



First Steps

Monthly Newsletter

December 2022

Pat Blakely, Editor

First Steps Early Childhood Education Center
233 Tinker Street, Woodstock, NY 679-6301

First Friends

*The children were asked,
"What are you
Thankful for?"*

Ari: "My jewelry box"
Azaela: "Snuggle time with my family at night"
Ariela: "My Friends"
Brayden: "My Mom"
Callie: "Mommy playing with me"
Carmine: "Blocks"
Charlie: "Going into the treasure chest"
Chloe: "Mommy Hugs"
Dylan: "Video games & watching TV"
Elijah: "Animals"
Helena: "My Mommy"
Lily F: "Fancy dresses"
Lily H: "My toys"
Miles: "My brother"
Zahra: "When Hooty picks me up"
Anthony: "Daddy's a Ranger"
Noemi: "My Mom & Dad"
Quincy: "My Mom & Dad"

Brianna: "The school bus"
Isabella: "For eating"
Islay: "Mommy"
Jozie: "For my jewelry box"
Levi: "My Mommy & Daddy"
Madelyn: "Mommy, Daddy & Mimi"
Maximus: "Making things"
Sasha: "Mommy"
Walker: "Mommy & Daddy"
Milli: "Aba"
Aidan: "My Mommy & Daddy"
Scarlett: "Mommy"
Novalee: "Everytime I come to school"
Nora: "Love"
Zach: "Having my pumpkins carved"
Luca: "Spiderman"
Singer: "My Mom & Dad"



First Steps News~

We hope that you all had a wonderful Thanksgiving Holiday filled with family, fun and tradition.

We truly appreciate the time many of you spent filling out our **Parent Survey**. The surveys reinforced your support of our program and our knowledgeable, dedicated staff. We are grateful of your support of play-based with intent curriculum and the love the teachers share with your children. Your comments and suggestions will be taken into consideration in our planning for the future as we strive to meet the needs of the families and children entrusted to our care.

Communication together with a sense of teamwork (child, parent, teacher, administration) is the best and most important approach for the full development of each individual child. Your specific questions, concerns, desire for more information is never frowned upon... "No question is a silly one" only unasked questions prove we are not communicating at our best. *Listed below are a few areas that were addressed as concerns needing clarification on the surveys.*

Parking Lot: Unfortunately, a survey noted that parents are speeding in the parking lot—as well as—looking down at their phones while driving in the parking lot. The safety of all of our children is our utmost concern! **The parking lot speed limit is SLOW—5MPH—and please, for everyone's sake—put down your phones. Please!**

Daily activities: Our teachers meet weekly to plan studies. Since we believe in letting the children lead us, the teachers plan the studies, and then let the children lead us in what they are curious about in each study. The teacher's weekly notes to you will provide a little more detail as to what they have learned. We hope these summaries at the end of the week will help you in your conversations about— "What are you discovering at school"!

Our sickness policy: We use the guidelines set forth by the Bureau of Communicable Disease Control and the NYS Department of Health when determining if/when a sick child should remain home and for what length of time. Whenever possible, we ask that parents call the Center alerting us to your child's absence, which in turn, helps us manage sickness outbreaks. In the interest of all students and staffs health and safety, we request that children remain absent if any of the following symptoms are present within the previous 24 hours: *a temperature of 100 degrees or higher, *an undiagnosed rash or skin sore, *unexplained lethargy, *intestinal disturbance accompanied by vomiting and/or diarrhea, *contagious stage of any communicable disease, * nasal and chest congestion (green mucus would apply), *inability to participate in regular program activities. (We cannot accommodate requests to have children stay indoors because of colds, etc.)

School Cancellations: In the event of severe wintry weather making it necessary for the Center to open with a delay or close for the day, you may log onto www.cancellations.com, as delayed starts and cancellations are posted under First Steps Early Childhood Education Center. You may also phone the school to check the outgoing message.

1. The UPK class follows the Onteora cancellation procedure: you may listen to several local radio stations, or log onto www.cancellations.com. UPK class postings are posted under Onteora Central School District as well as First Steps FACEBOOK Page. **If the school district is operating on a two hour delay, the UPK classrooms will open at 11:00am.** If the school district closes early (early dismissal) ~ Miss Michelle and Miss April's classes classes will be dismissed early following the elementary schedule.
2. **The preschool classroom will be open sometimes when the district closes. You can check [cancellations.com](http://www.cancellations.com), call the school and listen to the outgoing messages or look at the Facebook page.**

Parent Survey information continued:

Progress Reports~ assessing your children is a daily occurrence for the Lead Teachers. Knowing where each child is developmentally helps the teacher shape and build their curriculum for activities that will strengthen the child's knowledge or skill allowing us to move them forward to a higher level of development. Parent/teacher conferences will again be held in March where you will see a portfolio of your child's work throughout the year documenting their progress. As noted, 20 minutes goes very quickly. The teachers will take your notes and be succinct in what they share pertaining to your child's development thus allowing time for questions.

