

CO-OP CAPERS

The Newsletter of the Williamsburg Parent Cooperative Preschool

Molly Gareis 1-Day 2's



What a fun winter we have had in the 1-Day 2's! It was such a delight to see the joy on your children's faces when they returned from Winter Break. I was all prepared to help them readjust to school and the idea of Mom leaving for a little while, but that was completely unnecessary! They were so happy to be back together and immediately fell back into our routine as we have settled in for a cozy winter.

We kept warm during all of the January snow with stories, songs, and art projects focused on mittens and soup. Our mittens came in very handy when we were painting with frozen paint cubes and it was so silly to read about those kittens who lost their mittens! We chopped and chopped our veggies and very carefully added them to our big simmering soup pot. There is something very special about sharing in a warm pot of soup that we have all come together to make. February brought Valentines and bears. We marbled beautiful hearts for our parents and enjoyed that first experience of giving and receiving Valentines with our friends. I loved seeing the true delight on your children's faces as they peered into their bags full of Valentines. I even heard one of our 2's exclaim with sheer pleasure, "Look what all my friends gave me!" Finger

painting, koosh painting, bear caves and a bear hunt, as well as lots and lots of painting at the easel will all round out our month.

March will come in like a lion in the 1-Day 2's as we romp and roar like dinosaurs. We will welcome spring with eggs and bunnies as we focus on our counting skills. And April will be filled with lots of colors aboard *Freight Train* and all things that go! We will continue to refine our social skills and keep working on using our words to solve conflicts. It can be so hard to learn how to use words when you want something really, really badly, but your children are doing great. I am so pleased with their progress in this area.

Thank you for all of your help in the classroom. You are a delightful group of parents to work with and I truly enjoy our time together. Thanks for all of your enthusiasm, creativity, and true cooperative spirits. Most of all, thanks for sharing your darling children with me each and every Friday!

Heather Seltzer 2 Day 2's

It sure is nice to have the snowy weather behind us and be back into our regular routines. What a crazy winter it has been! The class is adapting nicely to the schedule changes that occur midway through our year. Having the playground first poses some challenges but the



two's are stepping up to the plate. Before entering the classroom the children are stopping to take off their own shoes and handing them to an adult to clap off the sand. I am also finding that they are asking for snack a little earlier too. It must be all of the exercise that they are getting before circle time. And not so long ago the children experienced their first picture day at school. Our schedule that day was a little backward, but the two's showed their adaptability and took some cute photos. It took some time to get everyone positioned for our class picture but I know the result will be worth it!

The crazy winter weather did coincide nicely with our January themes of snow, mittens and our community soup. One of our favorite art projects for this unit involved our feet. The children got to take off their shoes and socks and had their feet painted white. Then each child stood very carefully and walked on large sheets of black paper creating footprints in the snow. They loved it! We also painted doilies with white glitter paint to create snowflakes and painted using colored ice. Then we read *The Mitten*, a winter classic by Jan Brett. In this story a little boy loses his white mitten in the snow and can't find it. Some lucky animals find it and use it as shelter to keep warm. The children practiced a retelling using a large mitten and animal puppets. Story retellings draw out certain lessons and help aid in understanding. Plus the children love to see the story unfold visually in front of them. The last week of January we made our Community Vegetable soup. Each child was asked to bring a favorite vegetable to school as a contribution to our recipe. Undoubtedly the



children loved cutting the vegetables and feeling like they had helped cook. Several children showed us that they have what it takes to be little chefs!

In February the class changed its focus towards bears. Children brought stuffed teddy bears from home and showed them off at circle time. Some liked to snuggle with their bears while a story was read and others like to set the bear beside them.

