

Puffin Class News April 2018



Since our last newsletter we've welcomed four new faces to the class. As you see Miriam, Benjamin, Yael, Maya and their families at school activities, I know you'll welcome them to the class.

We really enjoyed having parents visit the class for observations this past month! Many of you wrote down some interesting comments and questions, which I'm looking forward to discussing during our conferences in a couple of weeks. However, there are a couple of questions that recur which seemed worth covering briefly here.

First, when do children eat snack? In a traditional setting, all the children would eat snack at the same time — often in high chairs or other types of fixed seating, being served by an adult who then cleans up after them. Even in the toddler class, the children eat at the same time.

But in the primary classes, the children eat when they are hungry, as long as there is space available at our two-seat snack table. We do keep an eye on snack to make sure that no child monopolizes the snack table for an extended conversation when other children are waiting to eat; and we also offer reminders to children who have a habit of getting so involved in their work that they forget to eat.

However, it is unrealistic to expect that all the children, ages 2.5 through 6, will be hungry on the same schedule; and they may prefer to eat something from food preparation (cream cheese on an English muffin, carrots, sliced eggs, apples, muffins that they baked themselves) rather than what's available for snack. The children serve themselves, they clean up after themselves, and they eat more or less when they notice that they need to eat.

The other recurring question involves children getting help. We have grace and courtesy lessons on how to seek help, whether it is with tying a shoe, cleaning up a massive spill or needing more guidance on a lesson you've had. We very much encourage the children to help one another (it builds confidence) in many instances. However, we also refrain from jumping in (or sending a helping child in to sort things out) every time someone seems stuck, because we want the child to have the experience of mulling over a problem and figuring out how to solve it.

If your child is in the habit of being rescued, chances are that he or she will spend less time mulling before seeking assistance. Sometimes, asking for help is the right choice, But our goal is for every child to work through all the options before throwing in the towel.

Coming up: mark your calendars for our end of the year celebration and potluck on May 18. The older children are working on our dramatic presentation of "Frog and Toad: The Lost Button." We look forward to seeing you there!

Calendar:

April 2-6: Spring Break

(students enjoy enrichment activities only, and Montessori work resumes April 9)

April 13: Lower Elementary Play, "Where the Mountain Meets the Moon"

April 16-17: Puffin parent-teacher conferences

April 20: Material Morning with the Guide

April 27: Adolescent Variety Show

UPCOMING:

May 18: End of Year Celebration



Ziva just got a lesson on flower arranging. She festooned the room with tiny arrangements; the operation of the flower snips was probably her favorite part.

Right: Nuri polishes a brass basket with our metal polishing materials. While the act of removing tarnish is intrinsically rewarding to most of our children, they're simultaneously developing fine motor skills, learning how to organize work and follow a logical sequence of action, and building their ability to concentrate for longer time spans.



Left: Maya is cutting an apple — a food preparation activity. She can (and did) have snack as well; this is not a one-or-the-other proposition.

Lower left: Benjamin demonstrates a strong sense of musical pitch as he organizes the full chromatic scale by ear.



Below: There's nothing wrong with Betsy getting an older child (Suri) to help read the labels for the farm animals — Suri has enough experience to know which words can be sounded out, and which have phonograms Betsy might not yet know.

