Hello Parents,

Welcome to a new school year! Even though BioKids is a year-round program, we still feel the excitement, and sometimes the pressures, of entering a new school year. As parents, you undoubtedly have thought, “My child has X number of preschool years left.” For some parents, this equation means thinking about whether or not their child will be prepared for kindergarten. Sometimes this is a question of mild curiosity, sometimes it is a cause to pressure children into areas that they are not developmentally ready to enter. Let me make some observations about children leaving BioKids for kindergarten: they know letters and their associated sounds, some can read, they can write their name, some can write additional words, some can write numbers, they are curious, they have been exposed to a multitude of early literacy activities (reading in large and small groups, “reading” on their own and to each other, songs, rhymes, coloring, conversing with adults and children, writing, using letters in art and at the writing center, seeing print in a variety of contexts), they know how to sit at a table and share a meal with friends, they know how to follow oral instructions, they know how to get along in a group, they know something about cause and effect, they have been exposed to a multitude of “pre-math” concepts and experiences, they know how to clean up, they know how to negotiate, they are able to participate in a group “circle time”, and they certainly know how to wash their hands!

Sometimes adults forget that the “work” of childhood is play; children learn through play and BioKids is very good at play. I have heard Manon say, “The more the children play, the smarter they get.” Sometimes we can almost hear the “wheels” in their brain turning while they are engaged in play: comparing, computing, guessing, deducing and analyzing. When children experience things for themselves out of their own curiosity and interest, whatever they come away with has much more meaning and

continued...
**Labeling cold weather gear!**

It’s a song you’ve heard before and will undoubtedly hear again before the season is over – Please label each and every item of clothing that comes into our classrooms! Imagine the scene in the Preschool Room: every child has two boots, two mittens and one hat (NOT including snow pants, an outer jacket, and the sweater or sweatshirt they wore in that day). The “accessories” alone add up to 110 items! Oh, and let’s not forget the occasional scarf or set of earmuffs as well as the items that were left behind the day or week before! Yikes! Try holding up a hooded blue sweatshirt and saying “Who does this belong to?” and getting 22 blank stares. You can almost see the wheels turning, “Hmm, I have one of those but I think it is at home on the floor / in the car / at my friend’s house / in my cubby...” Wait, it’s labeled, but with a name that no one recognizes; perhaps it is a hand-me-down from a cousin, friend, cousin-of-a-cousin or friend-of-a-friend. Well, hopefully you get the picture.

Children in both classrooms go outside everyday, regardless of weather. “There is no such thing as bad weather, only bad gear” has been a mantra at BioKids for several years.

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**Robin’s Nest continued...**

stick-to-it-ness then something an adult has tried to teach them. This is why NAEYC and other Early Childhood quality review programs require that a good portion of each preschool day be spent in “free play,” giving children time to follow their own interests and engage in child-directed rather than adult-directed activities.

I have previously cited a conversation with Bill Gates and Warren Buffet that was aired on PBS. Both men strongly stated that success in the business world was determined not by intellect but by social intelligence, the ability to get along with others and to be an effective leader. On a very basic level, social abilities are nurtured by solitary and group play experiences.

I found this wonderful lecture on TED. Please take the time to watch and think about it!

[http://goo.gl/cECr](http://goo.gl/cECr)

Robin
Halloween at BioKids

Fall at BioKids means a few different things. Of course pumpkins are front and center – they are something that children see and delight in at the grocery store, community and backyard gardens, and farmers markets. If you have a pumpkin you would like to donate to BioKids it will be entered in Manon’s annual “How Long Will I Last” contest. Believe it or not, the white pumpkin on our Preschool Room “Discovery” shelf has been there for an entire year and is showing no signs of decay!

BioKids seems to have a standing invitation from the School of Social Work and the Biology Department administrative offices for trick-or-treating. The Preschool children visit both locations, where the staff ooh and aah over their costumes and pass out small treat bags which are sent home for opening.

We will appreciate it if your child arrives at school in their costume, and brings a change of clothes for the remainder of the day.

We will be decorating goodie bags to take along, so you do not need to send special collection bags.

Co-Op in Costume!

We will be leaving BioKids on Thursday, October 31st at 10 am for the School of Social Work, located on the southwest side of the Marriott Library. Last year we had several parents, in and out of costume join us and it was a huge help. If you would like to join us, all you need to do is come to the classroom at 10 am and help supervise the children as we walk around campus. Then you can enter one hour of co-op time on the log sheet. There will be a sign-up sheet on the parent bulletin board in the Preschool Room.
Flu Season

Flu season is upon us and who know what it will bring; hopefully a relatively mild year like last season, but only time will tell. Please consider a flu shot for every member of your family! Did you know that simply getting a flu shot will save you $40 a month on your health insurance premium if you are a U employee if you also participate in at least one other preventative health measure (dental exam, annual health check-up, having a membership at the Field House, etc.)?

Halloween 2012—Good Times!

Photos by Anton Burtsev. Thank you!