

CO-OP CAPERS

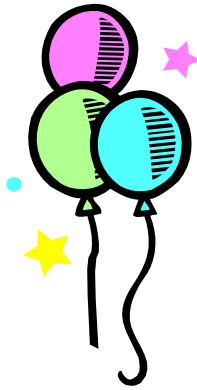
The Newsletter of the Williamsburg Parent Cooperative Preschool

CO-OP CALENDAR



4/1 (F)	April Tuition payment due
4/4-4/8 (M-F)	NO SCHOOL/Spring Break
4/11 (M)	School re-opens
4/21-22 (R, F)	NO SCHOOL/Parent-Teacher Conferences—**AM 2's WILL meet
5/1 (Su)	Co-op Carnival, May Tuition payment due
5/26-27 (R-F)	Last Days of Co-op
5/31 (T)	Teachers Organize Clean Up
6/2-3 (W-R)	End-of-Year Clean Up

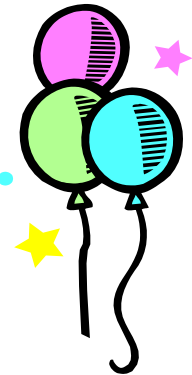
The Board Meetings are held the 3rd Tuesday of every month, 7:30 p.m. at Co-op and are approximately an hour long. Anyone interested in coming is welcome.



The Co-op Carnival is May 1st, 2-4 p.m.

This event is FREE for Co-op families & supported by a fundraising raffle which will have about 25 items which will include local restaurant gift certificates, summer camps, kids birthday party packages, Mother's Day & Father's Day gifts & generally family friendly local entertainment. Watch for flyers asking for donations of gently used books & collection boxes.

Questions? Contact Kimberly Richards-Thomas, Special Events Committee, 741-2034



Deadlines for submissions to Co-op Capers are the 25th of each month. Please contact Lorelee Clark at 258-3254 for further information. We welcome news of local opportunities for family activities and/or any parent- or child-related materials. Submissions via e-mail: loralee13@verizon.net

FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Dear Co-op Families,

Spring is certainly in the air!! As the familiar Williamsburg saying goes, if you don't like the weather, just wait a few seconds and it's bound to change! One day a bush in our yard looked barren and wintry, and the next day it was in full bloom! This is a great time to head out on family walks and see all the things growing and changing around us (besides our sweet children)!

Some change is in the air at Co-op, too. For our returning families, we are making a few changes in the activities calendar for the 2011-2012 school year (which still seems ages away). Our fall event this year will NOT be an auction. You read that right! So relax and make certain you look for details on a Fall Festival. We are trying this out to welcome our new families and get them involved closer to the beginning of the school year with an activity less intimidating than an auction. This will also take the place of the end of year Carnival in 2012 (Don't worry, this year's Carnival is still in the works, so be sure to mark your calendars for Sunday, May 1).

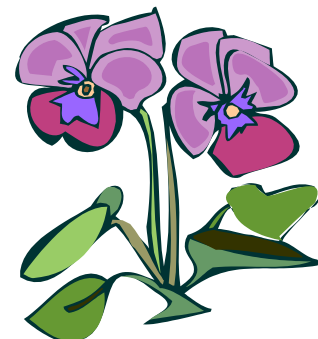
Instead of an auction, we will hold a different style fundraiser in the late winter/early spring. This event may have an auction component, but if so, it will be limited to ten items. (Note: Williamsburg has become increasingly overrun with auctions and we could all use a break. Solicitation is hard work and this is an opportune moment for us to explore different options.) Details are still being worked out, so let those creative juices start flowing! We have a major fundraiser/party planning committee, but are always

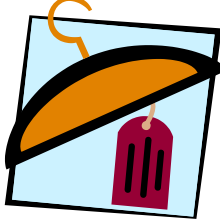
looking for folks who can plan a great time! We'd like to try and widen our audience beyond our immediate Co-op families to include alumni and the community at large. One idea is a spring fling gala event with a ticketed price, adult evening out, but limited to three hours.