We first started with the poem *Teddy Bear Teddy Bear*. After reading it several times the children acted out the motions of the bear in the poem. The children had great joy doing the motions with their

teddy bears too. We also read *Brown Bear Brown Bear* by Bill Martin. The class loved the predictability of this book and the anticipation of what animal would show up next. Again we practiced a retelling using the felt board and characters from the story. The art project that followed allowed the children to paint a bear with various objects. This new experience was thrilling to watch. Objects included a car, sponge, q-tip, cotton ball, potato masher and even a tooth brush. Our bear unit allowed us to taste many bear related goodies too. We tasted honey, gummy bears and strawberry and grape jam after reading *Jamberry* by Bruce Degen. We also ate strawberries in celebration of the book *The Big Hungry Bear* by Don and Audrey Wood. I introduced the concept of sorting by color and counting objects to five during our bear unit. We will continue to build on these skills as we head into our next theme of Dinosaurs and counting.

A lot of our class has turned three recently and it is exciting to see the change

Martie Severin 2 Day AM 3's



It doesn't seem possible that we are two thirds through the year. The children are really playing together now and getting better at the challenging task of sharing. I'm glad there are so many princess dresses in our home center area because we have lot of princesses who love to dress up. Gloves and jewelry are popular items of apparel for the children too.

The vocabulary of the group is growing by leaps and bounds and many of the children now have lots to say during circle time. One of our favorite games is playing what's missing with the color bag for the week.

March will have some special events. Madison Walk will become a big sister again as her family welcomes a future co-oper. I hope to see a lot of families at Pizza and Pajama night-it should be a lot of fun for the whole family. It is possible that a leprechaun may visit near St. Patrick's Day. On March 25th we will have our teddy bears or other favorite bedtime friends come to school for the Teddy Bears picnic. We'll wear our comfy pajamas to school that day too. Two children will celebrate birthdays-Ava and Zoe.

Before you know it, it will be time for Easter egg hunts and the cold mornings on the playground will be replaced with spring warmth. The children have not been bothered by the cold weather-they just like to dig in sand or snow and swing on the tire swing.

In May (thanks to Stacy Long) our class will take a field trip to Barnes and Noble for story time. I will let you know when a

date (a Thursday) is set since we will need lots of drivers and parents will be welcome to attend.

From the end of April until the end of school, we will be celebrating birthdays every day as many of our children turn 4 in May and June. Also, don't forget we will be having parent conferences after Easter on April 22. It is really a pleasure to share in the lives of your children and watch them grow and learn.

Sue Barton 2 Day PM 3's

The two day PM threes class has welcomed several new students since winter break. First we added Giovanni. Next James Carlton came. And, most recently, Cali, joined in the afternoon fun. We were up to ten students, but Thursday's departure of our beloved Canela and her family brought us back down to nine.

We began the year by focusing on shapes: circles, triangles and squares. Now we are enjoying the beauty of colors. Each week our art projects and books take advantage of the things around us that represent the special color of the week. The students are great detectives when it comes to finding colorful items around the classroom and hallway. They also really seem to enjoy the "What's missing?" game that we play at circle time. However, it's the finger plays that seem to provide the strongest "hook" for most of them.



It has been very exciting to see the growth that the children, particularly those who started in September,

have experienced. At circle time, they are doing a much better job of sitting and listening to the story. They also are raising their hands to take a "talking turn" and working on listening when a classmate talks. Just a short time ago, this would not have been possible! When moving from place to place, they are also getting better and better at forming an actual line – and staying in it. OK, it's a work in progress.

The switch from starting on the *playground* to starting in the *playroom* has been smooth. Although it eliminates the opportunity for the children to get rid of some energy prior to settling into our classroom routine, no one seems to be bothered by this fact. They move easily from the playroom into the classroom. And, I must say, it's nice not to have to empty shoes or risk a pile of sand on the carpet. They have had a chance to experience most of the playroom toys by this time of year, and they definitely have favorites. The multi-colored rice that's currently in the table has provided lots of fun.

Thank you, parents, for all of your support -- and for sharing your children with me on Tuesdays and Thursdays. I am grateful to be a part of their lives during this wonderful time of learning and discovery. Three and four year olds are great fun!

Diane Lee 3 Day 3's



What a busy and exciting time we are having in the 3 day 3's! The cold winter along tons of snow (and several snow days) have certainly given us many new experiences to talk about at circle time! The holidays and winter

were indeed our themes of December and early January, which was made so real this year by the weather. Making bird puppets, glittery snow pictures, and several bird feeders were some of the highlights of this time.

