Important Notes
- November’s theme: Building
- Parent Teacher Conferences: November 13th (afternoon only)
  November 20th (all day - No School)
- Thanksgiving Vacation: November 25th-27th
- Please remember to send a change of cold weather appropriate clothes.

Elements of Arts
A focus on color, line, shape and texture.

We began our study on the Elements of Art by talking about what we see around us, understanding how to tune into our observational abilities. We invited the children to be careful observers of the world around them and to take notice of details that can lead to important learning. Observational Drawing is the ability to draw and paint from life, creating an image not taken from either a photograph or the artist’s imagination, but from real life observation. This initial activity helped set the foundation for our unit, inspiring the creative juices to begin flowing, as we delved into the world of how art is created and what art means to us. Refining our observational skills was a nice way to tie in our exploration of our new make shop, learning how to use the tools around us, combined with recycled and repurposed objects, to create our own representation of art. During our unit, we explored lines, colors, shapes and textures, beginning with drawing, cutting, and painting straight, curvy and zigzag lines. We worked with primary and secondary colors in different mediums, manipulating and mixing them to make interesting combinations. We learned how to maneuver shapes with the purpose of creating and drawing 2D objects. We used descriptive language to compare and contrast a variety of textures. Throughout the month of October, we learned by means of hands on experiences, making personal connections, reflecting upon stories, and immersing ourselves into the world of art, by truly becoming a classroom of artists.

Adella and Rhys mix primary colors.
Megu, Jemma and August create art using the elements of color, line, shape and texture.
Brylie draws flowers.
Evy
Amanda paints a pumpkin.

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The elements of art serve as building blocks. A person cannot create art without utilizing some of them. Line is essential as a concept to depict objects and symbols and to define shapes. The friends learned that “A line is a dot that went for a walk.” A line can be straight, swirly, wavy, jagged, dotted, dashed, zig-zag, diagonal, vertical or horizontal. We explored the many ways lines can be used in art, to create shapes, show movement or represent texture. The next week we learned how to utilize lines to create shapes, then combined shapes to create everyday objects, such as a cat, a person and a house. Friends continued their exploration of lines and shapes on a daily basis, creating illustrations for a classmate’s birthday page, illustrating a book at the writing center, recreating the sequence of a story’s illustrations or drawing a teacher-modeled prompt in their journals.

EXPLORING THE ELEMENTS OF ART

We added the element of color during our second week of study. Starting with primary and secondary colors, we sang, danced and painted until we had learned the order by heart. During this time, we completed several art projects that combined color with lines. First, the children explored color mixing in the simplest form. Each child was given two primary colors and asked to predict the color they’d make when mixed together. After more exploration, finger-painting and investigation of color mixing (using white, grey and black paint), friends were eager to create their very own custom kindergarten color of paint. Using all they had learned, each friend selected specific colors to mix. After completing their creation, the kindergarten friends named their new customized colors such as “Rhys’ Camouflage Green” and “Evy’s Purple Rain”. Throughout the month of October, lines, colors and shapes lead our creativity. The children painted warm (red, pink, orange and yellow) and cool (blue, purple, teal and green) color symmetrical lines designs, had a chance to extend our exploration of self portraits using shapes and colors and used colors and a variety of lines to create 2D paper collages and 3D...

LOOK AT US NOW!

In just over one month, the kindergartners have progressed greatly in their drawing abilities. Their fine motor skills, awareness of detail, and focus has developed, allowing for more elaborate and accurate drawings. Their representations of forms are clearly recognizable and will gradually become more complex as time continues. Their use of color is developing into more of a realistic representation, rather than just a form of expression. To support the continual progression of their work, we have created a visual reminder of what a quality illustration (drawing) looks like at the kindergarten level. Ask your child to describe what a 5 drawing would look like. The answers included the following: it has five or more colors, the colors are used accurately, it includes tons of detail, is neat and represents that you took your time and did your best work!
COOKING AND TASTE TESTING

Every week, the kindergarten friends have the chance to further their exploration of cooking, working in small groups with Mrs. Mack. On Thursdays, several friends take turns (each week) cooking a yummy snack for the classroom friends. This year we have incorporated our kitchen cooking with birthday celebrations, using this time to make a snack based on recommendations of that child. So far this year we’ve enjoyed goodies such as pumpkin pancakes, apple dumplings, pumpkin-banana ice cream, and mini pumpkin tarts. Even though cooking in the kitchen only happens once a week, the kindergarten teachers also enjoy incorporating taste testing into our weekly activity schedule. During our week exploring colors, it was only fitting to taste foods that are red, green, orange and yellow. After each taste test, the kindergarten friends recorded their preferences. Cooking is beneficial at a young age, allowing children to learn and practice basic math concepts, build language skills, encourage an adventurous palate, allow exploration of their senses, along with a boost of confidence when gaining a sense of accomplishment.

LOGIC CHALLENGES

Our weekly challenges and classroom manipulatives also incorporated the elements of art. One great resource, Pattern Play by Mindware, introduces matching, symmetry and congruence in a colorful and exciting manner. The children sharpened their spatial skills by replicating the patterns shown on the card and manipulating the blocks into the wooden tray. Another popular game that allowed us to flex our logic muscles is Creative Color Cubes by Learning Resources. The challenge is to arrange the color cubes to recreate a 3D representation from an activity card. This game is designed to develop visualization and fine motor skills, along with improving a child’s understanding of basic math concepts, all while having fun!