It is important that you know we can schedule an additional conference time at any point during the year, especially if you have questions. Progress reports are completed in October, February and June.

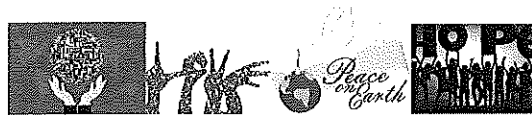
Communication: Weekly & Monthly Newsletters are important tools for families to see what studies the class is learning in weekly and monthly time frames. Included in many newsletters are requests and opportunities for volunteer help within the classrooms. Our classrooms are open; if you are interested in helping, please speak with Michelle, April, Heather, or Kathy to set up a date. We will make every effort to send out reminders of days off, which are listed on our Center's school calendar. If you are in need of another copy, please let us know.

Outdoor playtime: We pack so much into our "play" throughout the day. It is our policy that the children have gross motor play *at least 45 min.* in the morning and 45 min in the afternoon—I am thrilled to say that most days we are much better than that! There are times throughout the week, based on the lesson that you will find us out gardening, doing tree bark rubbings, picking leaves, acorns etc. **Please dress your child accordingly as we are outside if the temperature is 20 degrees or above.** ☺

Behavior Management policy—See below

On behalf of all the staff at First Steps, we hope you each have a very special holiday season~

Our wish for each of your children is a world of love, peace and hope!



First Steps Early Childhood Education Center
Behavior Management Policy 418-1.9 (found in parent handbook)

Children at our center receive no physical punishment. Children who have conflicts or problems with others while at our center are encouraged to verbalize their angers and concerns. The role of the adult at school is to be a facilitator in positive problem solving. Our staff members guide rather than punish. It is our intention to help each child develop self-regulation and assume responsibility for his/her actions through clear and consistent rules and limits appropriate to the ages and development of children in our care.

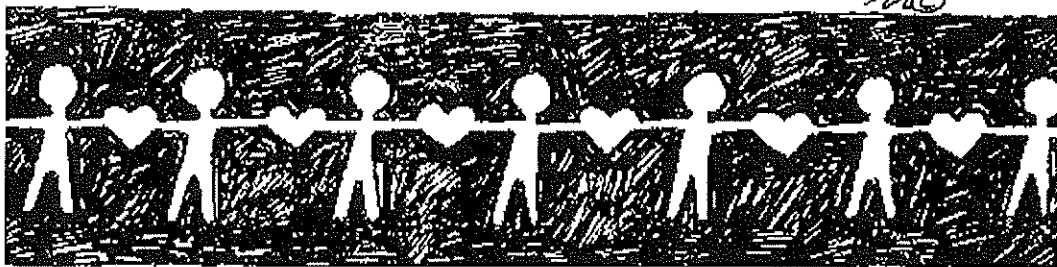
Our program expects that children's behavior will vary from situation to situation and child to child. Our focus is to gently channel the children's behavior in an acceptable way. The teacher then becomes the facilitator and is proactive in helping a child express his/her wide range of emotions without acting out his/her frustrations in a physical way to either hurt him/herself or another child.

Discipline, i.e., guidance, is always positive, productive and immediate when behavior is inappropriate. We resolve conflicts by letting the child first try to problem solve or resolve the conflict him/herself. If it becomes a physical altercation or the child comes to the teacher for help, then it is the teacher's responsibility to help the child find an appropriate way to end the conflict by modeling and "using our words" to state how he/she feels.

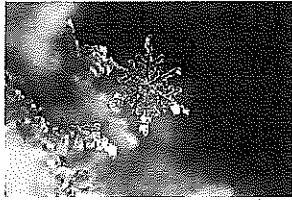
Children whose behavior endangers themselves or others are supervised away from other children. The child then processes the problem with a staff member and any other concerned parties. The staff rarely use "time out" unless a child is emotionally out of control and needs a private time to regain composure. Children are placed in areas where they are in view of and can be supported by staff members. Verbal processing is our preferred technique.