We had tons of fun during January learning about circles, triangles, squares, and rectangles. We did record paper art, made stone soup, and created beautiful circle collages. We decorated newspaper triangular hats. We built incredible shapes with marshmallows and toothpicks and then with sugar cubes and glue. We painted with ice cubes and dried tempera paint, and even created plaid by using droplets of liquid watercolors and squeegees!

We are now well into our color themes, and the kids rejoice as they walk into a classroom that is overfilled with the color of the week! Each week we learn new songs and finger plays, create new art, and read new stories that all go along with our special color. Valentine's Day (along with the post office dramatic play) and St. Patrick's Day (along with those mischievous leprechauns) add to the merriment of our exploration of colors.

I continue to marvel at the developing minds of our three and four year olds and I learn from them every day. What was initially parallel play is now full interactive play. Friendships have formed and group games of tag on the playground are common. Our memory game during color weeks is such fun and the kids are getting really, really good at it! The connections and predictions that the children make at story time are also becoming more and more accurate. What a beautiful, creative, social, and intelligent group of children!

Lisa Old 3 Day 4's

Greetings parents,

We are closing in on the last cold weeks of winter and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for being so patient and understanding with our many snow day school cancellations. Hopefully the coldest weather is behind us as we begin March!

Despite the cancelled school days, we did manage to learn quite a lot in January and February. We've learned about different types of weather and different types of animals that hibernate. We learned about volcanoes and managed to erupt our own indoor volcano as well. We also spent a week learning about music and musical instruments. Thank you so much to Griffin's father Pete for generously coming in to play the guitar and lead us in a few songs as well! After learning about fire safety and prevention, the students enjoyed a field trip to the fire station, where the firefighters were kind enough to show us around their station and show us all their equipment. What a great opportunity the children had to sit in a fire truck and have their picture taken as well. The children also enjoyed gearing up for Valentine's Day, with homemade valentines for parents and a great valentine exchange with the other children (thanks to Heather Seltzer for substituting for me that day!). A field trip to Muscarelle Museum was a great opportunity for the children to see how colors and shapes can be used to make something beautiful of their own.

For the next couple months, we will continue to introduce more letters of the



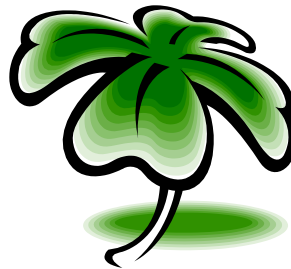
alphabet while we explore different themes. We will learn about being healthy and active, with a field trip to Baeplex to practice some martial arts moves. Also in March, don't be surprised to discover that a mischievous leprechaun has played tricks in our classroom on St. Patrick's Day. In addition, we will have a week to explore the concepts of planting and growing, as well as a week dedicated to the spring season. Of course, we will get ready for Easter with some egg and bunny activities before our big send off to spring break in April.

I look forward to a lot more fun with your children. Thank you so much for all that you do to help make our class a fun to place for the children. Sincerely, Lisa Old

Lori Wright 3 Day 4's

The snowfalls we had were beautiful, but I think all the adults (children too!) are ready for spring weather. Between the rain and snow, we have had little time on the playground. Hopefully, the days will become more balmy and sunny!

The children have adjusted well to our playground/play room switch. My spirited and energetic class is more than ready to run, play and swing when we get to the playground at the end of the day! J Our alphabet train continues to grow as we learn various letters each week. Our trip in January to the Fire Station on Route 5 was quite informative. Learning about fire safety and seeing the gear worn by fire fighters is so important for pre-



schoolers. There were some wonderful smiles when each child sat in the driver's seat of the huge fire truck! Our Muscarelle Museum trip was enjoyed by all of the children. I was amazed at how well this group could see the various shapes and lines in the paintings. They listened intently to the docent and also used inside voices!

