



News & Notes

Mushroom Family Learning Center

1240 Washington Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15228
(412) 531-1225

mflcdirector@hotmail.com
mushroomfamily.org

Important Dates / Info

TUITION DUE OCTOBER 1

FALL FUNDRAISER (AUNTIE ANNE'S GIFT CATALOG)

Look for info in the cubbies soon!
Orders will be due **OCT. 19**.

STAFF MEETING OCT. 24

Early dismissal at 11 a.m.; late arrival at 1 p.m. No lunch.

CONFERENCES NOV. 8 - 9

Details to come from each class.

ENRICHMENT CLASSES AND LUNCH

Enrichment classes and Munchin' Lunchin' start this month! Contact Jamie Geisler at jamie_geisler @comcast.net.

There's also still room in the art enrichment class called "Pee Wee Picasso"—two Tuesdays a month from 11:15am - 12:30pm.

OUTSIDE PLAY

Classes go outside if it's not raining and 28 degrees or above. Please be sure your kids are well prepared (including proper play shoes). And mark all outerwear.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Please return the volunteers form from your parent folder or talk to Joan.

WAYS TO HELP MUSHROOM

- United Way agency # is 885339.
- Giant Eagle's Apples for the Students program # is 5245.
- Save Labels for Education (bin in the stairwell).
- Help other families by donating to the MFLC Scholarship Fund.

A Big Thank-You to...

- Erin Bignell, who coordinated the E² Toys 2 Try outings.
- Julie Connolly, who coordinated our welcome coffees, and to the board helpers.
- Susan Sarkis, who coordinated our Family Picnic.
- Cindy Nairn, who created our coffee and picnic signs.
- Chelsea Rattay and family for their donation of toys.
- Thea and Abram Hippolito and family for their donation of a helmet.
- Piper and Ryan Schultz and family for their donation of clothes.
- Grace Pantelidis and family for their donation of helmets.

From the director...

What a busy start of the school year we have had. The children are settling into their classroom routines, they are happy and making new friendships. We at Mushroom Family Learning Center are excited and happy to be with your children and it is our desire to provide the very best for them and their future. We strive to provide an environment rich in possibilities to explore, think, deduce, and discover. We also strive to provide an environment that encourages respect and courtesy for ourselves and for others.

You, however, are the primary source of your child's education. Home is the place where children first learn their limits, abide by the rules, take responsibility for their actions and consider the rights of others. There is no doubt that parenting is the most exhausting and frustrating, yet the most rewarding job in the universe!

We as a society, and particularly we the staff of MFLC, owe a debt of gratitude to you parents for taking on and for doing so well the job of raising your little ones into future magnificent and marvelous people. Thank you for sharing your children with us. We are all so excited and energized for a terrific year ahead.

Joan

Joan Harrison



Process and Product

As adults, we are connected with the outcome, or the product, of our efforts. We want the report to look nice, the cookies to taste great, or the hedges to be perfectly straight. We participate in few activities just for the fun of it. In part this is because these activities were learned long ago. But do you remember when you learned to play tennis, or golf? Or use a new computer program? In the beginning you needed to do a certain amount of fine-tuning, exploring what would happen if you did this or that.

This is the way it is with your child. Children are learning new things all the time and they need the freedom to try things out without worrying about the product. Luckily, young children tend to be more involved with the process, or the doing, than they are with the end results or the product. That is why your child may draw all morning or afternoon yet still not be able to tell you what he/she drew. And why he/she can pour rice or sand back and forth between pitchers all day or string beads every day for a week.

It is hard for us as adults to look beyond the product of an activity and see what the child is learning from the process. Perhaps coordination, or beginning writing skills, or making discoveries about triangles or gravity. He/she is finding out that doing for one's self is very satisfying which builds confidence.

Be patient. Allow your child the time to grow and learn through various processes that are a part of the task. Enjoy watching his or her involvement. Later, we all can be proud of the product.



Clothing Drive for South Hills Interfaith Ministries Oct. 8-12

Mushroom Family Learning Center would like to help SHIM (shim-center.org), which is in need of winter coats and outerwear for adults, and fall and winter clothing for children sizes toddler to 16.

A collection box will be in the school lobby **October 8-12**. Please donate!





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Mushroom Wish List ~ If you or someone you know may be able to contribute, please let Joan know!
- Little Tykes ride-on fire truck
- Clothes: underwear, socks, pants, tops, gloves and hats
- Helmets

From the president of the board...

Happy fall, Mushroom families!

