Come one, come all …
to the Family Theatre Arts Festival!!

Bring your entire family to the Children’s School Family Theatre Arts Festival on Thursday evening, February 25th from 4:30 – 6:30 pm. Come ready to don simple costumes to help enact some of the children’s favorite dramas, make puppets for use in a show of your own creation, and in many other ways explore and enjoy the theatre arts! Last week, we launched our Theatre Arts unit by taking all of our classes to visit the Purnell Center Theatre on Carnegie Mellon’s Campus for wonderful tours of the stage, props, costume shop, dance studio, etc.

NOTE: There will not be an Extended Afternoon Program on the Family Festival day so that the staff can prepare the school for the festival. If your child is enrolled in the Extended Afternoon Program, we will dismiss your child at 3:15 with the afternoon preschoolers. Thank you!

Enrollment Reminder

Registrations for the Preschool 4’s and Kindergarten classes are arriving steadily and the Extended Morning Program is filling quickly, so please submit your re-enrollment materials as soon as possible. It is especially important that families let us know if you are NOT planning to re-enroll so that we can notify families on the waiting list that we have space for their children. Registrations for incoming 3’s are just beginning; but we have sent more acceptance packets than we have spaces available, so we expect to have full classes.

February Dates
Monday, February 15th Presidents’ Day Holiday (NO SCHOOL)
Thursday, February 18th Deposits DUE for 2010-2011 Children’s School Programs
Thursday, February 25th, 4:30-6:30 pm, FAMILY THEATRE ARTS FESTIVAL (NOTE: There will be no Extended Afternoon Program on that day!)
Friday, February 26th Professional Development Day for Staff (NO SCHOOL for Children)
Family Committee News

• Thanks to the Library Committee members who tried to locate a certain book about a nesting hedgehog. We are still trying to locate it, but we much appreciate the effort you put in!

• The Family Social Organization (FSO) Committee is planning a wine tasting at Enrico’s in Shadyside for sometime in February. Watch for notification of the date. They are also planning a family “Jam Session” for this spring!

• Many thanks to Eunjung Kim (Minjune’s mom) and Burcu Oc Cerit (Elif’s mom) for doing our Giant Eagle shopping.

February is Children’s Dental Health Month

The American Dental Association (ADA) sponsors National Children's Dental Health Month to raise awareness about the importance of oral health. Developing good habits at an early age and scheduling regular dental visits helps children start on a lifetime of healthy teeth and gums.

The American Dental Association states that the most important concepts for preschool children to know are (1) our teeth are important, (2) we need to take good care of them, and (3) the dentist is a friendly doctor who helps you take good care of your teeth. Teeth are meant to last a lifetime. A balanced diet, limited snacks, brushing and flossing each day and a regular dental check-up are the keys to healthy teeth and gums.

For programs where children are older than one year and receive two or more meals, NAEYC (5.A.16) promotes good dental hygiene by requiring the staff to provide an opportunity for tooth brushing and gum cleaning to remove food and plaque. At the Children’s School, since our children are not here for two or more meals, we talk about brushing our teeth and good dental hygiene. We also encourage children to rinse their mouths with water after eating. However, just as you encourage hand washing when your child comes home from school, you should also encourage them to brush their teeth.

Please note that, in compliance with Caring for Our Children 8.015, we are requesting contact information for your family dentist on your child’s re-enrollment information update.

Valentine’s Day

February is also the month when some families celebrate Valentine’s Day. Since the holiday falls on a long weekend, we are not planning to do valentine card exchanges in any of our classes, so there is no need to send cards to school. As always, children will have access to card making materials in the writing centers for use if they are interested in sending greetings to family and friends.
Nikou’s Adventures in South Africa

Nikou, his sister Mitra, parents and grandmother Grammy flew all the way to Cape Town, South Africa (18+ hours) for our winter break to enjoy a summer holiday there! One of the most enjoyable parts of the Cape area is the plants and wildlife.

The Cape floral kingdom is one of the most biodiverse areas on the planet and made up of a unique type of vegetation called fynbos or “fine bush” found only in this region. We stayed near a protected United Nations Biosphere area where we could hike in an amazingly beautiful mountainous landscape of proteas, ericas, restios and other types of plants that we simply don’t see in Pittsburgh. The sea and animal life also kept us entertained. We found a family of tortoises living underneath the house.

But for us the most exciting animal visitors of all were the Chacama baboons. A large troupe of 40 or so baboons lived near the village, and most mornings they would parade through in search of food. One morning the troupe decided to feast on the tall pincushion protea bushes in the backyard, scaring away the sugarbirds that had been there feeding on the flower nectar.