As we enter into March, we look forward to a trip to the Norge Dental Center to learn about taking care of our teeth and gums. Our very own Co-op parent, Shirley Vermillion, is always so kind to invite the fours classes to the dental office!

Master Ash, at Baeplex, will lead the children in stretching their bodies, exercising and learning a variety of Tae Kwon Do moves. The children have a wonderful time on this field trip.

As always, Lucky the Leprechaun, visits our class on St. Patrick's Day. Excitement and hilarity abound as the children find pennies, shamrock sequins and the pot-o-gold! We'll see if Lucky, once again, "redecorates" our classroom!

I can't believe we only have three more months of Co-op. This class has such personality and enthusiasm. Each day is truly an adventure! I thank you, the parents, for your help, energy and patience in the classroom. This job would be very difficult without your support and dedication. Your children are beautiful. Love, Lori

Emma McMillan 4 Day 4's

Thank you to all you wonderful co-op parents for the patience and understanding that you have shown during our missed school days! The 4 day 4's and 5's had been

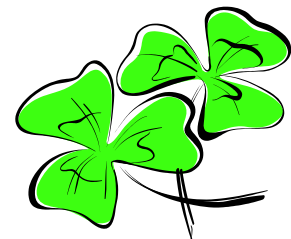
wishing for snow so you can blame us for the bad weather! Even with the cold temperatures, outside play is very important to 4 and 5 year olds, therefore, please remember to dress your child appropriately. Even though it is often time consuming to put on and take off coats, gloves, hats, sweaters, etc., layers are the key to keeping warm. They love the idea of playing together no matter where they are!

March roars in like a lion with our recycling unit and collecting newspapers to see if we can save a tree by collecting a 4 ft. stack! I hope to see everyone in their PJ's on Sunday, March 7th at 5:30 p.m. for our annual Pizza/PJ night. It's a treat for me to see the kids in their PJ's and with their families!

A field trip to the Jamestown airport will wind down our transportation unit. St. Patrick's Day will find us wearing green, painting with green, and eating green sandwiches! The teachers will travel to Richmond for our annual VAECE conference so there will be no school on Thursday, March 18th.

Our annual Dad's day will finish out the month with our dads visiting our class to play, receive a shave from their kids, and have lots of fun!

Hopefully, after Spring Break we will enjoy lots of spring time weather and outside play! We will end the month of April with a favorite unE on Dinosaurs!!! FOURS AND FIVES ARE FUN!!!!



CO-OP CALENDAR

3/1 (M)	Monthly tuition due
3/7 (Su)	Pizza and Pajama Night
3/18-19 (R, F)	NO SCHOOL/VAECE Conference in Richmond
4/1 (R)	Monthly tuition due
4/5-12 (M-M)	NO SCHOOL/Spring Vacation
4/13 (T)	School Re-opens
4/22-23 (R, F)	NO SCHOOL/Parent-Teacher Conferences AM 2's <i>will meet</i>
5/1 (Sa)	Monthly Tuition Due
5/2 (Su)	Carnival
5/27-28 (R, F)	Last Days



Deadlines for submissions to Co-op Capers are 3/29 & 5/7. Please contact Loralee Clark (258-3254) for further information. We welcome news of local opportunities for family activities. Submissions via e-mail are strongly encouraged: loralee13@verizon.net

HOLD THAT DATE!

The Pizza & Pajama night is Sunday, March 7th, 5:30-7:00 PM. Come join all of the fun and dancing! And don't forget your fuzzy slippers...

Another *Capers* and another month to say thank you to our hard-working Co-op crew.

This time, it is for the second super Co-op Consignment sale that we owe so many thank yous. The proceeds are still being tallied, but aside from the benefit to our education and scholarship funds, the sale was fun and friendly. Shoppers--both kids & parents--found cute and creative bargains aplenty.

From day one, the consignment sale has been the brainchild of Shirley Vermillion, and it is due to her unceasing effort that it came to life. The event would not have happened without her creative vision, energy, and spirit.

