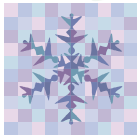


SAVE THE DATE:

- FEBRUARY 7TH-
PICTURE DAY



- FEBRUARY 19-23-
WINTER BREAK



- FEBRUARY 14TH-
BUS DRIVER/
MATRON APPRE-
CIATION DAY



- MARCH 28TH-
GRANDPARENTS'
DAY



The Tadpoles see if Ida has seen the Gingerbread man!

December and January in the Tadpoles Room



The Gillen Brewer School

THE TADPOLES MEET THEIR BIG BUDDIES

The Tadpoles and the Sea Turtles have been spending time together each week during “Big Buddies Little Buddies” time. The teachers matched the younger children with either one or two older “big buddies”. Each week the teachers review a “Big Buddies Chart”, which includes pictures of all of the Tadpoles and their older matches. The pairs have remained consistent from week to week, giving them the opportunity to really get to know one another. The Tadpoles look forward to spending time in the Sea Turtles’ room where they can participate in a variety of activities including reading, building, playing board games or putting

together puzzles. The Tadpoles have been the ideal audience for the Sea Turtles to practice reading new stories or showing them something new they have learned. The Sea Turtles have been excellent role models for the Tadpoles in terms of socialization and encouraging play. They are also developing a sense of patience by working with younger children. The teachers from both classrooms were so pleased with the way the program has been running, that they decided to celebrate with a hot cocoa social around the corner at Eli’s last Friday. The Sea Turtles helped the Tadpoles get dressed in their winter gear at the res-



Buddies Keba and Bella, and Troy and Val wait for hot cocoa at Eli’s.



taurant, and also helped them with their hot cocoa. It has been wonderful to see the two groups mesh so nicely and we plan to continue this great program throughout the year!

THE GINGERBREAD HUNT

In December, the Tadpoles spent some time reading several different versions of *The Gingerbread Man*, including a more traditional version and a version in which the Gingerbread Man travels throughout New York City. In the city version, the Tadpoles recognized some New York City spots, such as the E train

(which the Gingerbread Man rode on) and the Central Park Zoo (where the Gingerbread Man met his fate at the jaws of a red fox). Perhaps the most exciting part of our Gingerbread book study was our very own Gingerbread hunt throughout the school! That clever Gingerbread man left clues for the Tadpoles to find



him throughout the school. They visited Donna, Milt, Ida, and several other GB teachers. They were so excited to get back to class and find him fast asleep, with some edible gingerbread buddies, in the doll cradle! The Tadpoles enjoyed the tasty treats following a hard day’s work of problem solving!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, LILY!

This January, Nina informed the Tadpoles that Lily celebrated her second birthday. The Tadpoles were so excited to see pictures of Lily when she was a puppy (with her sisters and brothers) and noted how much she had grown! We thought it would be appropriate to celebrate our favorite animal buddy's special day. The children came up with a list of items that a dog might like to get for its birthday. On the list were many items including dog biscuits, a bone, a toy and a new coat. We decided that it

would not be a good idea to give Lily cake, because cake is not a healthy treat for a dog. However, the teachers thought it would be OK for the kids and Nina to indulge in some chocolate cake. We brought Lily a box of delicious dog treats and a new toy ram. When Lily saw the ram she happily grabbed it and dragged it around the room. The children were so happy that she liked it! We also took turns feeding her bits of dog treats from the box we got for her.

All in all it was one super celebration for an special dog!

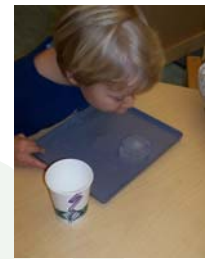


Nina helps Lily blow out the candles on her birthday cake!

EXPLORING THE PROPERTIES OF ICE

The Tadpole scientists are developing a keen sense of *observation* (one of our new vocabulary words)! This January, they began to explore the properties of ice. Although not as abundant outside as we would have hoped (due to our mild winter), the Tadpoles had a blast playing with man-made ice in our classroom. Teachers posed the questions: How does the ice feel? What does the ice look like? What does it taste like? The children observed that the ice was "cold" and "wet". Hannah told us that the ice

was like "raindrops" as she held it in her hand tightly. Some of the children deduced that the ice was "melting" as it grew wetter and wetter and soon began to disappear. Harry told us, "The ice is going home," as it melted away on his tray. Several of the children tasted the ice as well. Marley told us that it tasted like "nothing, like water." Following our ice exploration we talked about why ice melts. In the freezer, it stayed solid, but in the warm classroom, it melted. We decided to see what would happen if we left cups of water outside overnight. We



Keba and Julian check out the ice!

were excited to find the next day that we created ice! We will be continuing to explore with ice throughout February-stay tuned!

THE SENSORY ALPHABET



Marley glued cotton balls on to the letter "C".

The Tadpoles have been learning about letters in a multisensory way. Each week, the class focuses on one letter (following in alphabetical order). We explore the physical formation of the letter, seeing how it can be broken down into handwriting without tears wood pieces (big curves, little curves, big lines and little lines). While we are not yet working on writing the letter, these activities are a precursor for writing later on. Additionally,

we focus on building phonemic awareness of the sound the letter makes. We read book and look at pictures of items that begin with the same initial sound as the letter we are studying. This idea carries over from High/Scope's letter links program, where each child is identified with a picture that has the same initial sound as their first name (ie: Marley, marshmallow). We are also creating multisensory alphabet books. Each week we add letter pages to our books. These letters

are created with materials that begin with the same initial sound as the letter on the page. For instance, when studying the letter "A", we used apple chips, "B" buttons and "C" cotton balls.

This approach has not only helped to solidify identification of letters, but has also begun to introduce letter/sound correspondence which is an important pre-reading skill.

PRACTICING PREPOSITIONS-A BARREL OF LAUGHS!

Stephanie has been working diligently with the Tadpoles on practicing prepositions. Recently, she read (an authored) the book *The Tadpoles and the Barrel* to the group during Interactive Story time. The children lit up when they saw that they are the stars of the story! After reading the story, Stephanie used a real “barrel” and visuals depicting different prepositions to play a game with the group. The children took turns each drawing from the pile of visual cues and en-

acted the preposition they chose using the barrel. They had a blast getting physical and climbing in, under, on, behind and beside the barrel. The kinesthetic practice helped to solidify the meaning of the words they were learning.



The Tadpoles move their bodies about the blue barrel.



ZIP UP THIS WINTER!

Winter is the perfect time to continue to work on promoting independence! Daily opportunities are abundant, such as putting on hats, gloves, scarves and coats. When getting dressed to go outside, we encourage the children to put on their own jackets. Many of them use the “flip method” of flipping the jacket over their head. Additionally, we have them work on zipping their coats on

their own. If they have difficulty a teacher may help them get started. We also have them put on their own hats and mittens. Gloves often require some help, having the children work on getting each finger in correctly. This is also a good time to teach the children responsibility for their own items. We encourage them to keep track of their things and put them back in the appropriate places

so that they won’t get lost. Each child has a cubby hole labeled with visuals for winter gear to help them through this process.



The Tadpoles are dressed and ready to head outside!

WELCOME PEARL!

Pearl Port has started in the Tadpoles’ room as a paraprofessional. Pearl comes to our class with preschool experience and has a master’s degree from Bank Street College. We are lucky to have such a wonderful new asset to our team!



WORKTIME IN THE TADPOLES ROOM!

