



Creating A Space for Feelings

by Teacher Lisa

November was filled with emotion as we explored feelings together in the classroom. We played with mirrors, facial features, and facial expressions. This helped us investigate how to communicate and read feelings with non-verbal cues. Children were encouraged to put a name to their feelings and think of appropriate ways to express them – What do you do when you're angry? What do you do when you're worried?

Children demonstrated pride as they accomplished big things like when **Canon** built a structure with the outdoor blocks that was taller than



himself, or **Elliot** finding new ways to challenge her body on the monkey bars doing "tricks." We also had the pleasure of welcoming a new friend, **Orson**, into the

Tuesday class. We practiced introducing ourselves and inviting him to play.

In dramatic play, children explored how it feels to take on another persona. This is an important step in learning empathy and exploring different

ways to be in the world through play. We had all kinds of princesses, knights, and Dragons. **Calla** loved to be a dragon. **Azurez, Graham,** and **Nolan** were often armored knights with paper swords and bows and arrows. **Darian** tried to teach me how to be



princess (from Frozen, I believe). Eventually he gave up and realized I should be a monster and that he made a far better princess than me. Fortunately there were other friends to play Elsa, or was it Anna?



FEELINGS SHOW AND TELL

November's invitation to children to bring in a special item from home related to their feelings was a hit. Not only did we get to learn a lot about what is special to our friends, but the sharing also helped us explore strategies to cope with difficult feelings.

- **Azurez** brought in a special light. When he is sad, it makes him feel better.

- **Olive** shared a blanket that Uncle Gene made for her before she was born. It has pictures of wild animals on it. She loves it because it feels soft and cozy and it makes her feel happy. She likes to have it when she's having hard feelings.
- **Ryann** shared her pacifier, "binky," and her "shirt" (and continued to share them at multiple circles throughout the month). She likes to rub the shirt and suck on her binky when she feels sad or tired.
- **Henry's** "shadow blanket" makes him feel happy when he is sad. He carefully walked it around the circle so that everyone could touch it.
- **Honora** shared her fuzzy, pink blanket. It's soft and makes her feel happy.



- **Graham** brought in an airplane toy that he bought for his mom for her birthday. She shares it with him. It makes him feel happy when he plays with it.

- **Anais** brought a special bunny figurine to share, but was feeling too shy to talk about it at circle, so she put it on the table to look at while we ate lunch.



- **Valentina** brought in her stuffed sheep and was very definite about it not being real – only a stuffed animal. It makes her feel cozy and happy.
- **Anna** shared her butterfly wings. They make her feel happy and powerful. When she wears them she can really fly...really...but just for pretend. She actually can just run really, really fast.
- **Alida** brought in two bunnies – one is hers and the other belongs to her brother, Ian. They make her feel cozy and they do not play together. She walked them around the circle and let all the children feel how soft and cozy they are.



Nathalie: "I have a blanket my mom made. It is magenta!"



Fiona: "My doctor's tools. They make me feel happy."

Zoie: "I like to watch Dragon Tales."

Sam: "I like to get cozy in a blanket, but I don't know if there are any blankets here."

Darian: "I have a super, super, super big blanket that makes me super, super, super, super happy."

FEELING THANKFUL

As Thanksgiving approached we explored feelings of gratitude. This can be a fairly abstract concept for young children so we began by talking about things that make us happy, things that we are glad about, or people and things we would miss if they were gone.

As part of morning activity time, children were encouraged to trace their hands and record their thankful thoughts.

Darian is thankful for his family.

Jiraiya is thankful for his Bubba.

Honora is thankful for her hand (that she traced).

Addie is thankful for soup and rice and noodles.

Olive is thankful for her family.

Frankie C. is thankful for giraffes.

Ryann is thankful for good.

Linus is thankful for fish, and said, "I love a shark. I'm thankful that they live at aquariums."

Teacher Lisa is thankful for all the beautiful fall colors.

Teacher Ami is thankful for her family and friends.

Teacher Jana is thankful for forests.

At circle I shared a book about giving thanks for Mother Nature's gifts and



the importance of saying thank you. I asked the children to share what they were thankful for:



Olive: "I am thankful for my kitty."

Valentina: "I am thankful for Corky, my cat."

At one circle, Teacher Jana asked, "What comforts you when you are sad, frustrated, or mad?:"

Wolf: "I have my pillow. It makes me feel cozy."

Lyra: (points to Teacher Lisa)

Stella: "I'm thankful for Grandma Nisha and Pop."

Azurez: "I am thankful for my dad."

Elliot: "I'm thankful for Felix crawling on me!"



and again. I am grateful that we have this space for our children to do just that, for a strong and inspiring team of teachers, and for the time, energy, and dedication that all of you put into your children's preschool experience.

With Gratitude,



MAKING SENSE OF THE WORLD: EXPLORING GENDER, POWER, AND FAIRNESS

As is typical in this stage of development, children struggle to make sense of the world and their place in it. Many of the older children are grappling with big questions around gender (what does it mean to be a girl? A boy? Are there things that only boys or only girls can do?) and friendship...

