

Dear Families,

October 25, 2007

What a wonderful fall we are having! The Early Kindergartners are continuing to build their classroom community, as their friendships are beginning to solidify and each child finds his or her “place” in this group. For the past several weeks, children have been discussing the various aspects of friendship. Last week they discussed what it means to be a “friend.” They noted that:

“A friend is when you play with someone and you like it.”

“It’s because if you had no friends you’d have no one to play with and grown-ups have work to do.”

“But a friend can be a grown-up too.”

“You can make a friend feel better by giving them a hug.”

“You can say, ‘Do you want to play with me?’ and then someone can be your friend.”

But of course, making and maintaining friendships is not always easy. As a part of these discussions, the teachers have put on several puppet shows, presenting different problems that the EKs need to solve. Our puppet show characters will be appearing throughout the year. They are: Hickory the horse, Tina the turtle, and Sammy the tiger.

One of our more recent puppet shows involved the idea of exclusion, or “leaving someone out.” Many scenarios were presented, in which Hickory and Tina chose to exclude Sammy in subtle and not so subtle ways. Children were first shown an obvious form of exclusion, where Sammy was told, “You can’t play with us.” The class discussed how this kind of statement must make Sammy feel, and children were then asked to brainstorm ways that Hickory and Tina could solve this problem. Children

suggested ideas like, “They could say ‘sorry’” and “They could ask Sammy to play with them.”

The final scenario of this puppet show involved a less obvious type of exclusion. As Sammy tried to join a game of football, Hickory and Tina turned away from him and walked away from him whenever he came near. Children were asked, “Is Sammy being left out?” Many children weren’t so sure, as no words were used to leave Sammy out. Other children helped to clarify the situation, stating that, “They’re ignoring Sammy,” and “They keep walking away from him.” Children decided that Sammy was being excluded after all and stated that Sammy probably felt, “sad” and “upset.” Again, the EKs helped Hickory and Tina to be more inclusive in their play.

Learning how to be a good friend will be an important part of our experience this year. The many healthy friendships that are already forming will continually be encouraged. EKs will be asked to partner with others on field trips, as well as during block building experiences, as they play math games, and as they share classroom jobs, to name a few. Sometimes children will be partnered with good friends; other times, children will be asked to stretch themselves and work with someone new.

At home, you can further expand upon this as you and your child discuss and arrange play dates. You might ask your child to consider a play date with someone other than his or her usual friends. You can ask your child questions like, “How were you a good friend today?” and “Did you play with someone new?”

As the end of October approaches, we will begin our study of the school. Through interviews and observations of school workers as well as explorations of the building itself, the EKs will learn more about the

community that they are a part of at LREI. We will update you on this exciting piece of curriculum as it unfolds.

Happy Fall,

Diane & Charles

Upcoming Events:

November 2nd *Parent/Teacher Conferences (School Closed)*

November 6th *Trip to Collect Leaves in Washington Square Park*

November 9th *Parent/Teacher Conferences (School Closed)*