



# Learning at Play

It is true because neuroscience says so — We learn best when at play. For years this was something I believed to be true because of what I experienced, and eventually applied, as an english and science teacher (and going even further back to when I was a kid). As depth of our understanding of the brain has evolved dramatically over the last decade, the idea of the brain's increased susceptibility to learn while at play has found tangible neurologic support. SO LET'S HAVE SOME FUN!!!!

While neurologic evidence of this is more recent, the instructional practice is not. And while it has not taken hold in many schools, it is not uncommon at the Lyme School —and some would suggest is actively encouraged. It is the foundational premise of how we structured our Early Language Program - learning language through songs, games and dramatic play; it is also the foundation of the third grade's "Forest Friday" program in Mrs. Shipman's class; as well as regular activities in any number of classes. This week there was a great example of how learning can be amplified by activities that have a high pleasure quotient.



If you have spent any time looking at what is trending on YouTube or any time watching middle schoolers (or, for that matter, noticed the sharp increase in bottled water sales) you will be familiar with the seemingly endless "thunk" of middle students flipping water bottles. Instead of becoming impatient with the incessant clatter, Mrs. Burns' class is using this obsession, to learn about science. This project targeted five key goals of our science program: experimentation, prediction, measurement, interpretation, and communication.

Groups of 5th graders set up structured experiments to determine the ideal bottle shape and quantity of water to successfully flip their bottle. They had charts, tables, procedures, experiments, predictive documentation, and ultimately presentation documentation which communicated and supported their findings. How TOTALLY cool and fun is that!!! (At least for those who are obsessed with flipping water bottles — or those that find the different ways that people learn COMPLETELY fascinating). Examples like this one are not unique in our school, they are on the rise, (and no one is more excited by that than I am - including the students). In the first grade this week Mrs. Wilcox led the first grade in an excavation of our sand area to discover the paleontologic artifacts that — unbeknownst to modern science — were deposited in the early "Lyme-azoic Era" below our playground. Math may be, for many, the most difficult subject; However, step into a classroom where Kate Cook is working with students and you will see just how effective learning at play can be, as she develops math skills and problem solving while playing number games. Or join the third grade any Friday and you will see how skillfully Mrs. Shipman combines a day in the woods with an amazing level of learning about math, science, literature and history. Just. Plain. Awesome. As one of her students explained it when they remembered it was Friday: "Cool no school today !!!" (little did he realize he was learning... ALOT).

We shouldn't be surprised by the relationship between play and learning, nor a student's lack of recognition of it as "school". Rigor in schools is far to frequently associated with discomfort and stress. Yet the drive to learn is engrained in us at the most basic levels of our being. I have never met a young child who did not love to learn, but all too often I have had to help convince some of them when they expressed frustration at school, that it may not be learning that was difficult, just the process by which they were learning. An environment that encourages students to investigate ideas, engage their curiosity, and disregard potential failure — because even a process that leads to failure is still worthwhile (as evident in every child's love of building sand castles at the shoreline)—reconnects their fascination and curiosity and ultimately their enjoyment if learning. (Even if they do not recognize it as "school" or the fact that learning can look a lot like having fun).

## INK Spot Imagination and Knowledge

### Learning in the Kitchen:

Chef Larry taught students in the fourth grade about Pumpkins (The local produce of the month) through several activities including baking individual loaves of pumpkin bread. Other than smiles, full tummies heres what student said:

- "I learned that baking is a form of science"
- "Never put food into a cold oven"
- "Yeast wakes things up"
- "Sugar feeds yeast which is a living thing"

Thank you Chef Larry!!



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THE LYME SCHOOL  
**Newsletter**



• **VOLUME: 11** •  
2016-2017  
SCHOOL YEAR

**LYME ROCKS! PICTURE RETAKE DAY**  
**WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 9TH**



### October Highlights (Pumpkins!)

- Delicious, pumpkin recipes prepared by Chef Larry: pumpkin mac & cheese, pumpkin bisque, and pumpkin chili. Ask your kids about how they tasted!
- Field trips for grades K, 2 & 3 to Cedar Circle. The kids learned all about pumpkins: soil science, how to grow them, and nutrition facts. A wagon ride and pick your own pumpkins were a bonus!
- Cooking demo by Chef Larry with grades 1 & 4 featuring pumpkin bread. This was a huge hit and the kids all left with a recipe and a mini loaf to take home. Thank you Larry for taking time out of your busy day to do this!
- Pumpkin Science activities in the 3rd grade

Next month's feature food: Local Root Vegetables. Stay tuned for more creative dishes featuring root veggies in the month of November!



## Thank You, Cedar Circle!

Message  
from the  
**P.T.O.**

Speaking of having fun learning new things....

Thank You this Year's Artist in Residence  
Brent and Maya  
of **Yes! Theater**  
and their hosts Jay Cary and Deb Robinson

### Menus

Week of 11/7 to 11/11 • Week of 11/14 to 11/18

Al a carte Fruit and Milk are available everyday



<b>Monday</b>	<b>HOT LUNCH:</b> Local Chicken Tetrazzini with Rainbow Rotini Grilled Naan Wedges Fresh Fruit Option: BYO Salad 	<b>HOT LUNCH:</b> Chicken Fritters Baked Potato Mashed Carrots & Parsnips Frest Fruit Option: BYO Salad 
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>HOT LUNCH:</b> Chili con Carne with Beans (Local Beef & Pork) Fresh Baked Cornbread Cling Peaches Option: BYO Salad 	<b>HOT LUNCH:</b> Local Beef Meatloaf with Lentils and Oats Mashed Yukon Gold Potatoes w/ Beef Gravy Green Beans Fruit Option: BYO Salad 
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>HOT LUNCH:</b> Cheese or Chef's Choice Pizza Salad Bar Chocolate Chip Granola 100% Fruit Juice or Fresh Fruit Sandwich Option: Turkey & Cheese	<b>HOT LUNCH:</b> Cheese or Chef's Choice Pizza Salad Bar Chocolate Chip Granola 100% Fruit Juice or Fresh Fruit Option: Ham & Cheese Sandwich
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>HOT LUNCH:</b> Albacore Tuna & Egg Noodle Casserole Fresh Garlic Bread Steamed Mixed Vegetables Fresh Local Apples Option: BYO Salad	<b>HOT LUNCH:</b> Pulled Pork Dinner Root Vegetable Gratin Brown Rice Pilaf Fresh Fruit Option: BYO Salad 
<b>Friday</b>	<b>NO SCHOOL</b>	
		<b>HOT LUNCH:</b> New England Fish Chowder Oyster Crackers Baked Baguette Salad Bar Fresh Fruit Sandwich Option: Egg Salad