A few days later they visited again. While the porch doors were wide open, a lone male sneaked in and headed straight for the kitchen while Mitra and Nikou watched from behind a glass door. According to their eyewitness report, he tried a sweet potato, found it rotten and discarded it, then jumped up on a table breaking a cup, and upon catching sight of Illah returning, he grabbed a full bag of green apples under his arm and stole away. While amusing for us, these frequent raids on local homes make the baboons a challenging neighbor.

South Africa is a stunningly beautiful, diverse land in great transition. We love going there to work on conservation and educational projects and to meet the many peoples who call the very southern tip of Africa their home.
What’s New at the Theatre?

**Nickelodeon Presents STORYTIME LIVE** ~ Saturday, February 20 - Sunday, February 21, 2010
Benedum Center (various show times)
Tickets: $15.50 - $39.50: Visit [www.pgharts.org](http://www.pgharts.org) for more information.

Leap into Fairytale Land with “Dora the Explorer,” journey through Purewood Forest with “The Backyardigans,” hop into Wonderland with “Wonder Pets!,” and monkey around on The Monkey King Adventure with “Ni-Hao, Kai-lan.” Nickelodeon’s musical adventure, STORYTIME LIVE, features four of the top-rated preschool shows on television today and is sure to be the hit show you and your family have been waiting for!

**Peanut Butter and Jam Sessions present Open Wide: Discover Your Voice** ~
Saturday, February 20, 2010 ~ 10:00am and 11:30am
McClintic Hall of the Calvary Episcopal Church, 315 Shady Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15206
For tickets call 412-394 3353 or visit the website at [www.chathambaroque.org](http://www.chathambaroque.org).
Tickets are $5 per child and $8 per adult.

**Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra Presents Fiddlesticks Family Concerts: Songs Around the Globe** ~
Saturday, February 27th, 2010 ~ 11:15am Heinz Hall
For subscriptions to PSO visit [www.pittsburghsymphony.org](http://www.pittsburghsymphony.org)
Ticket prices vary for different level of subscriptions.

Experience the unique ways in which music has been handed down throughout generations and is incorporated into our children’s favorite games. Music can be found in many different areas of interests, from sporting events to backyard activities. Join Fiddlesticks for a mix of your favorite pieces.

Stayed tuned for more theater experiences!

**Web Artists**

Kindergarten Friends:
Charly B., Jordana J., Janis K., Janet M., and Kate N.

4’s Friends:
Jane B., Talia G., Anya L., Hiro M., and Ashley S.

3’s Friends:
Michael B., Delia B., Bryce L., Shaila M., Joby M., and Charlotte S.

**School Spirit Items for Sale**

Clothing and other items with the Children’s School logo are available in the school office for purchase by interested families. Please feel free to ask Ms. Drash to see our selection.
Please Continue Daily Health Monitoring

According to the latest reports from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the number of cases of influenza-like illness is declining nationwide, with the novel H1N1 virus continuing to be the predominant viral type in circulation. While this is good news, we must remain vigilant since we are in the middle of the influenza season and, as the CDC cautions, a third wave of illness could occur this spring. With this in mind, we encourage everyone to continue to follow the Children’s School Guidelines for exclusion due to illness.

The symptoms of the H1N1 flu are much the same as those for seasonal influenza and include the presence of fever with one or more of the following:
- Body aches
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Congestion
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Vomiting and diarrhea

Please take your child’s temperature each morning and keep children at home if they exhibit any of the above symptoms or have a fever above 99.6 degrees F. Whenever a child or adult has a fever of 100 degrees F (37.8 degrees C) or more, he/she should not enter the Children’s School (no matter the reason for the temperature). Individuals can return only after being fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications. Individuals who develop a fever during the day are removed from the classrooms and sent home as soon as possible.

In addition, everyone is following the hand-washing procedures recommended by the National Association for the Education of Young Children: Rub hands together vigorously until a soapy lather appears and continue for at least 10 seconds. Rub areas between fingers, around nail beds, under fingernails, jewelry, and back of hands and continues for 10 seconds. The children are being taught this much more detailed version.

Hand washing Technique:

**Step 1:** Put your hands together. Slide the tips of the fingers of the right hand to the left hand’s wrist and then slide hands together in a wave-like motion until the left hand’s fingertips are now touching the right wrist. Gently create a wave back and forth to wash the palms of your hands. (If you hold up your hands palms together and look, you can actually see a pocket between your hands. This is why the wave motion is effective in reaching the palms, which is a place germs hide)

**Step 2:** Build a bridge by placing right hand on top of the left hand. Interlock the fingers and gently move the right hand over the left hand several times. Switch hands and repeat.

