



January Buzz from the Bumblebees

We have been spending a lot of time talking about emotions and how to handle them. What to do when a friend won't play with you, when you feel mad, frustrated or sad. We have practiced some breathing exercises and other ways to calm down. Along with this came manners like using please and thank you and talking kindly to your friends and parents. How can you help at school? How can you help at home? The children took turns sharing many ideas to make the home, the classroom and the world a better place.

The oldest children have been reading a ton and the younger children have been working on their letter sounds. It is so exciting to see this learning unfold and their face lights up when they learn a new sound, new word, or finish a new book! Thank you so much to Cori, Deano's mom, Kate, Emma James' mom, and Karen, Mackenzie's grandma, for coming in and listening to readers! The children really look forward to these days!

We will have a Valentines party on February 14th. The children are welcome to make valentines cards to pass out to their friends and we will enjoy a craft and fun snack together. I will send a list of names home this week. The last Wednesday in February, the 28th, from 4-7pm, we will have our open house. This is a time for your child to show you what they have been working on.

Looking ahead into March, we will have our spring conferences. They will be 30 minutes long and we will chat about what your child has been doing, what their lesson plans are for the rest of the year, and what your plan for next year is. The dates will be March 15th and 16th and these are no school days. This has changed from our school calendar because the teachers are attending a Portland Montessori conference on March 9th.

We will have free childcare available during your conference. Save the date for our Auction, too! It is a fun, social evening with great food that benefits Camas Montessori School. The bumblebee children are making a collaborative, functional, one of a kind art piece. Hope to see you there!

Jessica & Danae

Here are a few things your children have been working on:

Mackenzie is on a mission to have every lesson in the classroom! She asks for multiple new lessons every day! She has been working very hard on *writing* and finished a paper where all of her words were evenly spaced and on the lines. It was perfect! She did the whole

thing in one afternoon without any reminders, she was so proud! Mackenzie also had a new lesson on the *cube chains* which is learning skip counting and preparation for multiplication (ex. $3 \times 3 \times 3$).

Sawyer has been learning about *money* such as how much a penny is, how many pennies make a nickel and how many are in a dollar. She also had a lesson on the *living and non-living* vocabulary cards and she helped explain to the younger children that trees are living- which is a bit of an abstract thought since we don't "see" them breathe or eat. She also had a lesson on the *square chains* which is learning skip counting and preparation for multiplication (ex. 2×2 and 5×5).

Sage just completed memorizing every word in puzzle words 1 (also called sight words like the, off, was). This was very exciting for him! He is also flying through the *phonetic reader books*. Sage had a new lesson on the *negative snake game* where he is practicing subtraction. He continues to enjoy the *stamp game* where he adds numbers into the thousands.

Violet enjoys the *animal sound lotto* game. The children listen to a cd and match pictures of animals to the sound they hear. She had a new lesson on *burlap sewing* which is preparing her for *embroidery* and *pillow making* coming next month. Violet has also been busy reading the *vowel cards* which are 3-4 letter phonetic words with one vowel (cat, sat, pan, last, etc.)

Emma James has been working on the *clock* and learning to tell time. She also had a lesson on the *square chains* which is learning skip counting and preparation for multiplication (ex. 2×2). Emma James also had a new lesson on *labeling the classroom* where she reads a word on a card and matches it to objects around the room.

Deano loves the *flubber!* This is a fun activity that helps to strengthen the muscles in the hand, preparing children for *writing* later on. He enjoys reading with the *object box* and matching labels to their objects. He also likes the *tea making* work and wants to take it out every day! While he doesn't like the taste of tea very much, he loves setting the table up and inviting a friend over for conversation. Deano also enjoys the new lesson, *color box 3*, where he grades a set of colors (such as gray) from lightest (white) to darkest (black). The ends are easy but the middle is the challenging part because the colors can look so much alike!

Nora also really likes the *tea making work*. She is so careful with the porcelain cups and loves the one on one time with a friend. Her *cutting* skills have really strengthened too as she is starting to try more intricate designs rather than the straight lines. Nora can be seen almost daily with the *hundred board*, lining up the numbers in order and then packing the 100 tiles away.

Ava wants to write everything as she watches the older children start to sound out sentences and begin to spell words. She took the *object box* out the other day and began writing all of the labels (words) on a piece of paper and then drew the object for the word. It was so neat to see as I did not show her this or ask her to do this. She had a new lesson on *windowing washing* and cleans our front door every day. I think her favorite part is the squeegee!

