

A Letter to Families About the Discovery Area

Dear families,

Your children were born into an age of instant feedback, turn-by-turn navigation, quick Internet search answers, and nonstop news. In fact, information-gathering has never been easier. The downside to this condition, however, is that we seldom have reason to *wonder*.

Curiosity is a powerful motivator. Curiosity creates questions. Unlike instant answers, which are often provide a quick *end* to thinking, questions that arise from curiosity offer a *beginning*. Questions lead to action, discovery, and innovation.

Our classroom Discovery area is a place where we honor the power and joy of curiosity. In our Discovery area, children will have opportunities to do what scientists do: question, investigate, and explore a variety of materials, from the familiar to the strange, using a range of tools.

Whenever you visit our classroom, take a look at what is currently in our Discovery area, as those materials and tools are likely to change throughout the year. You can provide even more opportunities to support the power of wonder both at home and in the many places you go as a family.

What You Can Do at Home

- Remember that children are natural scientists and that science is all around us. From blowing bubbles and digging in dirt to staring at a starry sky (or a sunny, cloudy, or stormy sky!), children have many opportunities to explore scientific concepts.
- Talk with children about science-based topics such as weather, nutrition, machines and technology. Point out how they affect our daily lives.
- Guide children toward learning about the needs of living things by having them help care for family pets; houseplants; or your yard, garden, or other outdoor area.
- Scientists rely on observation. Whenever you are away from home, help your children observe what is around them. Use action words related to the five senses (see, smell, touch, hear, and taste) to guide them in comparing and contrasting what they experience with what they are used to at home or school.
- You need not be a scientist yourself to help your children learn science concepts. A simple statement beginning with “I wonder what will happen if . . . ” can be enough to send your child down the road to discovery.