

# Bright Horizons at Long Ridge

September 2013



## READY for SCHOOL

### Maximizing Read Aloud Times

Many of us lament when night after night our child asks us to read the same book. We are hoping for another choice to keep it more interesting for ourselves. While reading the same book time after time can feel like drudgery, this repetition of favorite books can play an important part in children's reading readiness skills. Here's how:

- Repetitive reading of the same book helps children make the connection between the spoken and written word, a crucial reading readiness skill. A child is beginning to understand that every time his Dad looks at these pages, he says the same words.

- It can be helpful to occasionally point to the words as you read, especially with books with large print and a few words on each page. Don't do this every time - it could take away from the story if done repeatedly, but occasionally this also aids with the connection between spoken and written words.

- Ask your child to retell the story to you by just looking at the pictures. This helps with making the connection between pictures and text. Early readers can use pictures to help decode words they are unsure of. Learning this skill early will aid young readers later.

- Many of us have observed our child sitting and "reading" a book independently, telling the story out loud. She may tell you she is "reading" the book when actually she has just memorized it and recalls the story from the picture clues. While this is not reading per se, the process of using pictures clues to recall text, as above, will aid in the reading process.

- With books that have repetitive phrases (such as *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* by Bill Martin, Jr. and illustrations by Eric Carle), pause for your child to fill in the next words, once he gets to know the text. This helps your child with the following important skills: Predicting what comes next; Building memory skills; increasing your child's self-esteem and confidence; Building rhyming skills which aid in decoding words later; connecting the spoken word with the written word.

Reading together can be one of the closest times between a child and parent. The act of reading aloud helps reinforce a love of books. Occasionally focusing on some of the skills above helps further strengthen reading readiness skills.

## Important Days

**September 15-October 15**

is National Hispanic Heritage month!

**Take a Walk in your Child's Shoes at Curriculum Night**

September 26, 5:45 P.M-7 P.M

## Happy Birthday!

### Toddlers

Alina K.-14th

### Preschoolers

Lea S.-1st

Margo K.-5th

Matthew I.-9th

Aleya A.-12th

Simeon R.-14th

Ashley T.-1st

Tahlia S.-23rd

### Teachers

Ms. Wisline-9th

## Happy Anniversary!

Claire-21 years-9th

Nadia-9 years-21st

Lori-3 years-14th

**We will be updating our center check-in kiosk within the next few days. Please let us know if you need any help.**

## Connect with Bright Horizons



# Classroom Highlights



September is a great month to begin our sign language in each Nursery room! We encourage our babies to sign while looking at the pictures and during fun interactive story telling. We also "sign" along to the songs: Itsy Bitsy Spider, Bumble Bee, Ants go marching and more....



Our Toddlers had lots of fun learning about trains. We built a train out of giant LEGO, made conductor hats, and created a train out of a cardboard box. In *Language Works*, we read "Engine, Engine Number Nine", "I Love Trains!", and Catch Me, Catch Me!" In Math *Counts*, we counted trains and matched pictures of different trains.

We had an awesome jump start to Kindergarten Prep! The children enjoy writing about what they did in their journals each afternoon. In *Math Counts*, we have been working on sequencing and patterns. In *Science Rocks*, we are talking about recycling and how to keep our Earth clean and healthy.



In the Art Studio Ms. Carol has set up a clip board drawing center! The Preschool children love to draw with pens and markers on clip boards after they finish their projects. They often make many pages of drawings and staple them together to make books. Sharing a round table gives the children a great opportunity to socialize while doing what they love.



## Project Work at Home: A Simple, Fun, and Valuable Learning Approach

'Project work' or 'project approach' are terms familiar to most educators. From preschool to high school, educators are realizing the value in these meaningful, hands-on, and comprehensive experiences. The terms essentially describe an approach to learning that incorporates multiple content areas in the context of a project. For example, during a project on gardening, children learn about the life cycle of a plant, botany, weather, measurement, reading, following care directions, as well as caring for living things.

