

The Learning Community

at **Broadalbin-Perth**

October 2011

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From Mrs. LaFountain Principal's Notes

Thanks to your help, the 2011-2012 school year is off to a great start. It takes all of us working together to create a safe and friendly educational environment for the children. We will continue to work toward that goal through parent meetings, Shared Decision Making meetings, staff meetings and the PTO. Our theme this year for Morning Program is "Links to Success." We hope to include students, staff, parents and community members in our character education presentations throughout the year. Please join us when you can.

One of our focuses this year will be on building an even stronger literacy program. Schedules have been developed with reading and writing in mind. You should see and hear a lot about reading and writing. Children at all grade levels will have reading time that is uninterrupted by specials, pull-outs, testing, etc. Just like athletes, the more you practice something, the more you will improve. I hope you will take the time to read with your child every night and review the writing pieces they bring



Mrs. Sullivan helps one of her new second-graders and his mom sort through school supplies during TLC Supply Drop-Off Day.

home. We have several outstanding young authors.

We are very lucky to have a great staff at Broadalbin-Perth; our teachers and staff continually go above and beyond with what they are willing to do for our students. I truly hope your child is enjoying their time spent at school – if not, please let me know. Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to work with you as "we" raise the next generation. As always, please contact me with any questions or concerns.

For the latest information on everything happening at Broadalbin-Perth, visit our district Web site:
www.bpcsd.org

TLC Happenings

- ★ **Oct. 3** – PTO Meeting, 6:30 p.m., TLC Media Center
- ★ **Oct. 7** – PTO Barbecue Fundraiser & Activities
- ★ **Oct. 8** – Homecoming Parade, 9:30 a.m., followed by Fun Run
- ★ **Oct. 10** – Columbus Day, NO SCHOOL
- ★ **Oct. 17** – Board of Education Meeting, 6:45 p.m., HS Media Center
- ★ **Oct. 28** – TLC Halloween Parade, 1 p.m.
- ★ **Oct. 31** – Professional Development Half Day, students dismissed at 11:20 a.m.



Back to School Reminders

- ★ Transportation changes should be made in the form of a written note. **We ask that changes made over the telephone be limited to emergency situations only.**
- ★ With the exception of inclement weather, children will be attending outdoor PE classes and/or recess. Please dress your child with appropriate outdoor seasonal wear.
- ★ The school store will be open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:30-8:45 a.m., beginning Tuesday, Oct. 18. Please remember to send money in an envelope with "School Store" and your child's name written on it.
- ★ Please remember to park in designated parking areas. Please sign in at the office when attending Morning Program or before going to the classroom.
- ★ Please remember to be outside or visible to wave to your child's afternoon bus driver.
- ★ Help us earn free educational equipment for The Learning Community at B-P. Go to www.pricechopper.com/toolsforschools to register your AdvantEdge Card. Our school code is 15712. If you do not have internet access, fill out a Shopper Sign-Up Sheet and return it to school. Every time you use your card between now until the end of March 2012, we get credit towards free educational equipment.



A kindergarten student is a bit shy about meeting his new teacher, Mrs. Floyd, during TLC Supply Drop-Off Day.

Nurse's Notes

Please forward your child's physical (required for Pre-K or Kindergarten, 2nd grade and all new students) to the nurse's office as soon as possible. If a completed form is not received, Dr. Horowitz, our school doctor will be in later this year to complete the examination. Physicals are acceptable for this school year if done after September 10, 2010.

Reminders

- ★ No medications (even over-the-counter ones like sunscreen) can be given without a doctor's order. If medication needs to be administered in school, the following must be completed before it may be given to your child.
 1. Physician order for the medication, including dosage and when to administer;
 2. Parent signed permission; and
 3. An adult must deliver the medication in the original container to the nurse directly.
 - ★ If your child is going to be absent, please call the nurse's office at 954-2660. Excuses are needed the day your child returns from being absent.
- If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me directly at 954-2660. – **Carol Lempke, School Nurse**

The NYS Sex Offender Registration Act (Megan's Law) requires the Fulton County Sheriff's Office to notify schools when a registered sex offender is residing within the Broadalbin-Perth School District. The law further allows school districts to disclose or further disseminate this information at our discretion. Information on sex offenders living within Fulton County and/or the Broadalbin-Perth School District can be obtained from the NYS Department of Criminal Justice Services web site: www.criminaljustice.state.ny.us or by calling the public telephone number of 1-800-262-3257. Please contact Mrs. LaFountain with questions.



Preparing young children for school success

It's easier than you think

The following is from the B-P Parent Corner. Read more stories about issues facing parents and children of all ages at www.bpcsd.org. The B-P Parent Corner can be found under the Community tab.

For most parents, the first year or two of their children's lives are typically punctuated by specific, concrete milestones, from first steps and first words, to first tastes of real food. You probably knew what to expect and when—but as your youngster gets closer to school age, your questions may get far more complicated, and harder to answer:

Does my child play well with others? How many numbers and letters should my child know? How independent should my child be?

These common, but important, questions leave many parents pouring over books and magazines, talking with fellow moms and dads, and polling extended family in search of guidance. And usually, the answers aren't as concrete as one might have hoped.

Here's why: The skills that truly help children do well in school are not measurable on a growth chart or correlated to age, say pre-school and kindergarten teachers. Instead, the most important skills for school success are developed naturally, during common daily activities, such as throwing a ball back and forth, asking your child to name items in the grocery store, or helping your child make a drawing.

