

Building Blocks Nursery School

November Newsletter

The school season is well under way at Building Blocks. All the classes have settled in much quicker this year and are following the routines of school both in the structured components of class and the free play segments. We are very excited this year with such a full enrolment in all our classes. Most of our new families came to us via word of mouth so thank you to all our families for the great endorsements. We had a fantastic fundraiser return this year. We appreciate your support of our school. We are excited about the equipment and toys we can purchase with the proceeds

The children were equally thrilled when they brought in items for the food bank. They were excited to share that information with their classmates and teachers. We in turn were able to thank the children for being so helpful for those less fortunate in the community.

October was a busy month of activities at Building Blocks starting with the apple trip. It doesn't seem to matter if the trip is the child's first or fourth time round, each time is equally enjoyed. For staff it is a time for us to get to see the interactions between parent and child and for you to see how your child interacts with his teachers and classmates. Children enjoyed learning about Thanksgiving and then told us about their family dinners. "I tried pumpkin pie, and liked it!"

Some of our families celebrated Diwali in October, with the children then commenting the next day that they did not celebrate. One child said "I asked my mom but she said no we don't celebrate that one, we do Halloween". Children love to celebrate everything!

Picture day went smoothly with each class having their photo taken and then individual pictures taken. Photos ordered will be back before Christmas. We provide the pictures as a courtesy. Please contact Canadian School Photography at 905-840-4244 with any questions.

October finished up with fun filled Halloween activities. The children all love dressing up and the role playing that takes place. One of the JK classes had a Dorothy and the Wicked Witch from the Wizard of Oz. The two girls had a great time acting out the scenes in front of their teachers and classmates. All the children enjoyed the games, activities and thoughtful snacks provided by parents. I think we all loved marching in the parade with the grand finale being our Halloween song.

Important Upcoming Dates Please keep posted



On Thursday December 4th Building Blocks Nursery School will be having a **Parent Interactive Day**. This day is for you to enjoy with your child at his/her school. All AM children will come Thursday morning and all PM children will come Thursday afternoon at regular school times. **Each child must come with an adult to attend this day**. We also request that siblings not attend this program. We have special crafts, snack and entertainment planned. We ask that each parent bring a tray to keep track of the crafts they will be making. We have hired "Marcus " as our musician again this year. This is our eighth parent interactive day and the positive response from the parents over the years has been overwhelming. Please note there will be no school Friday December 5th.

Our Annual Christmas Concert will be held on Thursday December 18th and Friday December 19th on your child's school day. Again we ask that each child have at least one adult for this concert day. **If your child attends school 5 days a week he/she will be in both concerts. Please let us know if they will only attend once so we know what parts they will have.** All concerts start at regular school time. Parents, grandparents, siblings and friends are invited to attend this party. Party treats are more than welcome on this day. We plan and practice the concert in the month of December. It's always very sweet.

Please note that many of our classes are integrated. Some children require more support than our ratios permit. These children receive support from agencies like Brampton Caledon Community Living and Erin Oak Kids. The support workers work with a specific child and do interact with your child in the class settings.

Preschool News

Both morning and afternoon classes start their day in the large yellow room where they are greeted by Mrs. Geddes, Mrs. Quibell and Mrs. VanderBurgt. The preschool children now start their day with a welcoming circle. This is the time when the children greet each other, and find out about the routines for the day. They love the games that are played with the colour bin. The children are learning to listen, focus and pay attention. It is an important part of the day for the preschool child as this time helps them to make decisions about what what sort of activities they are choosing to do that day. We ask that you try to have your child arrive at school opening so they do not miss this time. The children are quite aware already of who their teachers are,

and will comment if a teacher is missing. They still don't quite get it if they see a teacher outside of school. They think we live at Building Blocks. The children are busy and engaged in all aspects of play. They love the water play and paint easel. You can always put the wet painting in a grocery bag to transport to your car. Your child has worked hard at that painting. When doing art activities with the art teacher, the children show pleasure at the simplest things. The preschool class settled in quicker than ever into the routine of school, and are actively telling the teachers how much they love their school and new friends. One little boy in the book center was overheard telling another boy, "That's my woman!" while pointing to a little girl. When the tidy up song is sung at transition time preparing the children to get ready for small circle times the children finish what they are doing and go towards the doorway with most of the children positioning themselves for the Super Brain Yoga. Again the teachers are amazed at how readily and happily the children transition to this time and activity.

At 10:30/2:30 the children then have their learning circles with their small group and a specific teacher. The teachers in the morning and afternoon are Mrs. Freer, and Mrs. Sanger. The children are quite ready for this transition time and love to anticipate what might happen in their circle time. Skills being worked on at this time include listening, following directions, turn taking, participating and sitting as a group. The children have a calendar time, followed by songs and a story that is age and theme related. After circle time, quiet and cognitive activities are offered. Further skills are also being worked on in monthly preschool age work sheets. Look for this booklet in June. Children play differently in this smaller and more structured time frame. These children finish their day with a large fun closing circle. Our different class setting allows your child to learn how to work in groups, share, negotiate, and resolve conflicts while developing self esteem and important play skills.