All events, whether they raise money for the school or whether they are thanking our families, require a great deal of planning. We are fortunate to have so many generous and talented families at our school; the Co-op spirit of working together always shines forth! With so many talented families AND alumni, we are also adding an alumni coordinator to the board. Years ago there was a similar position, so we're actually just picking up an old thread. This position will help keep interested Co-op families in the loop of school activities even after they have "graduated." My older two children still have fond memories from their Co-op days, and still maintain close contact with their Co-op companions, even those in different school systems.

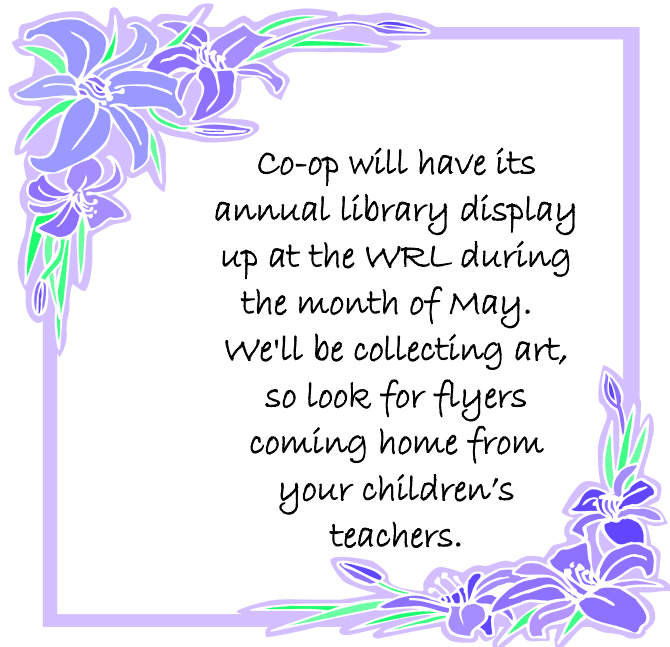
Enjoy the warming days and longer light! This is that wonderful time for picnics on the playground with friends! We hope to see you there!

Susan Zickel
Board President






If you are feeling generous, here's a reminder that **Co-op has its own account at Sugar and Spice**—the account is a donation to the school in terms that Co-op, not the consigning family, receives 50% of the sale.




Co-op will have its annual library display up at the WRL during the month of May. We'll be collecting art, so look for flyers coming home from your children's teachers.



Arbor Day is a nationally-celebrated observance that encourages tree planting and care. Founded by J. Sterling Morton in 1872, it's celebrated on the last Friday in April. That means this year it is April 30th! Other than planting a tree, you can also do these activities with your child(ren):

- Make sandwiches and use leaf cookie cutters to create leaf shaped sandwiches
- Color the last page of this newsletter
- Use evergreen branches as paintbrushes
- Use crayons to make leaf rubbings on paper



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Screen-Free Week is a national celebration where children, families, schools and communities spend seven days turning off entertainment screen media and turning on life. It's a time to unplug and play, read, daydream, create, explore and spend more time with family and friends.

As parents you have influence over the amount of TV your children are able to watch. Watching TV takes time away from the physical activity that kids need every day to be healthy and happy. Children who are physically active are less likely to be overweight, are sick less often, do better in school, sleep better, and are less likely to feel sad, depressed, or stressed. Adults experience many of these same benefits. Watching too much TV can not only keeps kids sedentary, but kids also see about 40,000 ads on TV each year, most of which are for candy, cereal and fast food. These ads pressure kids to choose unhealthy foods to eat. To learn more, go to www.commercialfreechildhood.org/screenfreeweek/index.html

POWER PLAY: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

Around the age of four, a perfectly sweet and wonderful group of children can transform into a miniature commando unit, arms and legs flying as they challenge anyone and everyone wandering into their territory. It's as predictable as puberty, and often just as frustrating for adults. It is the super hero or fighting game.

