



November Newsletter

2011



This month I attended an evening presentation by Dr. Roger Harrison, a pediatric psychologist from A.I. DuPont Children's Hospital. Dr. Harrison spoke about the unique temperament styles we are born with and how our temperament directly affects our behaviors and reactions. He mentioned nine core areas of temperament: activity level, sensory threshold, rhythmicity, approach/withdrawal, adaptability, mood, intensity, persistence and distractibility. Dr. Harrison explained that each of us fall out somewhere on the spectrum for each core area, and while there are strategies we can use to help manage situations that are counter to our temperament, it is important to recognize that our temperament style is with us for life. This has implications for parenting; when you understand your child's temperament, you are much more able to find effective ways of helping him or her navigate through life.

I learned that it is very likely that children will have temperaments that differ from those of their parents and that adults may need to alter their expectations to fit more easily with the temperament styles of their children.

Of course there are also times when we simply need a child to change his/her behavior so they can more easily integrate into the family, school, or community. Dr. Harrison reminded us that then we need to know whether the child's behavior is a function of poor motivation (which may be altered by offering rewards or other motivators) or a function of poor skills (which may be altered by teaching new skills and adding them to the child's repertoire). In either case, Dr. Harrison reminds us to think about what behaviors we want to increase rather than those we want to decrease. Then we can offer our children opportunities to practice the

desired behaviors until they become routine.

As a new grandmother, I have been paying attention to the temperament of my little granddaughter, Maddie. In the six short weeks of her life it is already clear that she is active, adaptable and not especially intense. I look forward to learning more about her as she grows and preparing myself for the times when one of her core areas of temperament don't match well with my own!

Happy parenting,
Sharon

Dr. Harrison recommends the following parenting titles:
The Incredible Years by Carolyn Webster Stratton PhD.
Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child by John Gottman PhD.
The Kazdin Method for Parenting the Defiant Child by Alan E. Kazdin

Life's Been Good To Me

Even people who have only known me briefly at Fairville Friends School know that I was not very thankful at Thanksgiving. Too long a journey, too many people, turkey too dry....you get the picture. But I did not need Thanksgiving to be a success for me to feel thankful. After all, when family members asked me how my new job was going, I could honestly tell them how richly rewarded I feel to be at Fairville.

How could I not feel thankful? From the very first day I have been welcomed and made to feel a member of this community. As I unpack my car in the morning children greet me as they walk into school. As lunchtime approaches I hear Ladybug children talk about going down to "Judy's room." I am thanked after every lunch that I serve and given tokens of appreciation for helping with popcorn or planting. I sit down to a meal every day with my colleagues and get great satisfaction from the simple ritual of sharing food.

The school is filled with joy and it can't help but lift my spirits to be here. Every day as I prepare snack and deliver it to the classrooms, I can hear the combined voices of children, teachers and parents lifted in song. The children also demonstrate a strong sense of community responsibility and mutual support: they tell me who is absent, and respectfully remind me when we have forgotten to sing the "Life's Been Good to Me" song; they clean up after meals and help return the platters to the kitchen. I feel privileged to be a part of their day.

The list of things to be grateful for is long: parents who deliver yummy snacks to teachers, board members who lend special equipment for enrichment, a weekly box of organic goodies from the CSA (which we pore over at a sort of kitchen Show and Tell), pies for Thanksgiving etc, etc. But each day has a new joy and today's was simple but powerful. At lunch there was a child who wanted no part of the grilled cheese sandwich and sat as a silent observer until her friend and classmate leaned over and persuaded her to try a bite. She took a bite, finished the sandwich and turned to me to make sure I saw, "Now I like sandwiches, too!" That little act of persuasion helped one child feel like she belonged to a community- the community of enthusiastic sandwich eaters. A sense of belonging is a great gift; each day that I come to Fairville I know how she felt and that's a lot to be thankful for.

Judy Leigh

Wish List Items

- *Crayola window markers
- *Single hole punches
- *Stand-up easel
- *Plastic play people (especially children) for block play
- *Sandpaper tactile letters

Fairville families support our school in so many ways. Many thanks to all who purchased pies at the pie sale, bought holiday greens at our greens sale, volunteered to work at the Book Fair or purchased books for the school library in addition to the books that were purchased for family and friends. We were awed by your amazing support of our food drive and loved having the children participate by placing donated food items in the baskets during Meeting. Teachers enjoyed a steady supply of yummy treats during November, too! How did you know that brownies were the perfect treat for a Friday afternoon lunch? Many of you signed up for Stay and Play or an enrichment class this month, helping to strengthen our afternoon enrollment. We appreciated your attendance at our Morning Coffee with the admissions directors and noted that there were some new faces at the Fun Fair planning meeting. It does take a village to run a successful school and we want you to know that your support does not go unnoticed.