In fact, it's easier than you might think to work a little preparation for school success into every aspect of your child's day. Here are some tips:

Ask questions. Building your child's knowledge of the world can occur anywhere, whether it's running an errand at the local bank or a trip across the country. Expanding children's knowledge of the world beyond their homes will help them get into the habit of sharing their opinions and ideas. As you travel around with your children, talk informally about your interests and ask them to do the same. Encourage creative answers from your child by asking open-ended questions, such as "Why do you think the sun shines?" or "How do you think birds stay up in the air when they fly?" Let your child's natural curiosity create the answers, no matter how offbeat or unrealistic. Aside from helping you form a close relationship with your children, this type of ongoing dialogue pays off once they enter school: Children who are accustomed to

RESOURCES

Even if the first day of school is still a long way off, it's never too early to gather additional perspectives on preparing your children for school success. Here are some resources to reference:

Online Resources

- ★ Helping Your Preschool Child: <http://www2.ed.gov/parents/earlychild/ready/preschool/index.html> — Download a free booklet from the U.S. Department of Education that lists school-prep activities for children from infants to age 5. Available in English and Spanish.
- ★ Grow & Play: http://www2.scholastic.com/content/collateral_resources/pdf/g/gerber_smp_growplay.pdf — A free PDF guide from Scholastic that features activities and tips for preparing preschoolers for school.

Local Resources

- ★ Schenectady County Public Library: <http://www.scpl.org/youth/read.html> — Check out the events list on the library website for activities geared toward preschoolers at various library branches, such as Toddler Time, Preschool Story Hour, and Baby Lap Time. Be sure to check if registration is required.
- ★ "Family Fun Day" at the New York State Museum: <http://www.nysm.nysed.gov/programs/familyfun/> — Every third Saturday of the month, the museum holds this event, which includes activities geared toward the whole family, no matter the age.

speaking up and who have had a chance to develop their vocabulary are often capable of handling more information than those with limited language skills—and they will be more likely to participate in classroom activities.

Give plenty of encouragement. Strong emotional development comes primarily from the positive encouragement children receive from parents and other important adults in their lives. Openly praising your children's good habits—such as following your directions when helping with chores or asking politely to have a snack—will help encourage them to follow the same patterns in school. Further, firmly encourage them to keep trying if they don't quite master a task at first, and help them work to solve the problem. This will build your children's level of persistence and instill in them the confidence they will need to resist the urge to throw in the towel at the

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first sign of failure.

Help your children learn independence. It's a given that children must learn to follow directions to be successful in school. At the same time, children must also demonstrate independence, primarily by learning to make their own choices and be self-sufficient. Pay attention to what you routinely do for your children, as well as the types of tasks your children consistently ask for help with (picking up toys, dressing, etc.), and work on teaching them to do those things independently. This will help your child learn to accomplish basic tasks without you, which will help ease the transition into the school environment where your children must learn to get along without you.

Set healthy limits. At the same time, children should not equate "independence" with refusing to follow directions. "Some children think that following an adult request or direction is optional," says one kindergarten teacher. "A child may say, 'I don't want to do that,' to which I find myself replying, 'I'm sorry, but it's not a choice!'" To help your children understand the difference, try giving your child choices within your directions. For example, if you want your child to make his bed as well as pick up his toys, let him choose which one he wants to do first. This gives your child some control, but also ensures both tasks are completed. You can also try giving your children choices (no more than two or three so they don't get overwhelmed) for how to spend their free time: "Do you want to play with Playdoh or color a picture?" At the same time, help your children understand that some directions are non-negotiable: If a grown-up (parent, babysitter, teacher) gives them a direction, they are expected to follow it.

Get social. Introduce your children to experiences where they can interact with other children their age and learn to accept care from adults other than their parents. Preschool, daycare, or play groups are perfect starting grounds. Through these experiences, your children will begin learning to play, cooperate and problem-solve with their peers, building the social skills that will translate to proper behavior in the school environment. Be sure to walk the walk at home as well: When limiting the amount of time your children spend on generally solitary activities, such as watching television or playing video games, do not engage in the activities yourself. Suggest activities you can all do as a



Members of the PTO handed out drinks and freshly popped popcorn to families who came to TLC Supply Drop-Off Day.

family instead of plopping in front of the tube, such as taking a walk after dinner.

Read, read, read. Even if your child is only interested in books as a way to delay bedtime, indulging that request for "one more story" every now and then can pay off. Early childhood educators say that reading with your children, as well as letting them see you read, sends your children the message that reading is important and fun. Further, reading develops children's language skills, helping them to communicate more effectively with you and others—which can lead to less frustration and fewer meltdowns. The same rules apply to very young children: Babies learn about language from hearing your voice, even if they do not understand the story you are reading.

Provide plenty of opportunities for physical activity. Playing a game of catch, running and jumping, climbing on a jungle gym or dancing to music are fun and easy ways children can learn muscle coordination and control. Ironically, activities like these actually develop the strength they need for quieter skills they will need to master for school, such as holding their arms steady for writing, or sitting for extended lengths of time. Coloring, putting together puzzles, zipping their jackets and even enjoying a bite-sized cereal snack will help children learn to control and coordinate hand and finger muscles.

Bring out your child's artistic side. Here's all you need to foster the natural evolution of your child's drawing and writing skills: A comfortable space, pencils and markers big enough for little fingers to grasp, and a blank sheet of paper. Watch as those first few scribbles evolve from squiggles and loops to actual letter shapes. Be sure to provide plenty of encouragement and do not worry if your child still isn't writing letters by the first day of school—every child's writing evolves at a unique pace.

For more tips and resources, please visit www.bpcsd.org and click on the Community tab to access the B-P Parent Corner.