Anything that children do as often and as universally as power play (which is not a modern phenomenon) must have some basis in children's typical development. If children consistently act out dramatic play scenarios that involve power, aggression, and good vs. evil, regardless of where they live, economic status, or family background, there must be something that they all have in common that is motivating this kind of play. Here are a few basic characteristics common in power play:

- there are always good guys and bad guys; good vs. evil; there is no gray area, you are all one or all the other
- there is always a conflict between the two; it is the responsibility of the good guys to fight the bad guys
- control or power is always the issue - who will "win" or be in control?

If we believe that children are always learning something about themselves and their world through their play, then what can we conclude about the concepts learned in power play? Some clues can be found if we look at other characteristics of children between the ages of four and six.

- Typically, children at the age of four begin testing their independence, as they did when they were two.
- They are still quite "black and white" in their thinking and tend to categorize people in simple, one-dimensional ways (for example, how can my teacher also be a mother?).
- They are becoming more aware of the effect of their own actions on others and the need for social rules of behavior. However, it is still difficult for them to see things from another person's perspective.

- They are beginning to form an understanding of morality, a universal code of "right" and "wrong" that is beyond simply knowing which of their own actions will result in punishment.
- Although they are given opportunities to make more decisions than they have at earlier ages, they still have relatively little control over what happens to them in our adult world.
- The line between real and pretend is still fuzzy, particularly when it comes to threats to be feared.

Perhaps power play is a means for young children to grapple with these concepts. In a dramatic play situation, the children have made the rules and drawn the boundaries. Within this safe environment, they can take on adult or super-human roles and experience a feeling of control. They can feel the satisfaction of good winning over evil and of knowing that they had the ability to overcome the bad guys. The very real fear of evil is brought down to a controllable size. And in the end, the children have the ultimate power to stop the whole game, knowing it is only pretend, making the issues of good vs. evil and power much more manageable.

Of course, you want to provide an atmosphere in which children are physically and emotionally safe. Left unchecked, power play can become too aggressive, leading to physical harm and fear. Here are a few boundary-setting suggestions:

1. **Make it very clear to children that one rule is always in force: everyone must be safe.**
2. **No one's feelings should be hurt during play.**
3. **As you see a power play scenario begin, have the children take a minute to explain to you the plot and the characters.**
4. **Observe power play closely- both the children involved and the children close by.**
5. **Join in the play periodically.**

Edited by Lorelee Clark, original article from National Network for Child Care - NNCC.

Feeding Ourselves, Feeding the Earth



When asked what a mother loved about eating local, in-season foods, she answered: “I love that . . .

- My children know when food is fresh by the season, the taste and the smell.
- I’ve learned to cook foods I thought I hated.
- My kitchen is decorated for the season, just by going shopping.
- I can name the source of everything on our dinner table.
- The consciousness of food production leads to consciousness in all production.
- Shopping has ritual and tradition.
- Eating seasonally brings spontaneity and creativity to our diet.
- I can trust in the earth to bring nutrition to my family.
- I find community in the farmers and other market goers.
- I’ve learned to preserve, giving me security and comfort in the cold of winter.
- I recognize the power I have to shape my life.
- My family knows I practice, and cherish, my beliefs.”

That quote from Sherene Cauley was an excerpt from “Eating Seasonal” on the website Rhythm of the Home. Another example of what can happen when children understand food and where it comes from is from the same website, but from a different mom:

Last night, while the garden snoozed under blankets of snow, I placed a jar of our home-canned pickles on the dinner table. “Pickles,” mused my six year old son thoughtfully, “aren’t like food you grow. They come from another food.”

It could have been an answer from Jeopardy! The Kindergarten Round, as in: “I’ll take Food Preservation for \$100, Mama.”

I could see Col flipping through his mental files, perhaps conjuring up the hot September day we plucked cucumbers from scratchy vines, or the corresponding night when cucumbers, garlic and dill seeds marched through the pickling assembly line of our kitchen.