Earlier in November, **Lyra** and **Olive** were pretending to build a house on the playground. **Darian** approached and asked if he could play. They said no, only girls can play this game. I approached and asked how Darian could help them with their house. They continued to say that it was a game only for girls and only girls know how to build houses. I explained that I worried about rules like that because they are unfair. That rule is based on how someone is born and something they can't change. I told them that I can't let them make unfair rules like that. If they worried that Darian wouldn't know how to build a house, perhaps they could teach him. I asked, "What are the rules of your game? How do people in your game build houses?" Lyra and Olive responded that you have to be a construction worker in the game. Darian quickly jumped in, "I can do construction!" They showed him the tools and where to work. Then the three of them continued building the house together. I guess boys CAN be taught how to build houses.

Although November's curriculum focused on feelings, the world of emotions is an ongoing theme for preschoolers as they learn to recognize, articulate, and regulate feelings within themselves and tune into those in others. Doing so when faced with powerful, and often overwhelming, feelings like frustration, anger, and disappointment is especially challenging. Finding safe and reliable coping strategies and learning that we – ourselves and our friendships – can recover, requires practice and support from caring adults. Practice means making mistakes and trying again



Our very own Bee Mattox has launched a new app for iPhone users! HurryOut is designed to help us find fun things to do. From a recent Geekwire write-up:

"Seattle startup HurryOut wants to modernize and simplify that process. The app, which launched last month, aims to be a one-stop shop for users looking for something fun to do in their area."

"I should be able to find an event I like, in any category, at any time and location, within seconds of pulling out my cellphone," said HurryOut CEO Andy Albani. "And I should be notified if I am about to miss something I might like."

Find her app in iTunes now and never miss another awesome event.

garden d'lights

WHEN: Nov 29, 2014 - Jan 3 at 4:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

WHERE: Downtown Bellevue , Bellevue Botanical Garden, 12001 Main St., Bellevue , Wa

COST: \$5 (10 & under free)

LINK: <http://www.gardendlights.org/>

Sheraton Seattle Gingerbread Village

WHEN: Dec 1, 2014 - Jan 5

WHERE: Downtown Seattle, Sheraton Seattle , 1400 6th Ave., Seattle , Wa

COST: Free (donations accepted for JDRF Northwest Chapter)

LINK: <http://gingerbreadvillage.myevent.com/>

Seattle Center Winterfest & Train Village

WHEN: Dec 1, 2014 - Dec 31 at various times (see listing)

WHERE: Seattle Center , 305 Harrison St., Seattle , Wa

COST: Free (ice skating fee)

LINK: <http://www.seattlecenter.com/winterfest/>

Kids Rock Concert Series: The Not-Its!

WHEN: Saturday, Dec. 13, 2014, 10:30 a.m.

WHERE: Mount Baker Community Club, 2811 Mt. Rainier Drive S. Seattle WA

COST: \$15 for 4 tickets

LINK: <http://www.mountbaker.org/kindiependent>

Cast Off! Free Public Sailing

WHEN: Sunday, Dec. 14, 2014, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

WHERE: Center for Wooden Boats, 1010 Valley St. Seattle WA

COST: FREE

LINK: <http://www.atlakeunionpark.org/>

Menorah Lighting

WHEN: Wednesday, Dec. 17, 2014, 6 p.m.

WHERE: University Village, 2623 N.E. University Village St., Seattle WA

COST: FREE

LINK: <http://www.uvillage.com/menorah/>

What the Griot Said: Story Time

WHEN: Thursday, Dec. 18, 2014, 11 a.m. - 12 p.m.

WHERE: Northwest African American Museum, 2300 S. Massachusetts St., Seattle WA

COST: FREE

LINK: <http://www.naamnw.org/events/2014-12/>

Solstice Stroll

WHEN: Saturday, Dec. 20, 2014, 4:30 - 8:30 p.m.

WHERE: Kruckeberg Botanic Garden, 20312 15th Ave. N.W. Shoreline WA 98177

COST FREE

LINK: <http://www.kruckeberg.org/index.php/news-a-events/events/details/3012-solstice-stroll?xref=144>

Kwanzaa Activities with Ocheami

WHEN: Sunday, Dec. 28, 2014, 11:30 a.m. - 3 p.m.

WHERE: Seattle Children's Museum, 305 Harrison St. Seattle WA

COST: Entrance Fee

LINK: <http://thechildrensmuseum.org/fof-performers>

Community Events





CRAFTY CORNER



Materials Needed:

- paper or cardstock, roughly 4x6
- ink pad
- black sharpie

Although I saw this online, I can't find a link to the original source. I have made this with my kids, though, and it's very easy. Draw a simple tree with the sharpie marker. Have the child (or you!) press a finger into the ink pad, and press it onto your tree. Punch a hole at the top corner and add a bit of string if you want to attach it to a package.

Macaroni Menorah for Hanukkah

Materials Needed:

- Dry macaroni
- Dry lentils
- White glue
- Cotton bud
- Red crepe paper
- Cardboard



Kwanzaa Wreath Craft Project



Materials Needed:

- Construction paper in red, green, and black
- Scissors
- Glue
- Markers
- Yarn
- Hole punch
- Printouts of the Kwanzaa principles and their meanings

The Seven Principles of Kwanzaa

- Umoja (Unity)
- Kujichagulia (Self-Determination)
- Ujima (Collective Work and Responsibility)
- Ujamaa (Cooperative Economics)
- Nia (Purpose)
- Kuumba (Creativity)
- Imani (Faith)

