



# Spuyten Duyvil

## P R E S C H O O L

3041 KINGSBRIDGE AVENUE

BRONX, NY 10463

TEL. 718 549 1525

FAX 718 884 0667

director.spuytenduyvil@gmail.com

**TAX LETTER for aftercare costs- Let me know if you need one.**

### UPCOMING EVENTS:

- Town Meeting ..... Friday, Jan. 26 9 am
- Movie Nite for 4K ..... Friday, Jan. 26 6 pm
- Compost Project coming to work on our bins- parents invited ..... Wed, Feb. 7 at noon
- Feb 19-23 .....NO SCHOOL..... President's Week/ VACATION SCIENCE CAMP
- March 1 ..... Deadline application for 3K/4K
- March 15 ..... Noon Dismissal for Staff PD

Jan. 23, 2024

Dear Families,



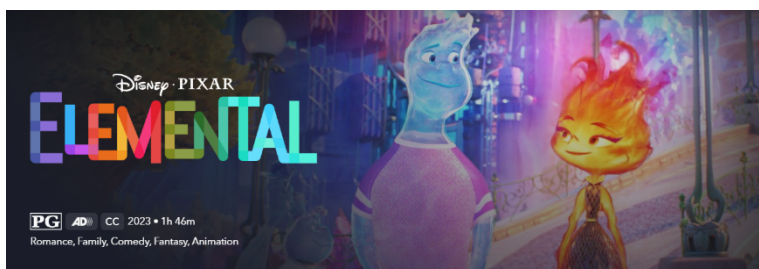
**Cold enough for you??**



Hopefully by the time you all read this the kids will be able to go outside again at school. The ice out back is a challenge, but Michelle took her gardening groups out last Wed. specifically to look at the ice! So remember to always dress your kids for the weather. It is great to have snow again but sneakers are not good snow footwear. It is also time to check the change of clothing you left back in Sept. Not only has the weather changed so the clothes need to also, but your child has grown a size or two so different clothes are probably needed.

#### OTHER WINTER NOTES:

As we don't have on site maintenance, keeping our sidewalk and entryways clear of snow and ice is up to us. Any parent who can help with this as the weather demands, just speak up and we will hand you the snow shovel and salt spreader. We need to keep the front garden path and steps clear also as our fire exits.



#### FAMILY EVENTS:

##### 4K Movie Nite-

The kids are all talking about this Friday night- We are watching Elemental. We are unpacking the popcorn machine. Smores ingredients are on hand. So are the franks and other yummys. We start eating and

hanging out at 6; the film starts at 7. We should be on our way home at 8:30. Bring your comforter, pillows and snuggly PJ's. You can pay as you go with cash or run a tab and then settle up with Venmo later.

**3K/4K APPLICATIONS** have opened on MySchools. Current 3K families only need to put Spuyten Duyvil down as your first choice but be sure to mark **Current Student** on the application. Of course, if you decide to make another choice for 4K that is up to you but remember that our seats will be filled by families that put SDP first.

**Spuyten Duyvil Compost**

The city may have abandoned the cause of composting food waste, but we have not. Our classes all collect fruit peels that Michelle takes out every Wed with the kids. They had these scraps to the compost bins behind the greenhouse and now also to our compost tumbler. Our families are invited to bring their food scraps to the school compost now. (We can't accommodate



waste anymore though.)

NYC Compost Project and other recycling services we are connected with through the Bronx Botanical Gardens are still available to assist sites like us in maintaining our composting capacity.



They are coming to work with Michelle on Wed. Feb 7 at noon to assess repairs needed to our 2 bins and explain best practices to any parent who would like to join. Parent support would be very helpful in expanding how we handle the food scraps we collect. As you can see from these pictures, the kids are already retrieving compost soil for our vegetable beds.

**VACATION SCIENCE CAMP**

Alda is running this special week of exploration again over Feb break. Here is what our young scientists looked like last year! Topics will again include, batteries and light, properties of matter, sound, chemical interactions – all through experimentation. Flyer attached for cost. Several graduates from last year are joining as well. Friends who are 4 or 5 are also invited. Financial aid already in place for aftercare is applied for Science Camp as well. Let me know if you want your child to attend 2, 3 or 5 days.



**THE CHICKS ARE COMING!**



It may not feel it right now, but Spring will be coming back again and that means our Chick Study is coming up. We used to work with a farm in south NJ that would bring the fertilized eggs and then take the chicks back a month later. But they don't do that anymore. Since Covid it has become a challenge- not so much in getting the eggs, but in finding someone to take the chicks. Last year I connected with the Cornell Extension in Suffolk County. My husband and I drove out to Long Island on a Saturday and a parent (thank you Rachel Yaggy!) drove the chicks back after. This is still the only place that is doing this work with schools so it is back to Suffolk County again.

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED-** the eggs need to be picked up either **Saturday, March 9** or **Tuesday, March 12**. The return day is much more flexible. If you have a car and a few hours to offer up, please let me know. Outside of rush hour or summer traffic, the trip on the LIE is not bad. Really a straight drive out to the farmland of Long Island.

**GETTING READY FOR SUMMER**



Families have started asking about summer programming. Spuyten Duyvil does not do its own summer classes, but we rent to like-minded programs. Attached is the flyer for **Second Nature Outdoor's Summer Camp**. Contact Sam or Hannah directly with questions or to enroll.

**Scribble Art** and **Music Adventure** will both be offering programming the last 2 weeks of August. For more information please contact Ben and Val at [musicadventurenyc@gmail.com](mailto:musicadventurenyc@gmail.com) OR [vfleer@gmail.com](mailto:vfleer@gmail.com).