“They’re from cucumbers!” Col remembered, and a chorus of angels blew trumpets in my garden-loving heart. —Rachel Turiel

Even if we don’t plant gardens, even if we don’t preserve the foods we eat, we can still teach our children about the seasonality of food, the importance of eating fresh, local fruits and vegetables, and we can aid in their discovery and exploration of plants which sustain us! If you want to begin small, plant a sweet potato in a jar. place it so half the potato is above the water. Watch how the leaves sprout and the roots spread out. It doesn’t need sun, but it does need a lot of water—so make sure it doesn’t dry out.

Here’s to learning from the Earth and understanding the value in what it gives to us. And the value in what we can give back...which we will explore more in next month’s article!

—Loralee Clark

To help your kids become more interested and involved in Springtime Veggies, here are some cool cards to print and cut out, courtesy of www.rhythmofthehome.com



Crafty Spring Kids

Make Your Own Bug with

- cotton balls
- egg cartons
- google eyes
- pipe cleaners
- construction paper
- Glitter
- any other material you want to use

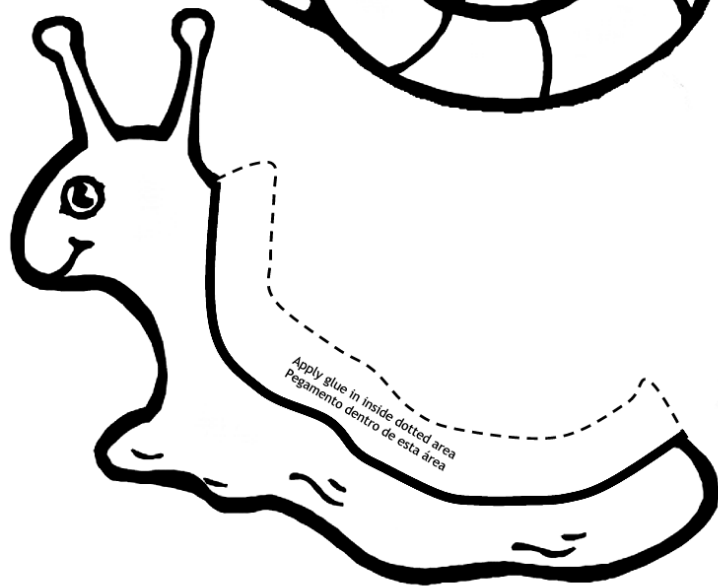
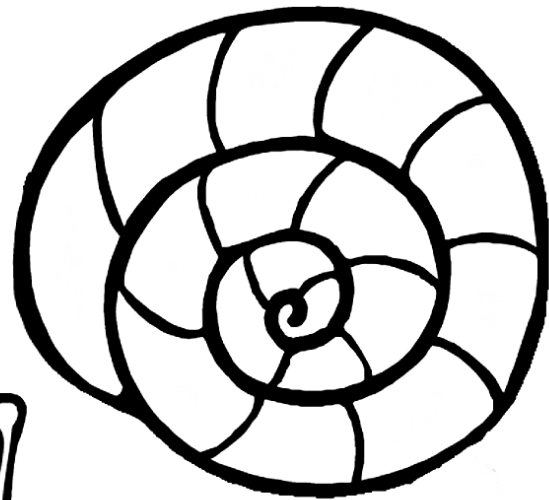


Cut the egg cartons into one, two, and three units. Let your child(ren) make their own bugs!

Those plastic grocery bags can really pile up. Keep them from ending up in the land fill by reusing them & keeping them organized. (crafts.preschoolrock.com)

Empty Oatmeal Container
Paints – colors to match your kitchen and also green and blue
Paint Brushes
Knife – adult use only!
Plastic Grocery Bags

Toward the lower end of the oatmeal box the adult will cut a hole about 3 inches in diameter; this is where you will be pulling out the bags. Let your preschooler paint the container. On the top of the oatmeal box lid, help your preschooler paint it to look like the earth with the green and blue paints. When dry, fill it with all your plastic bags.



