

The Children's Center at Groton

Remember to like us on



Learning through play is at the core of our school philosophy. Did you know that studies show that children are much more likely to learn new skills and retain information through play? Similarly to many adults, hands-on learning, or play, is the easiest way for children to grasp new concepts and make connections.

Play comes in all different forms whether it is dramatic play, sensory play, art, science experiments, reading, telling stories, and more. It can be incorporated into most activities to make children eager to learn and can even make children more cooperative in completing routine tasks. Imagine a child who has been asked to clean up and doesn't want to comply. Try turning it into a game, such as setting a timer and seeing who can pick up the most pieces, and you'll probably notice that they are much more likely to join in.

Read more about learning through play here:

http://www.earlychildhoodnews.com/earlychildhood/article_view.aspx?ArticleID=591

With screen time becoming increasingly more popular, play seems to be declining in children who are handed screens instead. While it may be argued that using an educational app is a form of play, studies show that kids "don't transfer what they learn from the iPad to the real world, which is to say that if you give a child an app where they play with virtual Legos, virtual blocks, and stack them, and then put real blocks in front of them, they start all over. It's not a transferable skill. They don't transfer the knowledge from two dimensions to three."

Read more about screen time's effects on children here:

https://www.cbsnews.com/news/groundbreaking-study-examines-effects-of-screen-time-on-kids-60-minutes/?fbclid=IwAR1glq_9VQWdNdjKn4GrqOHTSuRreoN1cbte5DxCNTyUaEZP3rf91IdOKcl



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Classroom Updates

Seedlings

Twinkle, twinkle little light, how I wonder....

The Seedlings experienced a sense of wonder this month discovering and exploring light. They wondered how lights blinked and changed color. They wondered how light was reflected by a mirror. They wondered why objects became brighter, bolder with light.

Ava and Rosie were in wonder with the light box. Ava climbed on top of the light box to experience light traveling through her hands and body. Rosie colored on the light box and was in awe of how bright her crayon coloring became. Lincoln and Lachlan wondered how small lights in sensory jar could be so bright and beautiful. Lachlan was fascinated with the blue snowflake lights, while Lincoln preferred the colored lights. Linley, Tate and Ginny explored light reflected in a mirror. Linley and Ginny were intrigued by their own reflection and the reflection of the classroom lights. Tate was fascinated with the tea lights and bright colored blinking lights reflected in the mirror box. Liam was in wonder with strings of colored light. He explored how lights on a string were connected and the different colors the lights created.

Bringing a sense of wonder to the Seedling classroom with light was an amazing experience for all. Each child had a unique perspective to approaching light thereby teaching us new ways to discover, explore and wonder!



Sprouts

December has flown by. We cannot believe that school has been in session for four months already. We have seen so much growth in the toddlers over the past four months. One of their obvious interests has been in books. There are so many benefits to reading to toddlers, for instance: reading aloud teaches them book handling skills, helps them form social skills, improves their language development, widens their imagination, and creates bonds amongst peers and teachers.

Before rest, it is typically a time to wind down the toddlers' bodies in order to ease them onto their cots for a restful nap. The nine toddlers have been fond of looking at books with teachers, but Alina and Quincy enjoy this time in particular. They will typically request the Dr. Seuss and P.D. Eastman books like, Are You My Mother, Go Dog Go, and Mr. Brown can Moo! Can You? These fun engaging books are full of rhythmic sentences, that show children there are beginning and ends to words.

Callum really gravitated to a provocation one morning that represented the menorah, during the holiday of Hanukkah. The menorah was made up of tea lights with a book titled, My First Chanukah, written by Tomie DePalo. While Callum was engaged with the tea lights, a teacher pointed out the illustrations in the book to make the connection of the actual tea lights Callum was using. Books can help children and adults learn about different cultures, religions, races, and holidays. This is something the teachers have tried to promote in the classroom throughout the year, but in particular this month.