Others who gave generously of their time include Carol Canova, who not only organized for hours but who generated great

publicity beforehand; Erica Snow, who donated untold time both at the sale and tallying receipts afterwards; Jose Garcia, who disassembled all of the racks and made endless trips back and forth to the parking lot; Jennifer Cummings and Jennifer Youngs for setting up the racks; Cindy Kordek, Heather Seltzer, Sue Barton, Jodie Davis, Susan Zickel, and Lori Wright for chipping in when help was needed.

Indeed, we had a small army of parent and teacher volunteers who helped the event to run smoothly. Thank you to all for your time and effort.

See you at pizza pajama night on Sunday --wear your dancin' shoes (or slippers)!

Crise Klee, President
WPCP Board of Directors

Seeing a lot of pregnant women around? Pregnant yourself?

How do you explain to your preschooler where babies come from? You might want to consult the library for age-appropriate books that can further your child's understanding of conception, development, and birth. FamilyEducation.com also has this helpful article:



In answering your preschooler's questions about where babies come from, remember to let your child lead the discussion and determine its direction. Provide the simplest possible answer first. If your child is satisfied with your answer, leave it at that. But if he asks more questions and shows he wants more information, then by all means go into more detail.

Try to avoid letting any embarrassment you may feel about the subject color the way you answer your child. All your preschooler wants is more knowledge. And there's really nothing unseemly about the knowledge he's asking for.

At three or four, your child is capable of understanding that a father provides the seeds or sperm and a mother provides the egg, and that when a seed and an egg join together, a baby starts to grow. This answer may be enough for your preschooler. But if he then asks where daddy and mommy keep their seeds and eggs, you can tell him about testicles and ovaries.

This anatomy lesson may prompt your child to ask how the sperm and egg get together. If he does, then there's no reason to avoid answering. Tell him that daddy has to put his penis in mommy's vagina so that sperm can (maybe) reach an egg. If you explain this as plainly and clearly as you can, your child will probably respond just as matter-of-factly: "Oh." Other common questions that preschoolers have about babies and pregnancy include:

- **How does the baby get out of the mama's belly?**

Answer: Most babies come out through the mother's

vagina, which stretches to let the baby out. (Make it clear, if you haven't already, that the vagina is not the same as the urethra or the anus.) But if a baby has trouble getting out that way, a doctor can open up the belly and uterus, take the baby out, and then sew the mommy back up again.

- **When can I have a baby?** Answer: Girls and boys can make babies when their bodies start changing, usually at about twelve or thirteen years old. That's when boys start making sperm and girls' eggs are able to join with sperm. (Now comes the moral lesson.) But at this age, boys and girls still aren't grown up. So they really can't take care of a baby properly. That's why boys and girls should wait until they're grown up before having babies.

- **Can two women or two men have a baby?**

Answer: They can raise a baby, but they can't make one. It takes a man and a woman to make a baby. But two women or two men can be parents if they adopt a baby or if one of them already has a baby when they decide to make a family together.

Don't be surprised if your child asks the same questions over and over again. This doesn't mean that you gave him a bad answer the first time. You don't need to change your story at all. Your child is just trying to satisfy his curiosity and further his understanding. He may need to hear the same thing more than once to absorb it.

Happy
Spring, Crafty Kids!

Spring Blossoms

As spring arrives, the blossoms start to appear on the trees outside. Bring some of those blossoms indoors with this craft. You'll need to pop up some corn – for the craft and for snacking! This is a very quick and easy craft even for younger children. So sit down together with your preschooler and talk about the arrival of spring while enjoying a little snack!



Step One: Paint a tree with bare branches onto the construction paper with the brown paint. Or, you can draw one with brown crayons or markers.

Step Two: Have your preschooler glue pieces of popcorn onto the branches to make a blossoming tree.

—Preschoolrock.com

Handprint Paper Flower

This lily can be made from a child's handprint (on paper) stapled to a straw. You can make an entire bouquet of flowers for a great gift or Spring decoration.



1. Trace a child's hand on construction paper.
2. Cut the tracing out.
3. Curl each of the fingers around a pencil.
4. Using the palm of the handprint, form a cone (with the fingers curling outwards).
5. Glue or tape the cone together.
6. Staple the flower to a pipe cleaner or a drinking straw.