JK News

Mrs. Freer plans and teaches all the lessons for both the morning and afternoon JK classes with Miss Kuehni assisting in the morning classes, and with Mrs. Papagiannis in the afternoon class. The children attending the JK program quickly settled into their new routine. Most children attending JK, were in our preschool classes last year and were able to recognize at least one or two friends. One JK girl said to a boy she knew from last year, " But you loved me last year" , after he commented that he was waiting for a different girl to sit beside him. He looked calmly at her and said," But I love you both."

JK is very different from the preschool class in that there is much more structure and teacher directed activities. The JK class has a large visual schedule posted and the children will walk over to it and understand what activity is happening next. Super Brain Yoga is practiced shortly after our greeting time and the children are eager and ready to participate. They commented to Mrs. Freer that it makes them feel calmer, happier and quiet.

The class is being taught the 40 sounds in English and already have mastered more than 15 sounds. They can readily sound out words like *hat, cat, hen, pig* and *it*. One student was so pleased when he realized he was reading he kept asking for more words to practice. "I can't wait to tell my mom!" Please remember we are working on the sounds, not the names of the letters. The children in this class are printing, and learning to hear and read phonetic words. Parents are commenting on how their child is noticing letters and words all around them.

Last week children in the JK class will be given their first set of tricky words on their word ring. These are words that cannot be sounded out. Words will be added to **tricky words/ sight words** as they are learned. You can go over these word(s) when you are reviewing sounds. It is best to keep the word rings in the book bag that goes back and forth to school. Last year the children loved their tricky word rings (and next year in SK Mrs. Sanger continues to add more words.)

On the daily sound sheets there are words that can be sounded out. The words are highlighted in yellow and the children are encouraged to sound them out when they finish the work sheet in class. Encourage them to sound it out to you at home.

Again remember blending is a skill that requires listening to the sounds slowly, putting them together and lots of practice.

Mrs. Sanger and Mrs. Freer have organized a lending library for the JK and SK class, that is comprised of books we have put together and sound bags that contain groups of 10 words that correspond to sets of sounds.

Library Books are to be signed out.

In our program children should NOT guess at words, so unless they have been taught the sound in class the books should not be signed out.

Children are requested to take out only 1 book at a time and return it by next class so that each child has a turn.

On Fridays a Math program is followed. So far we have covered positions, shapes, left and right, graphing, more and less and 2 and 3 level patterns. One of the key strategies being taught in both JK and SK is how to work not one on one as with mom and dad but in a structured environment with other children. Children must really listen and follow directions if they are to complete their work successfully. This is why we say at Building Blocks we are teaching the children "how to learn".

Each year we have had children join this group who have never been to our school and are SK age. These children are able to learn, but we find we must teach them how to sit still and pay attention. They always love our JK program and go on to Grade One very confident prepared and fully reading.

The children in this class love all that they are learning and they come to school with such happy faces and attitudes. With our smaller class size we find we are able to do so much with these children to enhance their day. The JK children join up with the SK children for the last hour of the day in the large yellow playroom. The class spends time with Mrs. Quibell, Mrs. Vanderburg and Mrs. Geddes where they have an art activity that is usually a bit different than the preschool class and the SK art.

The children at this age love the dramatic play with its imagination, and the many building activities. You will often find them building a block castle, building magnetic structures or working on the train tracks working together. They love to explore. They love to learn. These children tend to play more in small groups and are able to work on social skills.

SK News

The SK program is planned and taught by Mrs. Sanger. All children attending this class know all 40 sounds of the English language and are able to print their corresponding sounds. Many of the children in this class are attending Building Blocks for their 4th year. The children in this class are very confident and happy and are always commenting on how much they love school. The majority of children in the morning and afternoon classes attend everyday. The children in this class love their time with Mrs. Sanger and the next level of readiness she takes them to. As in JK the SK children practice Super Brain Yoga before their lesson time. They have a weekly 10 word spelling test. The improvement in the students handwriting in these short weeks is fantastic. In the first eight weeks the Phonics work done on the Monday and Tuesday class has included: sh, ch, th, ng, qu, or, and the short

vowel sounds. Tricky words are reviewed on a daily basis with: I, the, he she, we, me be, was, to do, are, all, you and your well known. Wednesday and Thursday classes are grammar days and the class has covered: Capital letters, simple sentences, proper nouns, common nouns and alphabetical order- children now know the names and sounds, a or an, pronouns and initial blends. The children in SK have also started journaling and sentence writing. The children are all reading at their own levels and are encouraged to take home books from our lending library. As with the JK class the children in this class love their time in the yellow room and enjoy role playing, building structures and art time. One of our SK parents from last year sent us a lovely note regarding her son's start to a new school, a full day of Grade One and new language. This is a part of her letter.

We know that we have both of you to thank for teaching him the skills that led him to be competent and comfortable to do this so quickly in the new school year at a new school with new classmates. It is truly amazing that our son, the quiet child of 4 years ago, would now lead new classmates through an oral exercise in a new language so comfortably. When we asked him about it after the conversation with his teacher, he said he shrugged it off smiling. And to think I was so nervous about his transition to Grade One!!

We hope you and your child are enjoying your time with us at Building Blocks. We believe we are truly a well balanced program and the best that is offered in this community.

905-846-3305

www.buildingblocksns.ca

“We celebrate the child in childhood”