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Logan Bain, Chloe Miller, Sadie Gilman and Grayson Cloutier watch the monarch caterpillars.



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## East Andover Village Preschool Sets the Pace for the New Year

### Technology allows family to stay involved

Lawre Goodnow, EAVP

The story of the tortoise and the hare comes to mind for a variety of reasons as we start our school year at East Andover Village Preschool (EAVP). Like most stories that present contrast, this story contrasts the fast and slow, and efforts to find balance between the two by searching for the middle ground.

At EAVP, we strive to find the pace for optimal learning. First, we must consider the pace at which each child learns in our classroom. Each child is different. Each family has their own tempo as they approach their daily schedule.

The teachers are also transitioning from the slow pace of summer to the faster pace of school. We all have anxiety about a new school year with its new teachers, new classmates, new schedule, and new expectations.

At EAVP, we have a wonderful tool that helps us make this transition a little easier and faster. New applications and smart phones accelerate our ability to communicate daily happenings at school.

Thanks to a former parent, we were introduced to and implemented a communication plan using a free app that allows us to photograph and video the children. Comments about the learning can be added to the visual images.

Taking photos is nothing new in a preschool classroom that seeks to illustrate learning. Sharing this with families in real time, as they wonder how their child is coping, doing, and learning, comforts the families and communicates that meaningful learning and teaching opportunities are happening minute by minute. This is especially reassuring during the early weeks of school.

We are also learning how to use another new tool – an iPad mini – whose

mobility and ease of use allows us to support our classroom with information, music, and visuals. At the same time, it does not get in the way of our play. The speed of communicating with parents at home or work supports the teachers' efforts to slow down, dig in, and take time for deeper exploration.

As the children get to know the daily routine, their teachers, and their peers, they are also observing monarch butterflies in their stages of metamorphosis. We cannot make it go faster; nature goes at its own pace. The children wait and watch.

Surprises make the waiting and watching easier, as in the case of a child discovering a tiny caterpillar no bigger than a centimeter-long piece of thread, or smelling or cooking vegetables from the garden.

In this stage of early childhood development, we spend time painting, playing with blocks, and pretending. We play outside, sing, and move. In the EAVP classroom, we try to slow down and engage in the world around us. At the end of the day when parents arrive, the children say, "I'm not ready. That was too fast!"

Families feel like their child is growing up quickly. At EAVP, we strive to slow down to smell the roses (literally) and to make space for wonderful imaginings while staying connected to our families using technology.

While we're on the subject of speed and pace, be sure to join us on October 30 with whatever speed you want for our 5K run. Kids run at 9 AM and adults run at 9:30 AM. The starting line is at the Rail Trail next to the East Andover Fire Station.

Costumes are encouraged! The cost is \$25 for the adult run and \$5 for the kids run. Games and prizes make it a perfect family outing. Proceeds from the race support the EAVP operating budget and scholarship fund.

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