Events Calendar

December 3	Drop and Shop 9am-12pm (\$25/child or \$40 for two children)
December 7	Pajama Storytime and craft with John from Kennett Library 6 - 7 pm
OR	
December 15	Pajama Storytime and craft with John from Kennett Library 6 - 7 pm
December 16	No Fun Friday class—school closes today at 12:30 pm
December 19	Winter sing-along with Bill Currier 10:30 am (\$10/family)
Dec. 19 - Jan. 1	Winter Break—School Closed—Happy Holidays!
January 2	Welcome Back—Happy New Year!



In the Classrooms.....

Vicki and Liza's Ladybugs enjoyed fall and the fall harvest. They observed leaves turning colors and raked up piles of leaves to play with and jump in. When I visited the classroom prior to Thanksgiving, I was recruited to be one of the turkeys as the class acted out the song "Five Fat Turkeys." What fun! Later in the month they talked about families, reading several family stories in anticipation of holiday visits with friends and relatives.

Elaiza and Meaghan's Ladybugs collected fall leaves, read fall stories, and learned fall songs. They painted leaves and made leaf prints. They read many family stories, including The Doorbell Rang. After reading this story the class baked some delicious cinnamon cookies.



In addition to observing the changes of the fall season, the Bumblebee class spent time learning all about important people in their neighborhoods. Their dramatic play area included props for playing grocery store and post office, both favorites of the children. When I dropped off books from the Book Fair in the classroom earlier this week, the Bumblebees spontaneously set up a bookstore in the dramatic play area. It was a pleasure to see them using books as play props, demonstrating that they already understand how books can enrich our lives!

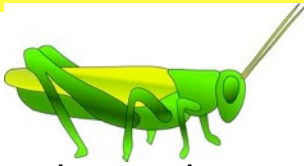


In the Inchworm class the children looked for signs of fall and discussed Thanksgiving traditions. They drew pictures of things they like to do with their families and read family stories. After Thanksgiving the Inchworms took part in a survey about their holiday turkey consumption and analyzed the results. Throughout the year they have been working on letter identification, particularly the letters in their names. Hands-on activities that support this skill will continue to be introduced as the year progresses.



The Fireflies began November with a unit on cats and dogs. A pet center was created in the classroom for dramatic play. Children discussed what a pet needs to be healthy and happy, then practiced being gentle with a large stuffed dog. Amy's dog Oliver also came to school so the children could practice being gentle and caring with a real live animal. We heard from one family that now their children are eager to have a dog of their own! Later in the month the theme of kindness and friendship was introduced with stories, songs and classroom charts and games. The Fireflies shared that when you are kind to people they are kind to you in return—a great lesson for young and old alike!

In the Classrooms (continued)...



The Grasshoppers finished up their map studies earlier this month. Since then have been using their keen observation and fine motor skills to do some sketching of objects in their natural environment. They sketched leaves first, then trees. Each child shared their tree drawing and then made predictions about what their tree will look like in other seasons. The Grasshoppers, along with the other classes, made turkey handprints that were turned into napkin rings and then given to seniors at two different centers to decorate Thanksgiving holiday tables. We are certain they looked fabulous and were much appreciated by our older friends.



In early November the Butterfly class began a study of the Lenape Indians, learning about their homes, family life, food, games and customs. The class created their own Lenape village, complete with a wigwam, baskets, clothing and typical tools used by the Lenape. The children had the opportunity to learn many facts about our local Native Americans as they studied their culture. They also practiced picture writing, read some Native American stories, learned a few Lenape words, played Lenape children's games, crushed and popped corn, and had a delicious feast!



Enrichment Classes

It has been a wonderful and busy year in our enrichment classes. The Art students have made many beautiful paintings and a few 3-D pieces of art work. They have learned about paint colors and paint mixing and worked with paper mache.

Our Young Scientists began the year with a unit on environments, creating their own imaginative buildings and homes. Later they made a book of what they can do now that they are older. The class is beginning a unit on simple machines by looking at their own bodies and the ways in which they move.

The Nature class has made very good use of our campus to study plants and to plant vegetables, collect and rake leaves, observe spiders (and a host of other insects) and to simply explore all of Fairville's outdoor spaces.

Our Fun Friday class has a theme each week. Lessons have varied and included gardening, art, science and cooking projects.

We still have a few select spots available in our enrichment classes. If your child is 3-and-a-half or older and you would like to join an enrichment class, please call or stop by the office.