KINDERGARTEN LANGUAGE ARTS

In kindergarten, we are immersed in the world of printed text. As the students write, they put more effort into their writing as they are allowed to initiate their own ideas. Consequently, their writing becomes meaningful to them. Students explore invented spelling or as we refer to it, “Kindergarten Spelling”. Kindergarten spelling enables the children to use what they know about letters, sounds and spelling patterns to spell the words as well as they can. Spelling is a developmental process in which children acquire certain ideas about spelling as they are exposed to printed language and make connections between the sounds that make up words and the letters used to write the words. In the kindergarten classroom, children are beginning to use invented spelling with thoughtful attention to letter-sound relationships. Writing in journals, on birthday pages, and throughout the classroom helps build personal relationships between the teacher and student, builds independence, fosters attention to details, strengthens self confidence, and creates a community of learners.
DISCOVERY AND EXPLORATION

The Science/Discovery Area continues to be an active place in the kindergarten classroom! This month we focused our exploration on several experiments with the element of color and have sparked excitement and interest in the students for our future units, wondering which experiments the kindergarten teachers will come up with next! Here are some of our favorites...

**Color Mixing**

I wonder...how can we make the water move from one cup to another without touching the cups.

I think...
• the colors will mix.
• the water will move like a slide.

I learned...
• a paper towel will absorb the water and carry it to the empty cup.
• water will move down hill but not uphill due to gravity.
• the water will move across to the empty cup until the water levels are equal.

**Lighter or Darker**

I wonder...what will happen when we add the colors white, grey and black to a paint color?

I think...
• the paint will become lighter with the white and grey paint.
• the dark black color will make the original paint darker, like black.

I learned...when you slowly add white paint, a lighter shade of the original color is created. When you slowly add black paint, a darker shade of the original color is created. Adding grey paints creates a shade slightly darker than the original color.

**Tie-Dyed Milk Experiment**

I wonder...what will happen when we add drops of food coloring and dish soap to a bowl of milk?

I think...the colors will mix together.

• the milk will change color.

I learned...
• when you add drops of food coloring to milk, the color sits on the surface, as it is less dense than milk, so it floats on the surface. The colors also won’t mix unless you stir the milk.
• The action begins when you add the soap. The soap reduces the surface tension of the fatty milk molecules. The surface of the milk has a higher surface tension, so it pulls the food color away with it as the soap spreads (mixing the colors together).

**Pumpkin Exploration**

With the fall season upon us, it was a great time to integrate pumpkins into our science and math exploration. (Thanks to friends on campus, pumpkins were donated for each child!)

Each friend had the chance to measure the height, weight and circumference of their pumpkin. Students first used Unifix cubes to compare and contrast the height of their pumpkin to their classmates’ pumpkins and record their data. Next, each child was given counting links and asked to predict how many would fit around the pumpkin’s middle, the circumference. They were then challenged to see if they could count how many lines (grooves) around the top of their pumpkin. Finally, friends predicted and tested to see if their pumpkin would sink or float when placed in water.
MUSIC MONDAY
Each Monday after work time, we enjoy Music Mondays, an interactive circle time when friends have a chance to listen to a musical instrument mystery sound, make a guess and learn about a new instrument. Recently, the friends were introduced to the sounds of a xylophone, snare drum, bagpipe and violin. The friends have also enjoyed exploring fine motor and gross motor movement in correlation to music. Each week, Mrs. Armbruster teaches a new dance move for the friends to practice. Recently, the friends discovered they could use lines in their dancing, exploring disco dancing (moving their arms in a diagonal line in-sync with a steady beat). This month we have also enjoyed using rhythm sticks. When used in the classroom, they enable children to identify a beat from an early age and develop a rhythmic sense. Rhythm sticks reinforce concepts like slow and fast, quiet and loud, stop and go, along with strengthening eye-hand coordination.

WEEKLY CHALLENGES
Each week the kindergarten teachers challenge the friends with various skill-based tasks. During the month of October, the friends completed several challenges ranging from fine motor development, one to one correspondence (being able to match one object to another object), alphabetical order, seriation (arranging objects in order by size from tallest to shortest) and the ability to follow a simple sequence. Once children complete an individual challenge, they proudly share their excitement and success with classmates and teachers by flicking the lights on and off.

MRS. WISHY WASHY
“Oh, lovely mud.” said the cow, and she jumped in it. During the last week of our unit, friends eagerly anticipated the arrival of a kindergarten favorite, “Mrs. Wishy Washy.” After reading and rereading the story, the students transformed the dramatic play center into a stage and themselves into actors. Each child had the chance to become Mrs. Wishy Washy, the Cow, the Pig, the Duck or a narrator and bring the written word of Joy Cowley to life on a stage. The class learned valuable lessons on how to use their voice, body and imagination as tools. Students had to concentrate on their role, remember their lines and use cooperation as they worked together, performing for the preschool friends.
A new addition to The Children's School this year is a make shop, located in what was once our Peaceful Room. The concept of a make shop space, according to the Children's Museum of Pittsburgh, is to allow children to make, play and design using “real stuff”, using the same materials, tools and processes used by professional artist, builders, and creators of all kinds. In the kindergarten, we encourage the children to be curious, creative, experimental and innovative. We feel this space is a place where a child can create and feel comfortable taking a chance. In September, the make shop allowed children to explore light, shapes and color using an overhead projector and recycled objects (along with the help of a blackout curtain). In October, the friends embraced the creative process, using their imaginations to create “Spooky Creatures” using found and repurposed materials.

FAMILY OPEN HOUSE

Thank you to all the families who came to our Kindergarten Open House on Wednesday, October 14th! We really enjoyed meeting all the moms, dads, grandparents, brothers and sisters. We hope everyone had a great time exploring our classroom and learning about our daily activities. Families experienced a daily work activity (creating an AB or ABC pattern using Unifix cubes), completed a Kindergarten Friend scavenger hunt, created with play dough, enjoyed a game of Kindergarten Bingo, explored our October journals and so much more! We look forward to meeting with you for conferences in November.