Physical intervention is permitted. Physical intervention is the act of using bodily contact as a short-term immediate response to prevent children from incurring substantial or serious injury to themselves or injuring others, however, we do have a "no restraint" policy. It may involve: picking a child up and moving him or her away from danger or conflict, holding the child's hands or gently touching the body to direct their movement, rocking a child to soothe them, blocking a child's path when they are about to injure themselves or others or destroy property. This technique allows the child to regain self-control as quickly and safely as possible. A consultation with a child's parent is required if the child is not receptive to physical intervention.

No child will be humiliated, shamed, frightened, or subjected to verbal or physical abuse by staff or by parents on the premises or during field trips.



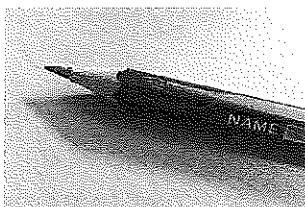
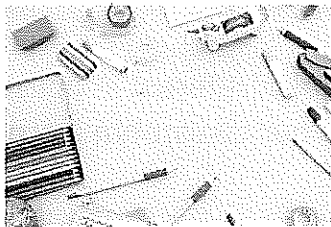
Miss Michelle's December News



Happy December!
It's hard to believe that this time of the year is here! Soon, the snow will fall

and we will enjoy our outside time experiencing the magic of winter! There is so much fun to be had when our playground is transformed into a winter wonderland!

We are so excited to celebrate winter and can't wait to transform our room with our December activities and projects. We will use our senses to experience this time of the year. We are looking forward to bringing winter into our room with activities with snow, ice, and smells like gingerbread and peppermint. We will even get to make our own giant gingerbread houses!



This month, we are continuing our name writing practice and alphabet writing

with fun and exciting activities using shaving cream, wiki sticks, play-doh, dry erase boards and more! We will focus on letters D, P, and B using the Handwriting Without Tears program.



This month's community helper will be store clerks. We will learn all about their

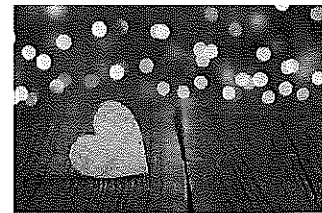
important jobs and will even get to work in our own stores that we make out of cardboard boxes this month!



Please continue to send your child with warm clothing to enjoy the outdoors even as it gets colder. Once the snow

falls, please send your child with a complete set of winter gear (winter jacket, snow pants, boots, hats and gloves) as we continue to go outside each day. If possible, waterproof mittens/gloves are highly recommended as they keep little hands and fingers much warmer and dry!

We will also be hosting a family Winter Celebration this month with a movie, fun winter themed activities and delicious snacks. Please look for more information coming home soon!



All Our Best,

Miss Michelle, Miss Brandi & Miss Amanda

Miss April's December Newsletter!



I cannot believe that it is December already! This month we will be talking a lot about hibernation. The bear who is visiting our classroom is going into his cave that we decorated and made cozy for him. On the first day of winter, he will go into his cave and sleep until it is spring. We will continue to learn about migration as well. We will also be learning about store clerks as our community helpers. We will be having a pajama party on December 15th. All students are encouraged to wear their pajamas to school! We will have a movie and special treat starting at 2PM! We will also be working on building a big gingerbread house with the other classes for our 3D art!

*As the weather gets colder, we will continue to go outside! Please be sure to bring warm jackets, hats, gloves, boots, snow pants etc. labeled with your child's name!

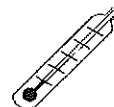
*After our parent teacher conferences, there was a lot of interest in activities that we do in school but also that you can do at home to enhance our classroom learning so I have attached a few ideas:

Some at home things to do with literacy: We do this in class, but you can reinforce this at home too.

A sound Sort Activity: We can go and gather a bunch of different toys around the house. You can take turns choosing a toy out of the basket and making the letter sound that the toy starts with. After every toy has been chosen you can take turns sorting them by their beginning letter sound.

At Home Math: On separate pieces of paper write the numbers 0-10. Mix the papers up and lay them out in a circle. Everyone should stand on a number. Put on some music and everyone walks in a circle on each number. When the music stops everyone has to name the number that they are standing on!

Taking care of me: As the winter approaches we have a lot of warm clothing to put on before we go outside. We will be working on dressing ourselves in our winter gear. You can practice at home by demonstrating how to put coats, hats, and gloves on as well as you can make it a game and race to see who can get dressed in their gear the fastest.



