

# The Pre-K Post

January 12, 2009

## Back to School

Children returned to school this week with lots of stories to tell about their holiday activities with their moms and dads, sisters and brothers, and grandmas and grandpas. We hope you had the time to browse through their **stories up on the wall**, by our classroom. Children enjoyed hearing about each other's adventures (did you read the one about one child and his dad being attacked by two bears? We are happy they survived the attack!).

## Winter

Our conversations naturally led to our new unit, Winter, with children sharing their stories about going skiing, playing with snow, sledding, building snowmen. This was a good start on how **people adapt to winter**; the activities we enjoy in winter is one aspect of adapting, as for example playing on the beach or going cycling are things we do in spring or in summer and even in fall when it is not too cold. Other than speaking about the activities we enjoy in winter, children acknowledged that "plants die", "it snows", "animals are asleep", "birds go south", "there is ice", "people drink hot cocoa".

Children especially enjoyed our hands on projects: **analyzing how ice forms** (observing it almost every day, when it was not too cold to go outside; our project will continue with **exploring the temperature** and how it affects the ice, **using a thermometer** and also **analyzing what happens when we use salt**).

Another project we worked on is **the Forest project**. This project encourages children to use their creativity to express what a **forest looks like in winter**. This expression is based on our outdoor experiences, on our conversations and on the stories we read on the daily basis.

Please read our notes outside and inside the classroom; they will give you more insight on the ice and forest projects.

## Class Notes

- Picture Day is January 21st; please make sure to submit your order form to Linda before that date.
- Our Shabbat dinner is coming up soon. Please mark your calendars for February 6th.
- This month we wish happy birthday to Zushe, Eliana, Bjorn and Emily.
- We began using our upstairs literacy room this week - please see box on next page for more information.

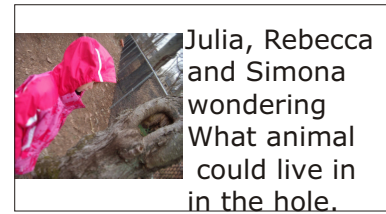
Zushe holding the ice disk for the children to see that it stayed frozen.



Joshua helped finding a place to hang the ice so we can keep track of how cold it gets.



Aaron making branches on a tree.  
(Forest Project)



Julia, Rebecca and Simona wondering What animal could live in in the hole.

## THIS WEEK:

Our experiences from last week will provide children with more activities that will explore winter happenings, such as migration and adaptation. **Please take your time to read more about this week's planned activities.** The plan is outside our classroom. Please note that the plan is a general guide to keep us on track; but we also encourage spontaneous exploration or emergent curriculum that alter our original plans. Also, weather conditions often change our plans as well. For example last week, our trip to the forest had to be cancelled due to the stormy weather. We are hoping to do it this week, weather permitting.

## Torah Stories & Lessons: Noah and the Flood

Returning from a brief hiatus of Chanukah and winter break (we chose not to continue the Torah stories during the Chanukah storytelling period so as not to confuse the children with too many story plots at once), we resumed our stories and lessons that we learn from the Torah each Friday.

Before Chanukah, we had completed the story of "Bereishit," the creation of the world, and the lessons we learned from Adam and Chava regarding choices, consequences, and hope for the future.

We continue now with the story of the flood; we revisited how Hashem created the world with people having the responsibility to take care of the world and be kind to its creatures and to each other. Unfortunately, only one family was doing this; the family of Noah. Hashem was very kind and patient and hoped that the rest of the people would correct their behavior and be nicer to each other. Noah built the 'very large boat' that would save all the different kinds of animals and his family from the Flood for 120 years, to give a chance to the other people to notice what he was doing, and to mend their ways. However, the people did not listen and chose not to be nicer to each other, and so there was a flood of rain for 40 days that destroyed everything that was not in the boat. The story of Noah was an additional lesson in Hashem's patience for us, in the responsibility to help others improve, and the consequences of our choices and actions.

## LITERACY CENTER UPDATE:

We launched the new year with a new center upstairs. The children are divided in three groups, with each child getting one day a week to work upstairs in our literacy center for 45 minutes. Activities in this center will be a blend of curricular-based literacy activities and specific literacy activities for each group's individual skill-building needs. On our first visit, children explored each area (library, writing and art area and games area). Children also wrote their names for their cubbies. We spoke about how we write from left to right, writing the name starting with a capital letter and continuing with small letters. Each child has a name tag to use in the future. We also read stories and played games.

This week we will continue with children practicing writing their names, keeping in mind the rules mentioned above. Children that are ready will move on to writing their surname. When reading stories we will analyze aspects such as words, capital and small letters (we will work at appropriate levels).

## SKILLS ADDRESSED THIS WEEK:

### Literacy/ Communication

- New vocabulary: process, thick-thin (also math skill), melting- thawing (science), hibernating- active- dormant- adapting (science).
- Creating stories- children telling stories about their holidays; sharing their own understanding of processes discussed.
- Writing alphabet letters - see more information in Literacy Center Update.

### Math/ Logical Thinking

- Graphing- when analyzing the weather for December. This will continue to be part of our math activities at the end of each month.
- Spatial awareness - We explored aspects such as under, below, above, etc, when working on our Forest project.
- Shapes- acknowledging the many different shapes that surround us: the windows are square, sprinklers are circle, board is rectangle, weather chart is circle, stop sign is hexagon, clock is circle, etc. We will continue observing shapes when we go outside, as well. We are also in the process of making a song/game that describes the different shapes.

### Science/ Social Studies

- Analyzing the different processes in winter: ice, animals' reaction to winter, nature in winter.
- Acknowledging that birds fly south (children recognized Florida as a south location).
- Mixing colors (see creative expression for more information)

### Social/ Emotional

- Interpersonal (Large group projects promoting social interaction and extension of cooperation skills): Forest project, ice experiment.
- Intrapersonal (Individual work, developing children's own individual train of thoughts with teacher support for encouragement): Winter color individual paintings, shape cutting

### Art/ Creative Expression

- Creating stories
- creating our Forest project. ]
- artwork, acknowledging winter colors: white and black makes gray: "Gray like the sky in winter"