

# **PLATO ACADEMY**

## **PRE-KINDERGARTEN NEWSLETTER**

### **SEPTEMBER 15, 2017**

Welcome to Mila K and Billy !

In the last two weeks, we have had Picture Day where we smiled our best. National Dot Day was on Friday September 15<sup>th</sup>. We celebrated it for two days. Here is a short read about it:

International Dot Day began when a teacher, Terry Shay, introduced his class to Peter H Reynold's book, *The Dot*, on September 15, 2009. *The Dot* tells the story of a caring art teacher who reaches a reluctant student in a remarkably creative way. In the book, the teacher encourages the student to begin a journey of self discovery and creativity, starting with a simple dot on a piece of paper. Transformed by this journey, the student goes on to inspire others. Since then, this date has been celebrated each year as International Dot Day — a day for classes to explore the story's powerful themes: bravery, creativity, and self-expression.

We found dots around the classroom, and on our bodies. When we walked to the park, we found big and little dots all around. In class, we painted dots just like \_\_\_\_\_ with brushes, our fingers, pencil erasers, and other objects that would make dots. Check out a picture of our Dot Gallery below and stop by the hall by our room to see it live!

Speaking of painting, in Spanish Class with Ms. Soraya, the class experimented with color mixing. So that is now THE thing to do when doing art in our room. Sometimes they use tempera paints and sometimes they use water color paints. Through more experimenting, we found that it isn't easy to mix colors with crayons.

The water table got an update! We added some PVC pipes, joints, and elbows for new exploration and new ways to make the water move. It is also a way for the students to learn about where the water moves. Often it ended up on the floor so we then worked on solving that problem.

When you look at the photos on our Shutterfly account, you will see all sorts of activities throughout the room. Every area is open to every student. Items from one area can go to others areas. We do encourage them to keep the water table items in the water table especially if they contain water. But, if the student has a plan, we often watch and ask along the way. We have towels around to mop up spills. No worries! That is also true of the outdoors. We are going to get dirty. The park contains wood chips and there is a running track of fine white gravel. There are also two baseball diamonds with sand infields. We don't usually venture that far but other classes do and sometimes our kiddos will follow along. While in the classroom, we encourage the students to wear our larger paint shirts but accidents still occur. So yes, our clothes may get messy.

Other activities that you may see were the students buying and selling things. I was truly entertained by their interaction and that they allowed me to join in. Again, they were learning by playing. They began their play with their prior knowledge of going to a store, and exchanging money for items. And when they included me, I played under their direction but made sure that I said the actual amount of my

bills when paying. I even found that I didn't have enough one time and asked for a loan of 5 dollars at the bank (another student holding more bills). The student found the 5 dollar bill and gave it to me.

We worked on some interesting self-portraits. While looking in the mirror on the wall, we painted our features with either our fingers (which worked better) or a paint brush. Then, a piece of paper was placed over and rubbed. When it was removed, our painting was printed onto it just as it was on the mirror. Again, with a mixture of developmental levels, all portraits looked exactly the way their artists wanted them to look. They are also hanging in the hallway across from our Dot Gallery!

1. Throughout the two weeks, our classroom community has not only grown bigger but we are really learning to work together. As with any group that comes together from many different places and backgrounds, there is a period of getting to know one another. When the students encounter a difficult time; a disagreement, or an argument over an item, we let them first attempt to resolve the issue on their own. This gives them the knowledge that they are in control of what they do. If a student or students do not display the ability to resolve the situation on their own, that is when the teachers step up and work as negotiators and help the students learn the words necessary to develop a healthy discussion. We do this over and over and will continue to do so until the students learn to use their own words and can handle the situation. Sometimes it happens quickly and sometimes it takes longer. Children at the ages of 2, 3, and 4 are still in a very egocentric stage of life and don't often show empathy toward others. But it begins to develop as they move toward that 4 and 5. You will see a section on the report card in November that reflects that development.

The more a child knows what is going to happen next, the more comfortable they are. We have a daily schedule which we'd rather call a routine. We've spent many early days this year talking and writing about our schedule and what happens next. We even checked off the activities that we had accomplished in our schedule. Now as we approach the 6<sup>th</sup> week of school, the students show eagerness to go to the next activity, whether it is gym, music, or a language class. And we know that many of you have seen changes in their eagerness to come to school.

Our teaching styles work with the children's developmental stages and not ages. We are a mixed age group with varying degrees of development. We are the little kids according to the other classes. We are not the babies and we tell them very plainly that we are not. As one big brother in our class told an older student, "We don't wear diapers, my baby brothers do!" 😊

Reminders:

- Please send healthy PEANUT AND TREE NUT FREE foods for lunches and snacks. **Please... no chips, cookies and candy.** They do not provide the nutrition and energy needed for the day. Examples of some healthy snacks are: fruit (cut up in bite-sized pieces), veggies, pretzels, graham crackers, yogurt/gogurt/danimals, oatmeal or granola snack bites/bars as long as they do not (may) contain peanuts or tree nuts. Tree nuts are, but not limited to: cashews, pecans, pistachios, hazelnuts, walnuts, almonds. Those are the most used in snacks and other food products. Please help us protect all students! We share the lunchroom and other common areas with the other classes and there are students with severe allergies in the school. Please know that the staff follows the same protocol.

- Girls... when wearing the uniform dress, please wear shorts underneath.
- Please do not let our child wear perfume, cologne or other smelly hair products. The bees are attracted to them and are very bothersome this time of year.

Please, please, please... Make sure that your child has eaten breakfast before coming to school. It is important that they are energized for the morning. They exercise their bodies and brains before lunch at 11:20. That is a long time to go without nurturing our bodies. We do not have the accommodations for students to eat or finish breakfast in the classroom.

We are starting a WISHLIST. The below items are wanted for future various activities in the classroom. This list is for items that you may have around the house and don't use anymore. It is not intended for a family to go out and buy them new:

Used sippy cups  
Newspaper  
Old towels, any size

Please contact us with any questions or concerns. Texting is best since we can usually reply quicker.

Thank you for allowing us to be a part of your child's life!

Ciao!

Noel and Soraya  
[Noel23@yahoo.com](mailto:Noel23@yahoo.com) 773.610.6352  
[sorayacastrof@gmail.com](mailto:sorayacastrof@gmail.com) 312.869.0945

PS... Check out the Plato Academy Facebook page to see a video of our Recess Dance Party last week!