Pre School's December Newsletter



Hello families! We hope you all enjoyed your Thanksgiving! We have now been in school for three months and we are very happy with everyone's progress! The children's self-help skills are improving week by week and we will continue working on them as well as their problem-solving skills! Both will help to boost their confidence and sense of self-worth!

This month we will be exploring holiday traditions from around the world! Saint Nicholas day, St. Lucia day, Hanukkah, Christmas, Kwanzaa, and New Years are a few we will be talking about. If your family has a favorite holiday tradition, we would love to have you come in and share it with our classroom!

The cold weather is now upon us and keeping warm while we play outside is a priority. Please remember to send in (or leave an extra set at school) snow pants, boots, waterproof mittens (gloves are very difficult for little ones to put on properly), hats and coats. We go outside every day that is above 19°, so warm layers are super important! We ask that if your child wears snow boots to school to please provide a pair of shoes to wear indoors.

Important dates: We will be closed the week of December 26 through the 30th.

We wish you all a wonderful Holiday season and a healthy and happy New Year!

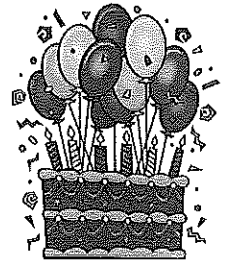
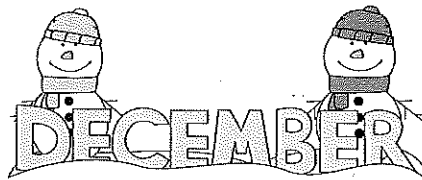
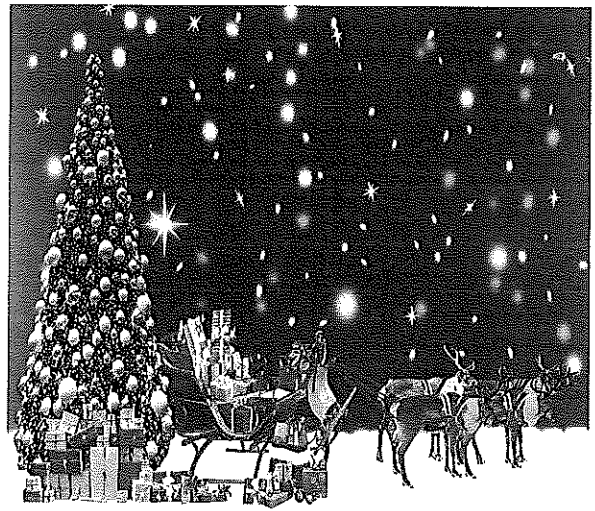
Heather and Kathy



Favorite Cinnamon Scenes

2 C. flour	2 tsp. baking powder
$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. baking soda	$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt
2 Tbs. sugar	1 stick butter, room temp.
1 C. cinnamon chips	1 egg, separated
1 tsp. vanilla extracts	$\frac{3}{4}$ C. buttermilk or milk

Combine all dry ingredients. Cut in the butter. Stir in the chips, and then add the wet ingredients (use only the egg yolk, not the white). Drop in mounds on cookie sheet and bake at 375° for 18–22 minutes. Enjoy!



Gary Williams	12/1/19
Elijah Anderson	12/7/17
Lily Franceschina	12/10/17
Singer Gocker	12/28/18

🌐 Spectacular Winter Solstice 🌐

❁ Quintessential Kwanzaa ❁

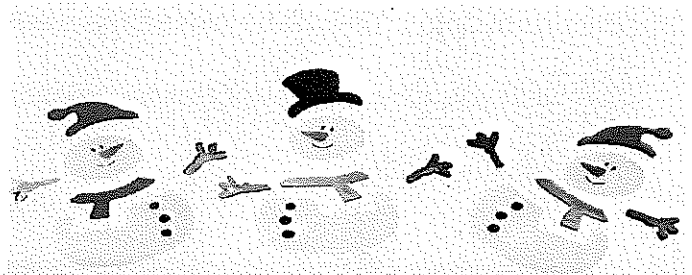
✡ Happy Hanukkah ✡

✝ Cheery Christmas ✝

ॐ Delightful Diwali ॐ

🌀 Grand Gobind Singh 🌀

🌀 Beautiful Bodhi Day 🌀



“Give the children love, more love
and still more love—and the
common sense will come by itself.”

~Astrid Lindgren
(Swedish author of “Pippi Longstocking”)

Dates to Remember:

Dec. 15:	Holiday Party 10-12pm
Dec: 15:	January Tuition Due
Dec. 26-30:	All CLOSED