Welcome back to another great school year at our wonderful school! This is my second year as board president, and I must say, I'm finally feeling like I am getting the hang of things!

Our first month of school is (almost) over and I must say that I think we started off with a BANG! The first-week-of-school coffees went very well. Thank you to those who donated their time and baked goods for the event.

We also had great luck with the weather for our Family Picnic and we were thrilled with the turnout. It was the highest attendance I can remember for this event!

We will be making some changes with the food for next year as it seemed like it was being consumed faster than it was being placed on the table! We will be offering some main dishes (in bulk) to which we can supplement with the dishes the families bring.

And on to what's to come! This month, we will be starting a new fundraiser. You will be getting catalogs in your cubbies most likely the week of October 8. These catalogs contain everything from magazines, candles, and holiday gifts to snack foods, Auntie Anne's pretzels, cookie dough....the list goes on!

I hope everyone enjoys these beautiful fall days and you get to go out and experience the season with your family!

Erin
Erin Bignell

Welcome Future MFLC Preschoolers!
A few MFLC families have grown recently! Welcome little ones, and congratulations to your parents and siblings.
- Jack Mizer, little brother of Lydia (4s), on June 11; Parents: Erin and Chad
- Nicholas Antonelli, little brother of Maya (3s) on July 18; Parents: Kata and John
- Abdullah Kasif, little brother of Maryam (Pre-K AM), on August 2; Parents: Tahira and Kashif
- Evan Lotter, little brother of Cara (K-Too PM), on September 2; Parents: Kelly and Mark
- Avery Wriede, little sister of Olivia (Pre-K AM), born on September 17; Parents: Kristen and Chris

Preschool Directory
The school directory will be out soon.
We are correcting names, email addresses and phones numbers.
Please check to be sure we have your current information and remember that the directory and email lists are for school use, play dates, and birthday party invitations, but not for solicitation.
Thank you!



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Dropoff and Pickup Reminders



Thank you for your diligence in following our parking lot rules and keeping our school families safe. A reminder of the key info:

- Our lot is one way, entering from Washington, exiting onto Sunnyhill.
- Drive slowly and carefully, especially when backing out, and be observant of the cars and people around you.
- Don't leave other children unattended in the vehicle during dropoff or pickup. Stay alert and keep kids close to you when walking in the lot.
- Please be sure that your children are properly secured in the back seat before moving.

If you arrive early, please wait in the foyer until 8:55am/12:25pm.

“chilly-con-carne” in the morning hours.

We are having a lot of fun getting to know all the children's personalities. With the wonderful mix of Early Learners this year, we can tell we are going to have a blast!

News from the 3s class from Jamie, Debbie and Christine...

The beginning of a new school year is so exciting to me. I have always loved the first day of school, from when I was a child up until present day when my children get on the bus for the first time. I get a little choked up on the first day, knowing that another year has come and my children are getting older. As a teacher, I get that same first-day excitement. I pick out my “first day of school” outfit, review the names of my students, and get ready to meet 18 new adorable faces. It is a wonderful way to begin a new school year.

The three-year-olds are off to a great start, focusing on the routine of our day and figuring out how to coexist with all the other students. During the first month we learned how to read our school schedule, which tells us the routine for the day. Our day always starts with art projects and painting/cooking. We love to sing the song “I'm Gonna Catch You” to transition into our gathering activity. We love listening to stories and reviewing our question of the day. We are learning how to communicate and socialize with our classmates. There are friendships already starting to blossom.



Our theme for the first month was “Let's Make a New Friend.” We also focused on healthy foods and what we looked like. The students made fruit smoothies which was a huge success. We also introduced our science center. This month the center focused on the five senses. We used magnifying glasses to look at items in our nature basket. We used our ears to hear musical instruments. We used our fingers to select items from our “touch me” box. We ended the month tasting different types of fruit, which included oranges, lemons, plums and limes. We enjoyed describing the items and loved their expressions when eating the lemons. This class is very inquisitive.

One of our other favorite activities was going outside to the playground. We found that many of the students know how to

News from the Early Learners class from Theresa, Marlene, and Debbie...

We are off to a wonderful start to the school year. Each child is adjusting at her/his own pace. Each week we see more smiles on both the children's faces and our moms' as well. We are totally charmed by your little Mushroomers and we are just thrilled to see them becoming more and more comfortable with us and their school environment.

September always finds us getting to know the children, helping them to learn the boundaries of the room (what is OK to do and what is not) and introducing them to painting and gluing. Your children are busy the minute they enter the room. They are very inquisitive and enjoy exploring the toys.