Other area programs are at the YWHA in Washington Hgts on Nagle Ave or in North Riverdale. Our families have also used Kids In The Game which is out of Amber Charter in Inwood and St. Margaret's on 260 St in Riverdale. All programs are registering now for the summer.

**LAST NOTES:**

**MEDS, ILLNESS AND KIDS-**

There have been a few interactions this past week that again reinforced how important communication is between school and home. We all often forget how young our kids are and they are not always able to tell us exactly what is bothering them. At this level of development they are not always aware that they are feeling “off” in the way adults would. It has been a winter of high fevers (more than usual it seems), lingering coughs, flu, RSV and a variety of other unpleasant viruses- for the adults too. We call home when your child seems not themselves; often it is simply a normally upbeat child has their head down or starts to cry or seems withdrawn. If you see changes at home, point that out to your teacher too. If your child is not happy as they normally are, pay attention to that. Invariably we will be calling in a few hours with an uncomfortable and sad child.

Be especially aware if you are giving your child prescription meds for any of the accompanying symptoms. Let us know also. We learned how toxic a certain steroid can be the hard way when the child became uncharacteristically angry, moody, and resistant. After several discussions with the family it came out that this med had been given for a bad cough; it was stopped right away. Between home and school there are lots of eyes on your child. Let’s be sure we share that information as it comes up; your child will benefit.

**PARENT WORKSHOPS –**

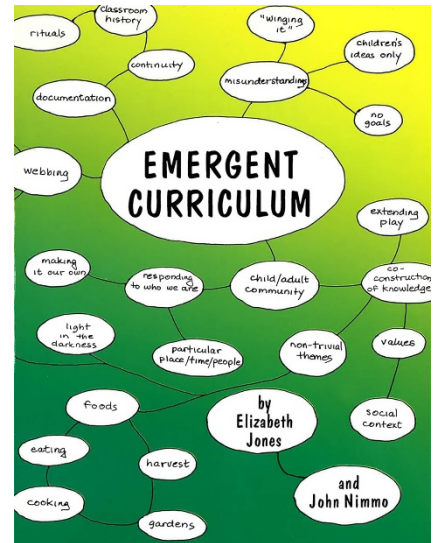
Some of you have already met Laura Marte, our DOE Social Worker. We are very lucky to have Laura available to our staff and families. She is available to any family directly at [lmarte@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:lmarte@schools.nyc.gov). Laura will be setting up another Parenting Circle date at Spuyten Duyvil shortly. In addition, she has shared a Zoom workshop coming up on dealing with supporting children through difficult life moments. That flyer is attached here also.

**ARTICLE OF THE MONTH:**

**How Does Following an Interest Differ From a Theme? Understanding Emergent Curriculum.**

.Giving school tours now to perspective families requires me to put into a few coherent sentences what we try to do at Spuyten Duyvil, what emergent curriculum, child centered, progressive, process driven all mean in practice. I have been doing this for so long, and believe so completely in the value of this kind of education, the words are always available to me. Plus our teachers are so good at it there is always so much evidence hanging all over each classroom that parents can “read the room” too. Hopefully you have that experience as well when you drop in Friday mornings.

NYC Dept of Education does not subscribe to this thinking, not any more, even though it was at CCNY and NYC public schools I learned all about this. As you will all see in kindergarten, the mandated curriculum is a series of “Units” or “Themes.” But the reading I have done on this recently really clarified where Themes (at least as now being delivered) are not child centered. One important problem is that the information is pre-broken up into chunks, in a set order, on a timetable with a beginning and an end. Emergent curriculum is not that; it is messy, goes in unexpected directions depending on the kids, can be as informative for the teacher as the child.



Sometimes when you think you know something so well, you can take it for granted. I came across this mention in one of my searches and bought the book. I think it will become part of our staff development plans as well. Always good to revisit core values.

"All curriculum plans are tentative, and children modify them by their response. Like the universe, curriculum is always expanding," wrote Elizabeth ‘Betty’ Jones in her 1987 "Emergent Curriculum Framework" which remains both relevant and resonant today.

Sources for emergent curriculum, according to Jones, include:

- Teachers’ interests
- Children’s interests
- Things in the physical environment
- People in the social environment
- Curriculum resource materials
- Serendipity: unexpected events
- Living together: conflict resolution, caregiving and routines.
- Values held in the school and community, family and culture.

On 'Living together,' Jones wrote, "Cooperation, expression of feelings, conflict resolution and all the daily tasks of living together are potential curriculum for young children. Physical care, self-help skills, eating and

resting and washing and dressing are the everyday life experiences that nurture the growth of young children. *Caregiving and the resolution of interpersonal issues are not interruptions to the curriculum, they are basic curriculum.*

Which brings me to this photo of a scene I walked in on in one of the 4K classes. It was spontaneous, directly grew out of shared need to extend their building, completely cooperative, filled with trial and error, could not have been done with less kids- all hands were needed. The girls kept shifting their hands to hold up the squares enough that supports could be added underneath. No one child had the answer; they were scaffolding off each others' suggestions, revising as experience led them. While this moment was remarkable, it was not unique in the life of Spuyten Duyvil classrooms.

If you are interested, there is a little more to read on this topic attached, along with an interesting site, Childhood 101, I found with a lot of similar pieces.

Even though there will be significant limits to finding this kind of learning in kindergarten, think about what you offer your child outside of school that encourages them to build on emergent interests too.



Sincerely,

Judi