Trenton loves building and is known in the classroom as the "go-to" person for help making the *tallest tower*. He knows what pieces come next and how to set them, just right. He has been very interested in *puzzles* lately and is able to complete puzzles with 20+ pieces with no frame. He was quite proud of himself the first time he did it without any help and immediately asked for another puzzle! Trenton also likes the *color mixing* work where he finds that red and blue make purple and other combinations.

Davin is almost 5 and is so excited to start staying up during "kindergarten time", what we call the afternoon work period. He likes to take out the *trinomial cube* (visual discrimination and preparation for algebra) and *letter tracing* after he has rested a short bit. He had a new lesson on the *decanomial square* (discriminating size, shape and color as well as a preparation for math and squaring) and figured it out so quickly! Davin has also been practicing with the *teen beads* and matching the symbols to their quantity.

Sylvanna has had many new *vocabulary* lessons this month. She has learned about *opposites* (not just off-on but many-few and above-below) and names of things on a farm and in the city. She also loves to lead the *sound bingo* game where she tells the other children the letter sound and they find a match on their card. Sylvanna also had a lesson on the *baric tablets* where she wears a blindfold and uses her sense of touch to feel which board is lighter or heavier.

Hank takes out the *100 board* daily as well. Many children have been wanting to do this work and it is a long work, so we have been having to borrow Nina's from the classroom next door! Hank's *cutting* skills have also taken off lately as he is able to now cut out circles and zigzag lines. He enjoys *puzzles*, *letter tracing* and the *living/non-living cards*.

Aspen had a new lesson on the *addition snake game* where she counts beads to make groups of ten (2 & 8, 4 & 6). This is a concrete foundation for addition. She likes to take out the *smelling jars* and find all of the pairs that smell the same. Aspen also really likes using the *farm table* and *tracing letters*.

Daisy had a lesson on *floor scrubbing*. This is helping her build concentration as there are many steps to this work. It is also strengthening her fine motor and hand muscles for later writing exercises. She likes finding out what things are living (people, flowers, bugs) and

not living (cars, toys, computer) with the *living/non-living* cards. She continues to want to *trace letters* every day and likes to use the *hundred board* with a friend

Julian likes the *tonging* work. There are always small, fun objects to pick up with tongs and put into another container. This is really helping with those fine motor skills. He likes the sound bingo game, matching letters to their sound and the animal sound lotto where he hears a sound that an animal makes and find the picture of the animal. Julian really enjoys group work where he can socialize with friends! He had a new lesson on the *mortar and pestle* where he takes a tablespoon of coffee beans and puts it into the mortar, then uses the pestle to grind them down into a powder.

Owen has been practicing identifying quantity with the *spindle boxes*. He now notices right away, without counting, when someone is holding three pencils or sees five dots on the rug. He has been wanting to paint almost everyday on the *easel*. Owen had a new lesson on *nuts and bolts* where he unscrews a nut off of a long bolt and removes the washer. The bolts vary in size so after removing them all, he needs to figure out which bolt each washer and nut belong to.

Jean Nicolas likes to play the *I Spy* game and is really starting to hear the beginning sounds in words like "p" in pig. His face lights up when he can spot the correct object I am "spying". He loves using the farm and exploring with the farm animals. Jean had a lesson on animals and which ones have *fur, scales or feathers*. The butterfly was the most difficult because children so not usually see these up close and assume that they have feather because they fly- but Jean can tell you that they have scales!

Harvi *draws* every day and always gives them to Danae or myself! We constantly ask her to show mom and dad or we sneak them in her folder but she gets upset with us when she finds them, sorry mom and dad- someday you'll see her designs! She also enjoys the color mixing work (yellow + blue=green) and I think her favorite part of this activity is the eyedroppers she gets to use to make the colors change. This was a challenging task at first, using the eyedropper, but now she is a pro and shows the younger children how to use it! We have special soft-beaded foam out right now that the children use to make the shape (outline) of numbers and Harvi really takes pleasure in this work too.

Leia loves sitting with the older children and having them show her lessons or read her a story. She had a lesson on the *lock box* where she finds all of the different ways to open the doors and then lock them back up. Leia has been using the *geometric cabinet* and sorting different shapes from smallest to largest and naming them like circle, square, triangle, oval, ellipse. She likes to count with the number rods, where each section of a long rod signifies a number (one space = one, two spaces = two, and so forth).