I'm sure you noticed that September was our Apple Festival month. Painting apples for our big tree, the children chose their favorite apple color and concentrated on the painting process. All the children took their time and really focused on their masterpieces. Our tree is now covered with red, green, yellow and even some pink sparkly apples!



Everyone had a chance to “paint” with glue as well when we made our apple trees. Sticky fingers were everywhere but the children waited patiently until we went to wash hands. The amount of glue and paint used on our projects always requires extra drying time but when they are ready, they brighten every home décor.

An apple festival is not complete without applesauce! The children were fascinated with the process of “smooshing” all the apples. Their eyes popped open when they saw the sauce coming out of the colander. They did their own mixing of cinnamon and sugar and it passed the taste test with flying colors! “More, please,” was heard all around the table.

October will find us doing a lot of fall things. We'll explore the colors of the falling leaves and create decorations to match the season. We'll be spending time in our gathering circle singing our morning songs, and Pat the Cat will come visit us, too. (He helps us name our colors.)

Everyone loves to go outside so send a light jacket as it is still



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Is your child asking to stay longer at Mushroom?
Sign up for enrichment and/or "Munchin' Lunchin!"

Supervised lunchtime is \$6 per day for kids 3+. In enrichment, the children have fun making crafts, cooking, learning Spanish and reading new stories. Classes are available for those 4+ on Mondays and/or Fridays each month; \$14 per class. Sign up for however many you like! Contact Jamie for more info at jamie_geisler@comcast.net.

ride the bikes. We also love to take off our shoes and play in the sand box.

Christine, Debbie and I are so excited for this school year. The students are eager to learn, are kind to one another and have already touched our hearts. We are looking forward to getting to know them all even better.

News from the 3/4s class from Liz, Marlene, and Brian...

We truly enjoyed meeting our new friends in September! The beginning of the year brings so many new experiences. For some, this may be their first time separating from their parents for school. However, even our "veterans" need time to adjust to a new classroom, new teachers, and new classmates. Our slow pace at the beginning allowed us to introduce routines and rules without overwhelming the children. We focused on helping the children feel comfortable and find their unique place in the group.

We spent a lot of time this month introducing and reinforcing routines. Children feel safe, comfortable and confident when they know what to expect. Transitions can be especially hard for young children. With predictable signals, the process becomes easier. For instance, when we prepare for gathering, we first arrange the "cushies" in a semicircle (a visual signal), then sing the gathering song (an auditory signal). Once the children are seated on the cushies, we always sing "Open, Shut Them." At that point, the children are feeling successful and focused because they knew just what to do! Each regular transition has its own distinctive song. We also display our visual schedule (school clock) so that the children always have a reminder about what is coming next.

Another important routine is the Question of the Day. The children have learned to find their names when they arrive and place them in the column representing their answer to the question. It is so much fun to have your say and compare answers with your friends that the children are unaware they are learning math (counting, comparing, representing data, estimating) and reading (name recognition, left to right progression, one to one correspondence for words, using cues to decode text).



Our theme this month was "Make a New Friend." We played many games with the goal of helping each child feel accepted into the group as well as learning each other's names. We created our own class book with a page celebrating each child. With the book, each child can promote his/her own special, unique identity while learning about the other children. We culminated the month with Bring a Friend Day. Each child brought a special stuffed animal from home to introduce to the group.

As we move into October, we will explore "Fall on the Farm." One big highlight will be our field trip to Simmons Farm on **Thursday, Oct. 18**. I hope you will all be able to join us.

Thank you for the opportunity to work with your wonderful children. We are looking forward to a terrific year together!

News from the 4s class from Liz, Kim and Melanie...

I am very excited to be teaching the fours this year! Having worked with many of these children in Jamie's class, I am privileged to witness and share in their incredible growth over the course of two years. It was wonderful to reconnect after the summer break and hear about all their adventures! Our new friends are terrific additions to the group and we are enjoying getting to know them.



Our theme this month was "Make a New Friend." We read books and played games that touched on themes of individuality, acceptance, kindness, and respect for differences. We created our own class book with a page celebrating each child. We culminated the month with Bring a Friend Day. Each child brought a special stuffed animal from home to introduce to the group. We met a giant gorilla named George and shared our ideas about how to be a good friend.

