

Dear Families,

Sadly, we have lost all our fish. Bringing living things like plants and animals into a classroom gives children the opportunity to take ownership, learn new skills and develop concepts of time, change and cause and effect. It also comes with the risk that they may not survive. Fortunately, though our fish are gone – we are at an opportune teachable moment.

Why did our fish die? And what could we have done differently? What do fish need to be healthy? How can we determine if our fish tank is safe or not? And how can we treat and protect our fish to keep them alive? What parts of the aquarium are necessary for fish to be happy and healthy? What do we know about fish as pets?

At times in our adult lives it can be difficult to navigate the best way to approach the passing of life and the impact it has on children. Preschoolers are so emotionally present – they most often tell you outright (and at times boldly) how they feel and what they are thinking as it surfaces. As we grow older we may tend to follow social expectations that ask us to put others comfort before our own genuine and authentic expressions of emotions, whatever range of feelings that may encompass.

I've chosen, as in my past experiences in early childhood, not to downplay the demise of our fish. Instead I'd like to pursue the Blossoms' curiosity, follow and engage their experience and interest, and respect the ownership of the fish in their classroom. The preschool setting provides a safe and guided environment for children to express, discuss and make sense of loss with the help of their peers.

Because of this teaching opportunity we'll be making an accommodation to our typical full month study. Beginning the first week of June, we'll be spending two weeks seeking and discovering the answers to our questions about our fish and aquariums. Continuing in June we'll begin our Artist's Study – an exploration of artists such as Matisse, Pollock, Picasso, Kandinsky, Mondrian, Suerat and more. We'll explore the mediums, techniques and influence of these artists and discover and discuss our own personal preferences and styles.

As the weather warms up we'll be spending more time outside. Because we play with dirt, water, sand, paint, and clay you may choose to dress your child in clothes that are appropriate for messy, hands-on learning.

All the best to you,

Lane