



THE SOUTH SHORE NATURAL SCIENCE CENTER



Nature Center Preschool News

October 2019

October arrived quickly and it is a busy month! NCP students will be exploring the wonders of Autumn. School pictures are coming up Oct 21st and 22nd, and at the end of the month, we will have a Harvest celebration with games, stories, and Pajama day! Instead of wearing costumes to school for Halloween, we encourage children to wear their favorite PJ's! This approach is developmentally appropriate with lots of fun centering around pumpkins and all things fall.

Please remember to label your child's belongings with their first name and last initial in case something is misplaced.

SSNSC Environmental Educators visit the Preschool classrooms twice a month to provide an up-close look at local flora and fauna or explore the grounds. In October, we meet the Red Bellied Cooters. Every year we foster about five little turtles giving them a head start to grow big enough to survive into adulthood once released. The State chooses a local site to release them into the wild after 9 months with SSNSC.

Swim

The NCP swim program at the Emilson Branch of SSYMCA will begin October 14th. Swim program registration will be going home in cubbies soon! Ask your teacher or Diane for a swim program registration if you do not see one.

Did you know?



A South Shore
YMCA Organization
ssymca.org

Family Advisory Council News!

We had our first Family Advisory Council meeting and it was a great turn out with some new ideas.

Our first storybook walk launch event is Oct 12th 9:30-11am. Come walk the story book trail and create your own kite! Warm cider will be served.

Birthday books is also underway—this a program to honor your child's birthday by donating a book in their name. Contact Katie Kunevich katiekunevich@gmail.com.

We welcome all families to participate on the FAC at our semi-monthly meetings or behind the scenes in supportive roles. If you would like to be a part of the FAC, let your classroom teachers know or email Diane dthureson@ssymca.org.

Upcoming meeting dates:

Wed. Nov 13th 6:30-7:30

Dates in October

12th Storybook walk launch

14th Indigenous People's Day/Columbus Day—

No School

21st School Pictures

MWF AM classes

22nd School Pictures TuTh AM and PM classes

SAVE THE DATE!

Savers donation drive Nov 6/7

Nature Notes

Encountering a snake in the garden causes many people to shriek or even panic. Yet snakes are among the most effective forms of pest control. If you tolerate these herpetological visitors – or better yet, encourage their presence – you'll be less likely to share your garden with ravenous bugs, or bottles of pesticide. You can attract snakes to your garden by providing habitat: loose rock piles, old tree stumps, brush piles, prone boards, a stack of wood, and unkempt corner swales. And since pesticides can sicken and kill reptiles and amphibians, maintaining a chemical-free garden safeguards these natural predators. Read more:

http://northernwoodlands.org/outside_story/article/snakes-toads-garden-pest-control



Lunch Bunch is a wonderful extra social time for children. Children eat their lunch together, exchange ideas in conversation, and have additional cooperative play time. Lunch Bunch occurs on Wednesdays and Thursdays from about 12-1pm. Afternoon children may arrive at about 12:10 to allow for morning dismissal and morning children should be picked up at 12:50 so that the afternoon classes can transition to their regular class time. Ask your classroom teacher!



October areas of Learning!

- **Social/Emotional:** Following the group plan, being helpful, being kind
- **Science:** Red-bellied cooters, leaves, seeds,
- **Physical** (Gross and Fine motor): Exploring nature trails, balance and coordination; pincer grasp control (buttons/zippers);
- **Cognitive:** environmental exploration and curiosity, noticing environmental changes, predicting outcomes
- **Language, Early Literacy, Math:** sequencing a story— *I am a Leaf, Sixteen Runaway Pumpkins, The Biggest Pumpkin Ever*, counting, measuring
- **Creative Expression:** *Music:* pumpkin and apple songs, Fall songs, finger plays and rhymes; *Drama:* cooperative storyline creation through dramatic play; *Art:* easel painting; *Creative play:*

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What's Lost When We Rush Kids Through Childhood

<https://www.edutopia.org/article/whats-lost-when-we-rush-kids-through-childhood>

The following is an excerpt.

Your book on early childhood education is called *The Importance of Being Little*. Why is “being little” so important? What do you want parents, educators, and policy makers to know about this developmental stage?

Traveling around the country, teaching and talking with parents and educators from a variety of backgrounds and environments, has persuaded me that we're in danger of losing the child in childhood. The notion that there is something of value in being a little kid—with little kid desires and, above all, needs—seems to have fallen out of favor. We talk about young children, increasingly, as commodities to “invest” in for future payoffs.

What does high-quality early education look like? If you walked into a preschool that uses best practices, what would you see and hear?

Quality education is about relationships. Caring teachers who understand child development and who know and are attuned to the children in their care are far more important than many of the measures of quality we use today, such as class size, physical environments, or a specific curriculum. Rich, open-ended conversation is critical, and children need time in the day to experience warm, empathic oral language—to converse with each other playfully, to tell a rambling story to an adult, to listen to high-quality literature and ask meaningful questions.

The research shows that quality caregivers know both the broad parameters of child development (“This is what a 3-year-old looks like”) and know their children as individuals (“This is what this child is like”).

Quality preschool teachers are intentional about everything they do: the classroom routines, the physical environment, the schedule, the types of materials they make available for children to explore and manipulate. These teachers do an extraordinary amount of observation and

reflection—and it's really almost impossible to do that in a vacuum: the best preschools have collegial, inquiry-based cultures so that they can continually experiment with and modify their learning environments to take advantage of children's natural curiosity.

You write a lot about the importance of play.

How do you define play, and why is it so crucial?

Play is the defining feature of mammalian development: the impulse is hardwired into us and can't be suppressed. However, it's crucial that we recognize that while the play impulse is one thing, the play know-how—the nuts and bolts of playing—is not always so natural, and requires careful cultivation.

Children don't play as much in mixed-age groups, where younger kids can learn from older ones, and the older children in turn have to learn to be gentle and fair with their littlest players. Children have less free time to mess around and make their own rules. They need the time and space to learn how to play effectively, and they require a culture that values play. Increasingly, we don't seem to have that kind of early childhood culture.

So much learning comes about naturally from what scientists call the serve-and-return style of communication between an adult and young child, which others have referred to as a conversational “duet.” I often ask open-ended questions such as “Tell me about your drawing,” rather than “checking” questions like “What color is the apple?” or “What are you drawing?” The open-ended response really opens up a huge space for spontaneous and deep learning.



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