We met Talking Turtle in gathering. Talking Turtle likes to hear what we have to say. When you have Talking Turtle, it is your turn to speak. When you don't, it is your turn to listen. We practiced passing Talking Turtle and taking turns answering a question or sharing news. With this activity, the children are learning to listen respectfully to their peers, to wait for their turn to speak, and to stay on a topic. They have so much they



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HALLOWEEN CELEBRATIONS

Halloween at preschool is generally mellow and we ask your help to keep it that way. While costumes are allowed (over top of clothes), please leave masks at home to avoid frightening other children. And, as always, no weapons are allowed in the school. Please refer to your weekly class email for event details related to your particular class. Thanks for your understanding, and *remember your cameras!*

are eager to share!

Most of the children are already familiar with the Question of the Day from last year. They confidently find their names and record their answers. Usually, they have already tallied the responses by the time we get to gathering! They like using the pointer for each of the words and "reading" the question for friends who come after them. I love that they have taken ownership of this activity.

We also introduced the children to their journals this month. At this point, our goal was simply for them to get interested in having their very own book to record their pictures and thoughts. We hope that feeling the pride and joy that come with authorship will encourage them to keep improving their fine motor skills, not as an assignment, but rather as a natural outgrowth of their own expression. As the year progresses, they will find more "surprises" from me in their journals in the form of prompts.

Dress-up and pretend play have been popular. We are encouraging them to think about their roles and work together with their peers in more elaborate scenarios. The upstairs space, which we use on Fridays, has provided some inspiring new materials and ideas. The children are using their pretend play to drive their "academic" growth. With clipboards and calculators on hand, and a little encouragement, they are making their own menus, taking orders, and finding many ways to create meaning.



As we move into October, we will explore "Fall on the Farm." We will have a field trip to Simmons Farm for a hayride on **Friday, Oct. 19**. I hope you will be able to join us.

Thank you for sharing your precious children. We look forward to a terrific year of playing, growing, and learning together.

News from the Pre-K morning class from Cara, Jane, and Brian...

What a wonderful first few weeks of school it has been! Brian, Jane and I have thoroughly been enjoying getting to know our class of 18.

Since our first week of school was spent establishing routines and reviewing/discussing safety rules, I thought it was important to have a day with the children that was all about what we *can* do at school. During this day, one of our activities was to create an "I can" chart listing all of the things we can do at school. Each of us took a turn contributing a line. As I thought about what to share in the newsletter about our first few weeks, I thought I would create an "I can" list highlighting all of the wonderful things we can do at school.

I can... I can meet my teachers.
I can meet my school friends.

I can follow the safety rules of the playground.

I can identify my name with upper- and lowercase letters.

I can choose an activity in the dramatic play area, block center, science center, math center, writing center, art center, puzzle center, reading center and/or manipulatives center.

I can sit "crisscross applesauce," listen with my ears and heart, watch with my eyes and think with my brain during morning meeting.

I can count how many days until my friend's birthday on the calendar line.

I can predict how many more/less children said yes or no to the Question of the Day before we actually count it.

I can write my name.

I can count how many letters are in my name.

I can watch my teacher write morning message and identify that print carries meaning.

I can fill my friends' "buckets" by saying and doing kind things.

I can listen to three-step directions and fill a cup, while using tweezers, with the correct colored pom-pom.

I can work with a partner.

I can use my words to ask politely for a turn with the blue sparkly glue when my friend is done with it.

I can build with magnets, tin cans, lids, caps, nuts and bolts.

I can create and decorate a mobile as expression of who I am.

I can sing and dance in music class with Ms. Theresa.

I can pour my own water at snack time.

I can say goodbye at the end of the day to my friend Snowy the Owl, and look forward to coming back again tomorrow.

I can learn through play.

The exciting piece is that this is only the beginning of the year, and we'll see how much we continue to add to the "I can" list as the year progresses! As we head into October, we will be



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Illness: When to Keep Your Child Home

While fever is a good indication of sickness, it is not the only one. If your child is "not himself," has vomited or had diarrhea within the last 24 hours, has a green nasal discharge, or is tired and irritable, something more than a cold is likely to blame.

children were delighted to have a snack where food was passed with serving utensils. Requests for more were preceded by their friends' names. "Please" and "thank you" were required!

September was "me" month for K-Too. The children made a class apple tree with a spin-art apple and photograph. The children made their own personal journal to keep drawings, writings, and thoughts in at school.

In order to write responses for these pages, we got busy right away at the math table. We reviewed two-digit numbers and measured ourselves and classroom objects. We charted our heights and interpreted the results together.