Evan and James have made connections to books through the sensory table. They took a liking to the book Owl Babies written by, Martin Waddell. The sensory table was filled with items owls use to make a home, like feathers, twigs, and even the owls themselves! The children also found the actual book inside the sensory table. This helped the children feel the materials that owls use to make as their home. It even helped them bring the owls to life, by engaging their active imagination. Evan and James pretended that the owls were perched on the branch looking not only for their mother, but their father too!

Emerson and Nessa like to choose their own books out of our ever-changing book basket. They will carefully select a book and find a comfy spot on the couch or in a cozy corner with a pillow. They will look at the books and point to pictures and say the names or make up stories to go along with the illustrations. Reading books independently helps children value alone and quiet time and engages their imagination.

Reade has taken to looking at not only his own, but his classmates' journals. He will sit down next to the sign-in desk area and thumb through the pages. He will excitedly say his friends' names, as well as their family members. Books are helping Reade engage his recall and memory. It is also teaching him how to respect books.

Rose loves to act out books, in particular, Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed. Though this is a popular song, we also have the book in the classroom. She will jump on the loft with her peers and pretend to fall and bump their heads. This allows her to act out her imagination, as well as moving her large muscles.

Lucy absolutely loves books. In the morning, she can be found reading to herself. She will recite the entire book Brown Bear Brown Bear, written by Eric Carle aloud and then read it to her baby doll she loves to carry around with her. During this time, Lucy is demonstrating her knowledge of book handling skills, memory function, and imaginative play.

What a fun and busy month we've had. We hope you have a relaxing winter break and we will see you all in the New Year.



Lily Buds

During the month of December, the Lily Buds used all their senses to explore gingerbread. We started with gingerbread playdough. We used cookie cutters, rolling pins, gems, and cookie sheets. When Cosi sat down to play with the playdough she said, "I like the smell of it" and Carter liked using the rolling pins to flatten out the dough. We read lots of different version of "The Gingerbread Man", including "The Gingerbread Cowboy", "The Gingerbread Pirates", and "The Gingerbread Baby". For cooking projects, we made gingerbread cake and gingerbread cookies. When we added molasses Lucy said, "It looks like slime". After tasting the gingerbread cake Asher said, "it tastes gingerbready", and Sebastian said, "yummy". To make gingerbread paint we added shaving cream, glue, cinnamon, cloves, and ginger. Meg made a mud pile, then she said, "I put on gems, I use these gems". Biz covered the whole paper and added gems, and Alyssa said, "It smells like ginger. I like ginger." For gingerbread science, we used all our senses to learn what happens to gingerbread in water. When we placed the mini cookie in the water Audrey said, "he's coming up to the top", when Sebastian felt the cookie he said, "it's hard", and Lyndi said "I eat it". When Anderson put his gingerbread in the water, he responded, "He's breaking in it", and Lily said, "He gets wet- I'm gonna eat the water gingerbread man".



Peace Lilies

During the month of December, the Peace Lilies have continued their exploration of the five senses, mostly focusing on the senses of touch and taste. The children were given loose parts such as, feathers, gems, felt, rock salts, shells, and cut up straws to add to pieces of cardboard. The cardboard pieces were then passed around during morning meeting. The children were asked to describe how the pieces felt. Nathan, Lilly and Gunnar thought the gem piece felt “bumpy.” Whereas, Emma F., Esther and Maeve described the shell piece as “sharp and rough.” Lachlan, Gavin, Teddy, and Ben described the feather piece as “super soft!” Our morning meetings were also used to discuss our sense of taste and our corresponding taste buds; sweet, sour, salty, and bitter. We conducted a tally to see what taste the children favored. As you can imagine, our sweet taste bud was the most popular, with salty coming in second.

This month the children have been extremely excited for the upcoming holidays. We made a gingerbread house out of cardboard boxes that the children were able to decorate and play in. The children also enjoyed a wrapping station. Our classroom is filled with wooden blocks wrapped in bright colored paper!

Happy Holidays and Happy New Year!