Hand Earth

Cut a circular piece of blue paper. Paint your child(ren)'s hand green and have them press it against the paper. This will make a neat Earth- like effect.

MAKE AN ARMY OF SNAILS! (FIRST-SCHOOL.WS)

Earth Corner: EARTH DAY IS APRIL 22!

Pick up Litter

(Sung To: "If Your Happy And You Know It")

If you see a piece of litter pick it up
If you see a piece of litter pick it up
You will make the world look better
If you pick up all the litter.
If you see a piece of litter, pick it up



Recycling For Our Earth

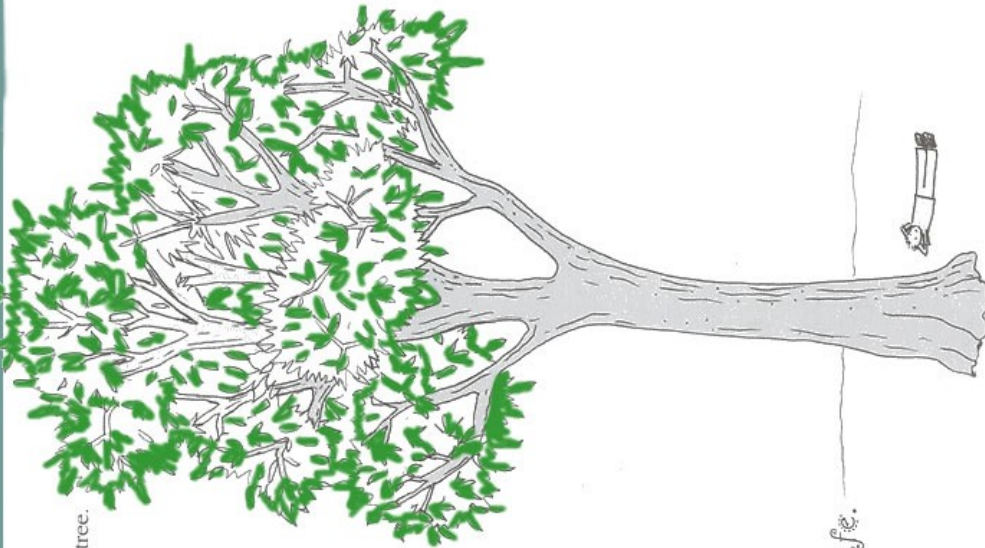
(Sung to: "Mary Had a Little Lamb")

Hear the cans go crunch, crunch, crunch,
Crunch, crunch, crunch, crunch, crunch, crunch,
Hear the cans go crunch, crunch, crunch,
Recycle for our earth.
Hear the bottle go ding, ding, ding
Ding, ding, ding, ding, ding, ding,
Hear the bottle go ding, ding, ding
Recycle for our earth.
Hear the paper go crinkle, crinkle, crinkle
crinkle, crinkle, crinkle, crinkle, crinkle, crinkle
Hear the paper go crinkle, crinkle, crinkle
Recycle for our earth

—everythingpreschool.com

Try This some Nice Day Breathing With Trees

click on arrows for more activities



Lie on the ground under a tree.

Look up at the leaves.

Breathe in deep breaths.

Slowly breathe out.

Look up at the tree,
and think about this:

The air you breathe in
is breathed out by the tree.

The air you breathe out
is breathed in by the tree.

From the tree to you,
From you to the tree.

You and the leaves...
the leaves and you.