In October we will finish the "me" unit with a full-scale portrait of ourselves. We will talk and read about feelings, as well as choose to study a biological system of the human body.

We will move on to study the changing seasons and the life cycles of trees. Many children don't know why trees lose their leaves, what function leaves fulfill, or about the internal skeleton of a tree.

spending our time enjoying the fall season filled with apples, pumpkins, and (the children will not let me forget) Halloween! We will enjoy a trip to Simmons Farm on Thursday, Oct. 4, to go apple picking, and end the month celebrating Halloween (which the children have already begun planning).

News from the Pre-K afternoon class from Cathy and Melanie...

The month of October will find us busy doing fall activities—using tons of orange paint (!), singing spooky songs and learning new poems and a new letter each week.



The letter of the week will resume October 8 with B. We had a wonderful A week in September and will continue one letter each week until we have finished the alphabet.

Our field trip to Trax Farms is scheduled for Wednesday, Oct. 17. Please be there by 12:00 noon. We will take a hayride, learn about how important bees are to a farm, pick a small pumpkin and have a snack.

We will celebrate Halloween on Wednesday, Oct. 31. If your child wishes to wear a costume, it should be over his/her clothes. Please no masks. We will have a picture opportunity for you and then we will parade around the school (inside).

We had a GREAT start to the school year and look forward to watching your wonderful children grow. They already have shown to be a tight-knit group. We may be small in number but we are mighty!

News from the K-Too class from Marilyn...

In September our classes got to know each other and their new teacher. We have a fun and comforting daily routine now. Ask your children about their jobs: calendar helper, recycle helper, line leader, snack (cup, napkin, prepare, and cleanup) helpers, hand wash helper, and "hip and lip." Your

Help Keep Kids Safe While Walking

On Friday, September 28, the six-year-old brother of a Mushroom student was hit by a car as he was walking home from first grade in Mt. Lebanon. Thankfully the driver was going slowly, aware of children in the area, when the boy darted out into the street. He only sustained minor injuries, the most serious of which was a broken hand. Our thoughts and prayers are with this family.

As Mt. Lebanon is known as a “walking community,” and we all come into contact with children walking to and from school on a daily basis, we’d like to take this opportunity to remind everyone of some safety tips for both walking and driving. Please share them with your families.

SAFE WALKING TIPS



Wear bright/light-colored clothing and reflective materials.

Carry a flashlight when walking at night.

Cross in a well-lit area at night.

Stand clear of buses, hedges, parked cars or other obstacles before crossing so drivers can see you.

Be smart and alert: avoid dangerous behaviors.

Always walk on the sidewalk; if there is no sidewalk, walk facing traffic.

Don't assume vehicles will stop; make eye contact with the driver—don't just look at the vehicle. If a driver is on a cell phone, he/she may not be paying enough attention to drive safely.

Don't rely solely on pedestrian signals; look before you cross the road.

Be alert to engine noise or backup lights on cars when in parking lots and near on-street parking spaces.

Be careful at crossings: look before you step.

Cross streets at marked crosswalks or intersections, if possible.

Obey traffic signals such as WALK/DON'T WALK signs.

Look left, right, and left again before crossing a street.

Watch for turning vehicles; make sure the driver sees you and will stop for you.

Look across ALL the lanes you must cross and visually clear each lane before proceeding. Just because one motorist stops, do not presume drivers in other lanes can see you and will stop for you.

Don't wear headphones or talk on a cell phone while crossing.

If you have small children, always hold hands while crossing.

SAFETY TIPS FOR DRIVERS

Be alert: watch for pedestrians at all times.

Scan the road and the sides of the road ahead for potential pedestrians.

Before making a turn, look in all directions for pedestrians crossing.

Don't drive distracted or after consuming alcohol or other drugs.

Do not use your cell phone while driving.

Look carefully behind your vehicle for approaching pedestrians before backing up, especially small children.

For maximum visibility, keep your windshield clean and headlights on.

Be responsible: yield to pedestrians at crossings.

Yield to pedestrians in crosswalks, whether marked or unmarked.

Yield to pedestrians when making right or left turns at intersections.

Do not block or park in crosswalks.

Do not pass school buses that are stopped with their lights flashing to let students off.

Be patient: drive the speed limit and avoid aggressive maneuvers.

Never pass/overtake a vehicle that is stopped for pedestrians.

Obey speed limits and come to a complete stop at STOP signs.

Use extra caution when driving near children playing along the street or older pedestrians who may not see or hear you.

Always be prepared to stop for pedestrians.