

April
in the
Outdoor Classroom

Messy, muddy play provides children endless opportunities to learn while having fun as it creates very special childhood memories. Playing in the mud makes one healthier and happier. Exposure to dirt and germs work to boost children's immune systems and to prevent allergies. It makes us healthier because dirt contains microscopic bacteria which stimulates the immune system and it makes us happier because it increases levels of serotonin (an endorphin that soothes, calms, relaxes) in our brains. While playing outdoors, the sunshine will convert a chemical in the skin into an active form of Vitamin D (calciferol). Vitamin D regulates many cellular functions in the body. Immune health, muscle function, and brain cell activity are supported by its anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and neuroprotective properties.

Our 'little saints' have discovered many natural treasures in our very special play space. A pair of mourning doves created a nest and in two weeks, the eggs hatched. On Wednesday, April 21st, some of the friends in PreK 205 were able to observe as a squab was fed by its mother. A pair of cardinals have built a nest very close but at a higher elevation than the mourning doves' nest. We've observed the female begin to incubate the eggs and the male is keeping a close eye on her and making sure she's fed. Soon, we will have 1 to 5 baby cardinals. Our exploring friends found black beans' pod husks and pumpkin seeds. The Three Years Old Class in 204 helped to remove the individual beans from their pods which requires quite a bit of fine motor control and eye-hand coordination. We folded paper towels, moistened them, and gently placed the bean seeds on them. We checked the seeds daily and they all sprouted. We have transferred them to our garden bed. The children are excited about the growing beanstalks. A friend in PreK used her imagination by repurposing a dried-out pumpkin and creating a pot. She filled it with dirt and sprinkled it with pumpkin seeds. They've sprouted too! Young children thrive as they experience the wonders of nature and the joys of learning outdoors.