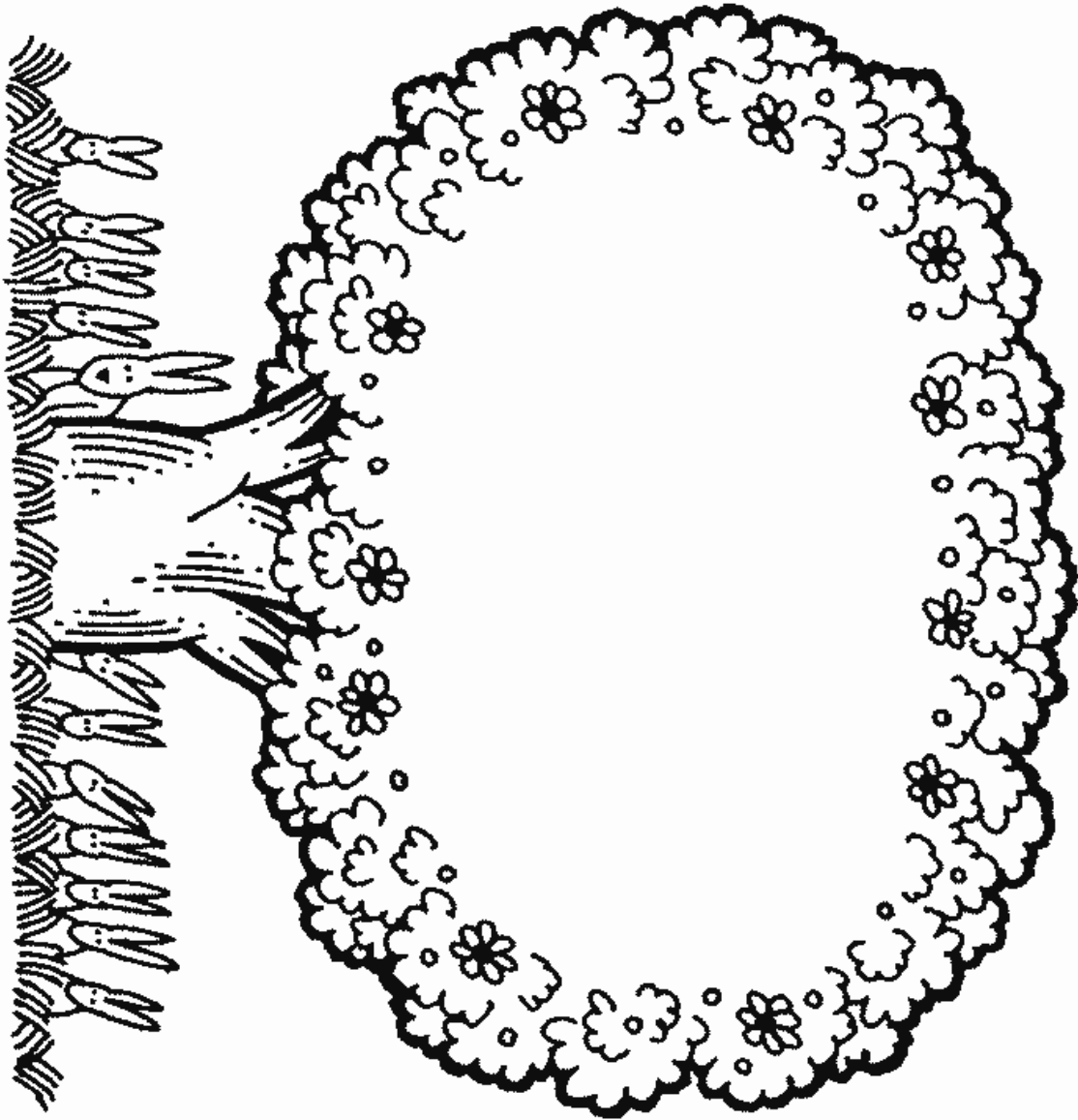
Back and forth...
Forth and back...

Over and over...

the Breath of Life.

With kind permission from
The Kids Book of Awesome Stuff
By Charlene Brozman

Who lives in the tree? Why do the rabbits like the tree? Why are trees important?
How old is this tree? What can you do to help trees? Color the tree & rabbits!



April Showers bring May Flowers...Color this beautiful Mandela of umbrellas and rainbows!