**Step 3:** Create a bracelet with the fingers of your right hand over the wrist of your left hand. Slide the fingers of your right hand around and around your left wrist. Now slide your finger bracelet off and on your left hand several times. Switch hands and repeat. (This cleans the outside of the hands, paying special attention to the thumbs and little fingers).

**Step 4:** Pinch fingers together, place finger tips in the palm of the opposite hand and twist, twist, twist in a circle to gently clean your nails. Switch hands and repeat. (Jeannie Simms, American Respiratory Alliance of Western Pennsylvania, November 2, 2009).

Thank you for your continued attention to the health and wellness of our Children’s School Family!
Help for Haiti

In response to the catastrophic earthquake that occurred in Haiti, Carnegie Mellon's Division of Student Affairs, Student Government and student organizations are working together to raise money for relief efforts. If you are interested in making a monetary contribution to this cause, please go to one of the links listed below.

Hôpital Albert Schweitzer
http://www.hashaiti.org/
Hôpital Albert Schweitzer, located 42 miles outside of Port-au-Prince, escaped earthquake damage and is treating a constant flow of patients. Founded in 1956, the hospital is operated by Ian and Lucy Rawson of Pittsburgh. Jim Tinsley, a former Carnegie Mellon School of Architecture employee and former husband of Carnegie Mellon librarian Lynn Berard, is the facilities director for Hôpital Albert Schweitzer.

Doctors Without Borders
http://doctorswithoutborders.org/
Doctors Without Borders is working to provide surgery and basic care to victims.

Yéle Haiti
http://www.yele.org/
Founded by musician Wyclef Jean, Yéle Haiti builds global awareness for Haiti while helping to transform the country through programs in education, sports, the arts and environment. The organization is raising funds and delivering emergency services and materials to victims.

Brother's Brother Foundation
http://www.brothersbrother.org/
This Pittsburgh-based organization promotes international health and education through the efficient and effective distribution and provision of donated medical, educational, agricultural and other resources. The foundation is collecting personal hygiene items for victims.

Also, student organizations, led by the Alpha Phi Omega service fraternity, will join the Pittsburgh-based Brothers Brother Foundation (BBF) to collect hygiene items for earthquake victims. Items requested include plastic buckets, baby wipes or wet wipes, non-liquid soap, washcloths, toothpaste, toothbrushes, combs and brushes. All items must be new, and BBF asks that donations do not include shampoos or materials that might leak. If you would prefer to donate items, please send them to the Children's School.

Updates regarding additional relief efforts will be posted on this News Blog site and on the Helping Haiti Facebook group site:
Research Spotlight

The Read-Aloud Game / The Classroom Game

Karrie Godwin, a graduate student working with Dr. Anna Fisher, is beginning a longitudinal study of children’s selective attention. The purpose of her study is to investigate how children allocate their attention in learning environments. She is particularly interested in examining how physical features of the environment (e.g., toys, posters, art work, etc.) can contribute to or hinder kindergartners’ ability to attend to the content of a lesson, and she is examining whether children’s ability to effectively distribute their attention has consequences for learning new content.

First, the children will participate in four small group sessions of the Read-Aloud Game. During each read-aloud session, the children listen to a short story and then answer questions about the content of the story. For example, if the children hear a story about modes of transportation, they then answer questions similar to the example below.

Circle the picture you saw in the book.

Then, in the Classroom Game, the researchers are teaching children 10 mini-lessons in a small group format. For 5 of the lessons, the physical environment includes items that are typically found in early childhood classrooms that may be potential sources of distraction (e.g., posters, artwork, manipulatives, etc.). For the remaining 5 lessons, the physical environment only includes visual aids and materials directly relevant to the lesson. Each lesson lasts approximately 10 to 15 minutes. During each lesson, children listen to a short story and answer questions about the content of the story. For example, they might listen to a story about plants and then answer questions similar to the example below.

Circle the picture you saw in the book.
The Sorting Game / The Waiting Game

How do children learn to adapt their behaviors to their changing environment? When does children's ability to monitor and control their own behavior reach maturity levels? What factors affect the development of the cognitive aspect of this important process? These are some of the questions that Dr. Anna Fisher and undergraduate research assistant, Janelle Higa, investigate in their study of cognitive control. Cognitive control is an important ability that allows people to adapt their behavior to the changing demands of their environment. This ability has been found to develop very differently in each individual. The purpose of our study is to investigate social factors that may contribute to variations in children's development of cognitive control.