—enchantedlearning.com

Make some Shamrocks with hearts and triangles—have them pre-cut and let your child go with a glue stick and some paper!

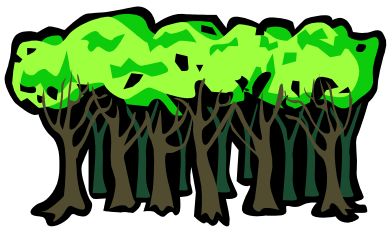


EARTH CORNER: National Wildlife Week, March 15-21



Celebrate National Wildlife Week by doing what comes naturally. Climb trees, chase butterflies, dig in the dirt and celebrate nature. You'll become healthier, happier and more connected to the world around you. National Wildlife Federation (NWF) wants America's kids to take a walk on the wild side this March—and stay there, for their health and well-being! Here are some suggestions:

- Hibernating mammals come out in spring. Try to count as many kinds of dens and shelters used by groundhogs, squirrels, foxes or other mammals.
- Look on the ground for animal tracks. Muddy soil is a good place to find tracks.
- In the evening, try to spot a bat in flight. Bats are mammals too. They help people by eating pesky insects!
- Go on a nature hike and try to spot as many kinds of birds as possible. Have you noticed any new birds that weren't around in winter?
- In spring, many birds build nests and lay eggs. Explore your neighborhood and look for different nests.
- Listen for bird calls. What do the bird songs sound like? Can you repeat the calls?
- After bird watching, draw a picture of a bird you saw. How many different colors can you find on birds?
- Dig in soil and under rocks to look for hidden insects. How many different insects do you see? What do you think they are doing on the ground?
- Do you notice any bees, butterflies or other flying insects? Where are they headed?
- If you have a magnifying glass, try to get a closer look at an insect. Can you describe its body?
- Touch the bark of different trees. Some might feel smooth, bumpy or scaly. Does the tree bark remind you of anything?



- Evergreen needles and pine cones last through the winter. Compare the different needles of trees.

FAMILY FUN TOGETHER: RANDOM IDEAS FOR GOOD TIMES

- Make a dessert or favorite food together—maybe there is a recipe you’ve been wanting to try?
- Plant some seeds, care for them, and watch them grow into flowers or vegetables you can eat!
- Write, doodle, or draw a family letter to grandparents or far-away friends; each family member gets a section of the paper.
- Have a music party—everyone gets to choose 1 or 2 of their favorite songs to share with everyone.
- Choose a theme and take pictures until the roll is full or the card is filled. Develop/print them and make a storybook together.
- Have a timed clean-up-the-house party. Whoever wins gets a prize!
- Have a family slumber party in the living room with glow sticks and scary stories.
- Learn a foreign language together, or sign language, or Morse Code.
- Exercise together.
- Have everyone tell what they appreciate about the other family members.
- Talk about safety issues and role-play scenarios.
- Start a family collection (coins, rocks, stories...).

FAMILY-FRIENDLY EVENTS AROUND TOWN

Thu, Mar 11, 2010, Cabin Fever Concert Series
(7:00 PM) *Yorktown Freight Shed*. Wipe the winter blues away as local musicians engage and interact with audience members. This weeks entertainment will be provided by Poisoned Dwarf (Celtic Selections). Sponsored by York County. Yorktown Freight Shed, 331 Water Street. Cost: Free (but tickets are required).

Sat, Mar 6, 2010, Stonehouse Stables Winter Horse Show and Classic (11:00 AM - 4:00 PM)
Stonehouse Stables, 2116 A Forge Rd Toano, VA. Come out and enjoy our final event of the Winter Season! Watch beautiful horses and riders compete in a horse show where they will ride both over fences and basic skill. Visit website or call 757-566-0666 for more information. Cost: Free Admission.



“Now, my dears,” said old Mrs. Rabbit one morning, “you may go into the fields or down the lane, but don’t go into Mr. McGregor’s garden: your Father had an accident there; he was put in a pie by Mrs. McGregor.”