—evolving from a farmyard to a cityscape. In the emergent curriculum tradition, our homemade buildings started out as barns and now are houses with imaginary roads and sidewalks.

The recent intense cold kept us indoors for four days in a row and we started doing lots more movement songs and games to burn off the energy. Ask your child about “Animal Action.” The whole school got into the act at the last “All School Sing”, pretending to be such offbeat creatures as a red-eyed slider (a kind of turtle) and armadillos! The toddlers especially like the galloping and jumping animals, and most have those movements down as they work on those and other more challenging techniques such as tip-toeing and following a leader’s directions in other movement songs.

In celebration of March being National Nutrition Month we engaged in an exploration of the characteristics of many kinds of vegetables. These were chopped, peeled, smelled, cooked and tasted! Some of our picky eaters tried new ones after a curriculum focus on it.



**Figure 1: Lauren spraying the new growth**

April is National Library month and we are looking forward to our **Annual Book Exchange**. Everybody may bring three books from home to trade. **Please bring these by Wednesday, April 11<sup>th</sup>.**

We also always remember Earth Day in April by doing recycled art and a few “green-up walks” in the neighborhood. It will be exciting to also be looking for birds, flowers and signs of spring!

*Susan, Kathy, Marie, Lindsey*

## What's happening: Older Toddlers

### Acting Out. . .

Everyday, the children can be found reading either with others or by themselves. The books on our bookshelves are well loved; in fact, we've had to retire a few because they've fallen apart. The children can read during activity time as well as during rest and nap time. Due to this natural part of our literacy curriculum, the children have begun acting out certain stories.

The first story to be acted was *The Mitten*. Several groups got to participate using props and the stage in our classroom and in the playroom. The second book to be brought to the stage was *The Rainbow Fish*. Each child got to be a major character. The third book was *The Carrot Seed*. Though there were some props, much of the acting came completely from the children and their interpretation of the story. They have enjoyed bringing these favorite picture books to life! The books have also correlated with the rest of our curriculum: Winter (*The Mitten*), our classroom fish (*The Rainbow Fish*), and carrot seedlings (*The Carrot Seed*).



**Figure 2: Tatum and Hannah being rainbow fish**

### Projects and Play. . .

We had some partner work this past month. The children got to trace each other's bodies and then had an opportunity to paint them. The child who was being drawn would choose the artist. It was a great collaborative project.

**Older Toddlers (continued in 2<sup>nd</sup> column, pg. 2)**

## **Older Toddlers (continued from 1<sup>st</sup> column, pg 2)**

The children were excited to see their bodies on the wall and were very proud of their work. Others got to paint with balls. This project consisted of a large shallow container (3 ft. long), 6 small balls and different colored paint. The partners had to maneuver and manipulate the balls into the paint. Not only was this an upper body workout, but it also meant both children had to work together so the art would happen. The children chose what colors they wanted and had to agree. There were many "Oh-ohhs" during this project because the balls would suddenly pop out of the container and roll on the floor.

The children got to play in containers of snow while making snow men (using Mr. Potato accessories) during the morning activity period. It was great to see tiny snow men with big eyes, big shoes and hats! The children also got to enjoy being outside and sledding in the snow!

The children explored working with sand as a form of art. They made beautiful paintings using sand and paint. Their work had great texture! The children also got to explore painting with water colors using cars, trains and trucks. They would squeeze watercolor out of an eyedropper, then choose a vehicle to drive through the color puddle.

### Just keep swimming. . .

We got goldfish this month! The children were fascinated with our five new friends. The children got a chance to name the fish. They colored fish pictures and then had a teacher write down the name they wanted. Then during circle time, we pulled out five names out of a box. There was anticipation in the air! Our fish were named: Toto, Dorothy, Nemo, Ceecee, and Dory.

A week later, we got a Beta fish named Nemo. JoAnn donated him to our classroom community.

The first few days, the children wanted the fish to have all sorts of different toys and materials in the tank (to keep them company!) but now the children have become very caring and have begun asking great questions about their diet and why they live in the water. These fish have been a great addition to our Science curriculum.

**Older Toddlers (continued in 2<sup>nd</sup> column, page 5)**

## Preschool News

While we're certainly happy it's spring, the usual "cons" come along with all the "pros", those being: mud, mud, and mud puddles. Please be sure your child has plenty of extra clothes, socks, and also has boots to wear on the playground and walks. Snow pants are also a plus in muddy weather, even if it's warmer out, because they really help keep your child's clothes (and therefore our classroom) cleaner. So keep an eye on the cubby basket and make sure it's well stocked with everything your child needs. We also learned a song about mud to help us get through this season, here it is:

"Mud, mud, I love mud. I'm absolutely, positively wild about mud. I can't go around, gotta go through it. Fabulous. Wonderful, Super-duper mad!"