This approach to learning is more exciting for children because it stems from their interests and allows them to pursue their ideas, seek answers for their questions, and makes sense in the context of real-life. Learning fractions during a hands-on cooking project is much more sustainable and transferrable than if children simply practice them on worksheets. That's not to say that there is no place for direct instruction or short-term learning activities, but all high-quality education programs should include some project work.

A great aspect of project work is how easy it is to do at home. The project approach supports and enhances children's learning while they're at home and gives families an opportunity to support their child's learning in a way that has a significant impact. Much better than flashcards, worksheets, or computer games, meaningful projects originate with interests of the children and can develop in many directions.

### A few key features of project work:

- Projects are most often inspired by children's interest from a simple question, such as, "Why do birds fly?" to an evident interest in something like space or water. The more the topic of the project is "chosen" by the children, the more successful the project will be.
- Projects should be child-centered. The child's curiosities and questions should shape the direction of the project. If you begin a car project and they are more interested in tires than engines, the project can focus on tires. Further, children should be the lead investigators, with adults providing guidance, resources, tools and experiences, but not providing answers.
- Project work is open-ended. There should be no pre-determined end outcome. The experiences and discoveries made along the way will guide the project. What starts as a farm project may evolve into a chicken project. A bus project may not result in building a cardboard box bus as the adult envisioned, but instead result in a family fieldtrip on a bus.
- Project work should include multiple experiences from experiments, to field trips, to interviews with experts, to reading books. It should also address multiple content areas allowing children to use knowledge and skills in real ways. This is simpler than it sounds; during a construction project children can learn and practice skills in real-world ways such as reading instructions (literacy), taking measurements (math), and experimenting with structures and balance (science).

You'll discover ideas for projects by just listening to or watching your child. Do they ask about a certain animal a lot or do they show interest in a specific topic? Do they play in the same place or with the same type of things? Do they have a favorite place to go like an aquarium or the zoo? While projects should be based on children's interest, adults can certainly inspire those interests too. *(continued on next page)*

# READY for SCHOOL News *(continued...)*

## A few ideas for at-home project work:


- Cooking – Don't just cook one dish, but conduct a farm-to-table exploration.
- Seasons – Examine the seasons; ask, "Why do leaves change color?" or "Why do seasons look different in different places in the country?", etc.
- Boxes – All children love exploring boxes. Take the next package you get in the mail and ask your child to re-imagine what it could be. Visit an appliance store and ask for an extra large box. Take it from there in whatever direction most interests you child.
- Mail – Take a trip to the post office and start asking questions to prompt curiosity. "Where does mail come from? How does it get delivered? How did it get delivered before cars existed? "

At Bright Horizons, project work is a part of what we do. Project work is an excellent example of how we believe children learn best and part of the learning experiences we feel young learners deserve. *Projections*, a core curriculum element focused on project work, is part of all preschool, Kindergarten Prep, and Kindergarten classrooms. Even some toddlers and twos are beginning project work. Beyond working on projects at home, feel free to jump right in and join the fun at your child's center as a guest expert, a lab assistant, materials collector, or a field trip chaperone.



*Projections* is an element of the *World at Their Fingertips* curriculum dedicated to project work.

**Want to learn more about the projects being explored in your child's classroom? Join us for...**

Curriculum  Night

Join us for Curriculum Night 2013 to take a walk in your child's shoes! You'll have a chance to meet with your child's teachers, see what a typical day is like in their classroom, and learn more about what your child will discover this year.

As a special gift for Bright Horizons families, all attendees will receive a free 3 month digital subscription from our friends at [BabbaCo](http://BabbaCo), a provider of curriculum-based activities for children. The digital BabbaBox is a great way to introduce fun and educational at-home activities with children ages 3-7. Each month's subscription includes:

- All creativity & step by step directions for 4 hands-on projects
- Book recommendations and a Reading Guide from early childhood education experts
- Parent Guide and Materials List to help you get the most out of each activity

To learn more about BabbaCo, visit [www.babbaco.com](http://www.babbaco.com). For information about Curriculum Night in your child's classroom, talk to your child's teacher or Center Director!