

# Bee Balm Learning Center March Newsletter



Artic Willows: Preparing for and celebrating Mardi Gras was a ton of fun! We did not make the King Cake at school. Once I read all the directions, it was clear that I needed a full kitchen and four hours to work on it. The kids enjoyed eating it regardless. The traditional hidden baby was sitting right on top so we decided that meant we all were lucky.

After attending two days of the, Launching Into Literacy and Math conference (an event designed for educators of children aged birth-5 years), I have been reconsidering what is important and how our classroom is run. Years ago, I taught at a Montessori school (it was loosely based program). A lot of the philosophy made sense and felt right to me. The conference referred to a lot of the techniques and ideas that I abandoned after leaving the Montessori position. When I came back to the traditional preschool setting I felt I had to change in order to fit the center and match what other teachers were doing. Now that I have been reminded or affirmed of best practice, I want to get back to what I feel is valuable and appropriate.

One change is that Morning Meeting will be different. Instead of doing the same routine every day we will be coming together to do different large group activities (games, songs, greetings, yoga.....). If kids do not want to participate they do not have to, they will choose from limited alternate activities. Our schedule will also become more flexible. If the kids are hard at play, getting along and being respectful, we will put off planned activities for later. Child directed play is as important (if not more important) than any product-based activity, worksheet or even the most well intended open-ended adult plan.

For years, studies have shown that children learn through play. It's my goal to provide a safe and engaging environment that fosters and honors play in a time when childhood seems to keep getting shorter. We will begin referring to "play" as "work" in the Willow room in an attempt to stress how important it really is and give it the respect and focus it deserves!