After learning it, the pre-schoolers came up with a vocabulary list of words they would use to further describe mud: Words like "dirty", "gooey", "sticky", "we", "slimy" gave us ideas of how it feels to move through mud, something we will take on in a movement time during April.

We have pursued our investigation of pets with many activities. We made a graph of the numbers and kinds of pets everyone in our class has (lots of cats!) and talked about the kinds of food they eat. (What do you think is in turtle food?) As a result, we decided to make a batch of dog biscuits from scratch. With a simple recipe and lots of fun measuring and counting, stirring and rolling and cutting, we baked a batch and hope that everyone had a chance to take one home to their own or a neighbor's dog. Lydia even fed one to her cat, and said she liked it too! The ingredients are as follows: yeast, rich chicken broth, flour, cornmeal, salt. Roll them out like cookies and bake at 300 for 45 minutes. Yumm! (If you don't believe me, ask JoAnn in the office!)

Another activity we took on we called "an experiment in cooperation" or "making a plan". It evolved from a spontaneous activity in which most of the class was involved in trying to build a fort on the stage area. Talk about too many cooks! Not a lot of listening was going on and so many ideas were being enacted at once that of course the fort was not a huge success. But knowing the idea of building a

**Preschool (continued in next column, pg 3)**

## **Preschool News (continued from previous column)**

fort the class could play in had so much appeal, we couldn't just let it go. Bob suggested we attempt it again, but in a more guided fashion and see if we could generate a class culture of cooperation instead. So at a circle time we did just that. We talked about the past fort and what had happened and simply asked them what they thought about how to make it better. Hands were raised. Notes were taken. Ideas were shared. Consensus was achieved. Building began.

At first, a row of chairs was made in the classroom. A sheet was brought out. "What would happen if we cover the chairs like this?" "Would it be a fort?" The children thought not, but the teachers said, "Let's see". So we draped the row and asked the class if it looked like the fort they imagined. "No." So what do we do to change it? "Put the chairs in a circle." Work continued.

The teachers guided and helped the children by stopping periodically to question the direction of the building. Children listened to each other. They cooperated. When the children got in and were covered with the sheet they found it was too low of a ceiling, and hampered their ability to move. More questions. Quietly, McKade raised his arms over his head, raising the "roof" of the fort. A teacher brought it to the attention of the rest of the children and they followed suit. Kayla even knelt on a chair with her hands raised to make it even higher. They had solved one problem, lack of room, but still were left with the problem of lack of ability to move around. We broke and left it for another day.

The follow up to fort building occurred in the playroom, in order to stimulate new ideas with different materials. We talked first, deciding to explore the room before we made any decisions, then the teachers brought the group together to "make a plan" again. We asked what materials they found in the playroom that could be used for a fort. Hands were raised. Suggestions were made. Turns were taken. Alyssa said "slide". A teacher responded, "Could the slide be used as part of the fort?" Enthusiastic YES! But the slide was over in a corner, in a dangerous place for a fort. It had to be moved.

**Preschool (continued in 1<sup>st</sup> column page 4)**

### **From the Office of Pat Field:**

I want to thank our parents for their incredible response to our NAEYC survey. Our parents are our greatest source of what we do well. They provide us with the best possible input we can receive. You are to be commended.

The Registration packets must be completed by April 6<sup>th</sup> in order for space to be held for any child. Please be sure to submit the entire packet by that date. Failure to do so can result in being placed on our waiting list.

### **Preschool News (continued from page 4)**

So all fifteen preschoolers found a place around it and began to push it across the floor. They worked collectively and cooperatively for several minutes in order to get it to where they wanted it, with some guiding questions from teachers to help them stop and think from time to time (they are, after all, preschoolers!). But the spirit of cooperation prevailed and an elaborate fort began to take shape, with the slide at the center. Mats, box tops and even the balance beam were added on to the structure. They played in it for a while and then when it was time to clean up, they all worked on it together again. What a successful experiment! As teachers we were proud to guide them through what became their own process to solve problems and achieve goals together. This is a lesson that bears repeating.

