

Director's Corner: Why Theatre?

As you've undoubtedly noticed from Fall 2016 communications, we've been experimenting with theatre arts this year and encouraging families to do the same. This emphasis is preparing for our **Whole School Theatre Arts Unit** in February, which will culminate in our Family Theatre Arts Festival on Thursday, March 9th from 4:30-6:30pm. We chose this theme because people of all ages, cultures, and ability levels can enjoy participating in or watching creative dramatics.



During early childhood, theatre arts experiences can promote growth in all six of our developmental domains. Of course, the unit fits best with our emphasis on Artistic Expression and Appreciation. The children can experiment with different roles, create and enact stories, learn to use their movements, voice, and props to represent aspects of the setting and story, etc. In addition, theatre arts production can help children develop the following aspects of our other categories of objectives:

Self-Esteem & Independence: self-description & sharing personal stories, pride in accomplishments, expressing & reacting to emotions, self-care skills, etc.
Interaction & Cooperation: taking turns, following directions, understanding others' perspectives, being a leader and a follower, negotiating conflicts, respecting differences, etc.
Communication: listening skills, speaking to a group, reading signs & symbols, using pictures and print to convey a message, using body language to help communication, etc.

Discovery & Exploration: visual perception, spatial skills, planning skills, measurement, scientific concepts and process involved in technology, problem solving, etc.

Physical Capabilities: fine motor skills involved in using technology tools, eye-hand coordination, gross motor movement, body awareness and coordination with others, etc.

The Children's School's individualized approach to helping all children progress in all domains will enable us to tailor the specific theatre arts projects to each one, including those with special needs and English as a second language.



As a NAEYC Accredited Program, we commit to providing young children with diverse topic area learning and vocabulary development opportunities (2.D.04). While a **Theatre Arts** exploration most naturally fits within NAEYC's "Appreciation of the Arts" category (2.J.01) and includes "Arts Terminology" (2.J.04), the kindergartner's recent dramatic play about **Native Americans** clearly supported their learning in "Social Studies" and "History" (2.L.11). Similarly, the Green Room friends' interactions with architects and subsequent play in their "architect studio" enriched both their "Social Studies" (2.L.11) and "Skills for Artistic Expression (2.J.05). Dramas involving this month's **Animals in Winter** and **Water** themes will of course build "Life Science" concepts (2.G.02a), while scenery and sound effects design could enhance both "Earth Science" and "Physical Science" concepts (2.G.02b and c respectively), as well as "Scientific Terminology" (2.G.08). Preschoolers will be able to apply concepts of structures and stability from the **Building** unit when constructing the actual sets.

So, both in terms of general skill development across all domains and conceptual knowledge in a range of topic areas, **Theatre Arts** has it all. Besides, creative drama is FUN! What a wonderful way to enliven the cold winter months. We hope you'll join the process so that we can together learn creatively and constructively in 2017.