

June 1, 2014 2-day, 3-am, 3pm

Hi Everybody,

We thought we would tell you a little bit about how we spend these last sweet days of school. Two weeks ago we started calendars with each group to count down the days. They are very simple, no days of the week or numbers, just red dots for days when kids don't attend school and green dots for days they do. The green dots we draw on as each day occurs followed by a short discussion of summer and end of school. On each calendar the space representing the last day has a drawing of the three teachers waving goodbye. We also have an additional calendar page with red dots only, an attempt to illustrate how long summer is.

During the discussions kids sometimes contribute actual plans their families may have made for trips or camp and sometimes what they've heard about school next year. Others are silent as they try to sort out what all of this means. One boy chimes in each day "I won't be sad because I'm coming to camp!" If kids are expressing some emotional uncertainty, we reassure them that it's ok to feel a little sad (after all we feel a little sad too) but we also focus on all the other interesting things they might be doing with their families instead. In addition we try to stress ways to keep in touch after a change. "If you're missing someone tell your mom and dad and you can work out a play date." Some kids have already left on early vacations so we've had a few practice last days with them.

However, how much or little everyone understands is minimal at best. Should someone reiterate a comment about "no more school" at the end of one of these discussions it's not unusual for any number of kids to inquire, "Why?" Therefore, don't be surprised if even after our goodbyes this week, kids continue to ask if they are going to go to school each day. Don't worry, summer's length will ease a lot of questions, but if you think it helpful you can always make a little red dot calendar of your own with picture or word additions of what you might be doing like camp, excursions, visits to the park etc. In addition if questions arise about upcoming changes in the fall, it's probably a good idea to keep your answers brief and simple and remind kids that it is really a long way off.

Along with the calendars, lots of kids armed with scrub brushes and sponges have been busy washing up some of the plastic toys and we are really impressed with the amount of elbow grease they are willing to apply. You might want to keep this in mind for an activity on a hot summer day.

Overall the atmosphere is congenial and communal on many levels. When we passed out the yearbooks for kids to peruse, the intimacy was palpable. Many kids weren't just looking for their own picture, but were looking to share one about someone else. "Look here's you playing with the trucks," at which the boy looked up from the picture of himself and asked wistfully, "Can we get those trucks out again?" On a day when another boy left for an early vacation, he received a bounty of hugs for his farewell.

This week we'll be packing up our spare clothes, taking home our name tags and probably sharing some more hugs, so it seems the best time to say thank you for all the myriad of little and large contributions you made throughout this school year; fixing snacks and sopping spills, unsticking cubbies and wiping noses, trudging through snowstorms and taking off of work for Parent's Day, waiting in the arrival line, waiting in the dismissal line, waiting for the new filter to fill the pitcher, and of course all the emotional support and companionship you provided your child on assisting days. Most of all we want you to know how much your kids have touched our lives. Thank-you one and all.

We hope your summer is GREAT! If you are moving on to new places and spaces don't forget to visit. If you are returning we'll see you in the fall. And so...

Goodbye Everybody!  
Melinda, Anita, and Sarah