One more thing the warmer weather brings is opportunities for walks. Last week the whole school went on a walk together. (All School Walk could replace All School Sing or at least combine with it!) What a sight to see all three classes out together in our neighborhood. We are sure we will be doing it again in the future. It really gives all the children another chance to get to know each other and all the teachers as well, so that when transitions are being planned the children at least have a greater level of comfort with their “new” class already.

**Nan, Bob and Kate**

### **A View from FITP**

What a privilege to work in a place where some of the best teaching comes in small sizes. A little boy I know is just learning how to move on a ride-on toy and is only able to move backwards. Recently, a little friend from ELC1 joined him for a ride in the hallway. As they propelled themselves along, the little girl kept turning around to look for him, calling and gesturing for him to catch up to her. He looked unsure and a bit distressed as the harder he tried, the further away from her he went. Did this little girl become impatient with him, give up and move on? Was she impatient and judgmental about his lack of skill? No, not this little Winston Prouty Center tutor! She was determined to be with her friend, and, much to his obvious delight, began to propel herself boldly backwards to draw alongside him. They proceeded backwards down the hallway to cover the longest distance he had ever traveled on his own!

Each week I am deluged by questions from the children in ELC2 about a little friend who joins them in class only 2 days per week. “I want to play with him. Is he coming today?”, “I want to wait for him at the window”, “Can I push him in the wagon today?”, etc. When this little boy does arrive at “school” with a huge grin on his face, he calls out for his greetings to staff and students alike, and just rocks in happiness as he sits at circle with his friends.

I am proud to work in a place where children accept each other wholeheartedly, where differences are celebrated, where children’s eyes are large and their hearts are even larger. And where teachers and families value the inclusive philosophy that allows all this to be possible!

The Early Childhood Council of Windham County is pleased to announce that April is the Month of the Young Child. To celebrate, there are many fun, free activities for families with young children. A partial listing can be found in the next column.

***Mary, Martha, Kathy, Joanne***

MONTH OF THE YOUNG CHILD – APRIL 2007

Free Activities by local co-sponsors, the Early Childhood Council of Windham County and the Early Childhood Educators' Network of Southeastern Vermont. From April 6<sup>th</sup> through 21<sup>st</sup>, including:

4/6: Children's Art Exhibit, New England Youth  
5 PM Theater, Flat Street

5:30 Governor's Spring Challenge, gather at  
Whetstone Pathway

5:30 The Annies, Experienced Goods

4/7 Easter Egg Hunt, Living Memorial Park  
9:30 am

4/14 Let's Have a Tea Party! Brattleboro Food  
10 am Coop

4/19 Book Reading with Eileen Christelow,  
10:30 am Brooks Memorial Library

4/20 Super Bike and Fun Day, Living Memorial  
10:30 am Park

4/21 The Annies, New England Youth Theater  
11:00 am

Children's Stories Exhibits (ongoing)

Wednesdays Children's Storytime  
10:30 am

Detailed brochures are available from FIT.

*Mary, Martha, Kathy, Joanne*

"When one door of happiness closes, another opens,  
but often we look so long at the closed door that we  
do not see the one which has been opened for us."

Helen Keller

**Older Toddlers (continued from page 2)**

**Sowing the Seeds. . .**

As part of helping the children recognize and understand different seasons and changes in their environment, we began planting seeds. We planted carrot seeds in a self-contained root container. After a week, the roots became visible and the children were intrigued with the "feet" Then the seedlings shot up through the soil. Keeping the container full of water has been a job for the children. Next, we planted grass seeds both in a large container for our classroom and in individual Dixie cups for home. The grass has been very gratifying because it comes up so quickly and it has amazing roots. One child exclaimed, "it's hair!" when she saw all of the swirl like roots through the bottom of the clear container. The plant waterers job has become quite extensive! As the grass continues to grow, the children continue to ask great questions. They have also been "petting" the grass!

**Sharing. . .**

The children have become a wonderful community! They sing goodbye to each other every day and ask questions of each other in conversations during play. Due to their interest in sharing something about themselves and what they find important, we have began an official Sharing this past week. It has been a fabulous addition to our day! During circle time, the children each take turns sharing and allowing all of the children to touch, smell and listen to the items they've brought from home. The other children have been gentle with the special objects and excited to see what will be shared that morning.

*Ana, Katrina, Sherry*

"How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before beginning to improve the world."

Anne Frank

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**EL 2 – Older Toddlers** E

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**EL 3 – Preschool** E

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**April Birthday Wishes to:**

