

I hear from real estate agents that when you are trying to sell your house it helps if you throw some bread or cinnamon rolls in the oven to bake while it is being shown. The smell of the baking bread makes your house seem so warm and welcoming. Gets the buyer everytime.

Last Friday a family from New York came to see the school and thanks to our kindergarten students Lafayette had it own forms of delectable smells. On Thursday the students had visited Homestead Farm in Poolesville, Maryland. It's apple picking time and the students went on a field trip to visit their orchard and see how apples grow on trees. They each picked a small bag of apples to take home with them. Every child left school that afternoon sure that the bag in their hands had the most deliciously perfect apples in the world.

On Friday, it was time to make applesauce out of the apples brought back by the teachers. Crockpots were set up in the classrooms with a danger line surrounding them so no one would get burned by the hot fruit. Children got to see how the apples were chopped up and then watched how they cooked and changed during the day. Wonderful spices were added to the pot and then around 2:30 it was time to eat this very special applesauce. Certainly a lot better than the Mott's in the jar kind.

Other apple activities took place earlier in the week. Students did observations of different kinds of apples. They collected data on your favorite apple color and then made large charts displaying the data. There were journal entries and stories to hear. All week long apples were on the brain in kindergarten.

And then we had our visiting family. Coming next year but already checking out schools and neighborhoods. One child entering kindergarten next fall. I walked them through the school following my normal route. Talked about how we integrate the arts into instruction. Stopped at Ms. Perll's bulletin board in the hallway and showed how what looks like a simple art project related to lines incorporated so many math and language objectives. Then we walked through the double blue doors and that wonderful smell of warm cinnamon hit us. Along with 60 very happy students lined up waiting for their homemade applesauce. The perfect example of how we teach so many different content areas and skills when we do a unit like the one on apples. Exactly what you should expect to see when visiting an early childhood program.

The family was impressed. Asked questions about the school boundaries and when to register for the fall. "As long as you live in our school boundary zone, just fill out the forms, prove residency and you are good to go." Apparently there are more hoops to jump through in New York City to get into the school you want. I'd like to think the work on the walls impressed them. The orderliness of our classrooms even though everyone was very busy. It was choice time after all. But I know that the thing that sealed the deal was that applesauce cooking away. How could you not want to have your child at a school that just smells so good? So warm and welcoming? Thank you kindergarten students. You just might have a future in real estate or apple farming!