

***GROWING TOGETHER***  
***GNP NEWSLETTER***  
***October 14 2022***  
***OUR THEMES THIS WEEK***  
**Mindfulness Practices**  
**Introduction to Forests**  
**Pumpkin Explorations**

## ***NOTIFICATIONS***

In our daily comments home we have mentioned some of the many activities we did this week. This newsletter is to share some insights into the “**why**” and “**how**” we engage in our experiences. We include research-based best practices from renowned educational institutions and educators.

## ***REMINDERS***

**Please remember to schedule, get and notify us that your child has received a flu shot.** This is to assure a safe environment for us all.

**Friday October 21** Regular school day 9:15 – 11:45.

**Friday October 28** We are hoping to have an Introduction to the Forest Hike at Holcomb Farm. Each child should be accompanied by a parent. Please be at the classroom ready to hike by 10.

## ***OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT***

### ***Why***

Green Teacher Magazine recently published an article about mindfulness and its link to nature saying, “Numerous studies over the years have shown the incredible impact mindfulness can have by helping to reduce stress and anxiety and increase attention and focus. Scientists have actually witnessed people’s brains thicken in areas in charge of decision making, emotional flexibility, and empathy during meditative practices. The brain constantly evolves during our lifetime, most quickly during childhood. By helping children develop a mindfulness practice, we can equip them with an exceptional tool that will help them make better decisions, regulate emotions, and improve their understanding of the world throughout their lives.

Nature inherently induces mindfulness. Simple experiences like catching a glimpse of a vivid bird flying by the classroom window or observing a squirrel climb a tree spur mindfulness in kids. Nature is filled with features — such as colors, textures, patterns, scents, and sounds — that provide a multi-sensory experience. When observed in a mindful way, they can be quite soothing to children and give them a much-needed break during an otherwise hectic school day.

Teaching children this special technique of focused, mindful attention can help them in so many ways throughout their lives. By being aware of their emotions and learning how to shift their concentration, they will be empowered and feel in control of their thoughts,

feelings, and bodily sensations. From an early age, we can start to introduce some fun ways for kids to build up their mindfulness muscle. Focusing on awe-inspiring scenes of nature — whether in-person or through pictures, videos, and recordings — can engage children’s attention and help them feel more mindful and relaxed.”

***How***

This week your children ran, walked, crawled, climbed, chased, explored, felt, smelled, looked, searched for and discussed what they did outdoors in the fields, meadows, forests and by the stream. Enhancing these rich experiences prompts were used to help children use words to express what they saw, heard, smelled and felt, and thought about, and to explain what they liked the best. They liked close looking, wondering, running with abandon and playing with their friends. While immersed in nature, they were developing mindfulness skills. All the while they were also interfacing aspects of scientific investigation, math, language development and positive interaction with one another. They fulfilled many of the best practices of age-appropriate development within the areas of content, concepts and skills – all while being immersed in all that the natural areas of Holcomb Farm have to offer.

*We are inspired by Green Teacher, Education for Planet Earth, “Finding Ecohappiness in the Classroom” by Sandi Schwartz, Green Teacher Magazine, September 22, 2022m Fall 2022 issue.*