On the first day of the study, the Sorting Game, children participate in one of two games designed to measure cognitive control. The first of these is a computer-based card-sorting task. Children are shown cards on a computer and asked to sort them either by shape or color first. They are then asked to switch and sort by the opposite dimension. An example of the card-sorting task is shown here. This is an example of the shape dimension of the card-sorting game. The child would be asked to sort the middle card into the either the fish or star pile by shape. Previous research has shown that young children typically have no trouble doing the first sorting task but often have trouble switching from sorting by shape to sorting by color.

On the second day of the study, the Waiting Game, children will initially be invited to play with a highly appealing toy. They will then be shown another interesting toy but asked to wait for a few minutes before playing with it. This "delay of gratification" task tests children's ability to cognitively control their behavior in a more social situation involving a change in the rules. As part of this study, researchers will ask parents to complete a brief survey so that they can determine whether children's level of cognitive control correlates with family demographics and styles.

The Da and Ga Game

Dr. Dan Hufnagle and Dr. Lori Holt are investigating how children learn sound categories. The children hear a story about a boy named Da and a bird named Ga. We ask them questions about the story to gauge how well they have understood it. Then, they hear the words “da” and “ga” many times and are asked to tell the experimenter which sound they hear. Sometimes the sound is ambiguous (acoustically between “da” and “ga”). We are testing children at several ages to understand how sound categories (like “d” and “g”) develop across time. The answers will help us understand the nature of auditory perception.
Undergraduate Spotlight: Getting to Know You

We gladly welcomed many of our undergraduate assistants back for the Spring semester, but we also have new undergraduate workers and student interns that have joined our team. We hope these introductions will help you learn who is working with your child, as well as who your child might be mentioning at home!

• **Mike Bittarelli** will be working in the Kindergarten two mornings a week. Mike has jumped right in and started reading with the children. Mike is a senior Chemistry major who enjoys a little foosball in his spare time.

• **Danielle Head** is returning to the Children’s School for a second semester. She will be working with our Extended AM and PM groups one day a week. Danielle is part of the ROTC program at CMU.

• **Emily Lambert** is also returning after taking a few semesters to pursue other jobs. Emily will be working with our Extended AM group. Emily is a senior Decision Sciences major. She can be seen working with children in community programs when she is not busy with school.

• **Janice Lyu** is starting her first semester at the Children’s School. She is helping in the Red Room two mornings a week. Janice is a sophomore majoring in Biological Sciences.

• **Chuck McKain** is a new undergraduate in the Green Room two mornings a week. Chuck is a sophomore majoring in Psychology. He has been on the Dean’s List every semester and will step up to the role of Orientation Counselor for CMU next year.

• **Gina Seguiti** is new to the Children’s School, but has taken quickly to the routine of our Extended Morning program. Gina is a sophomore majoring in Business Administration and plays on the Carnegie Mellon Varsity Soccer Team.

• **Lauren Gumbel** will be working in the Kindergarten two afternoons a week as an intern. Lauren has worked with children as a swim coach and teacher’s aide and is happy to back in the mix. She is a junior Cognitive Science major, swims for the Carnegie Mellon Varsity Team, is president of her sorority, participates in the Psi Chi Psychology Honor Society, and has been on Dean’s List.

High School Start on Success

Each year the Children’s School partners with the Pittsburgh Public School District to invite “Start on Success” students to work in our school. **Start on Success** is a program allowing high school students to attend their high school for half a day and work in a professional environment during the other half. The program is designed to help students identify career interests and build skills needed in the workplace. This year we have two SOS students working with us in the afternoon preschool.

• **Lindsay Miele** is a senior at Carrick High School. She has been working with the afternoon green room for two years and will be graduating this year. We will be sad to see Lindsay go, but know that she will excel in pursuing her goal of becoming a preschool teacher. Lindsay will attend CCAC after graduation with plans to then attend IUP for her certification in Early Childhood Education. Lindsay has gained classroom experience in her two years at the Children’s School, but she has also gained experience through babysitting in her spare time.

• **Shannon Wiederstein** is also a senior at Carrick High School. The 2009-1010 school year was Shannon’s first year at the Children’s School, and she integrated well with the afternoon blue room friends. Shannon will also be graduating at the end of this year and has a dream of becoming a preschool teacher. Shannon is gaining the experience needed to accomplish this goal. When she has some down time, Shannon enjoys spending quality time with family and friends.

*We wish Lindsay and Shannon the best of luck pursuing their career goals!*
Director’s Corner: Play as a Priority

“Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for children, play is serious learning. Play is really the work of childhood.”
Fred Rogers

Young children’s play has many benefits for all aspects of development. At the Children’s School, educators support children’s play as a significant means to engage them in effective learning in all six of our goal domains.

**Self-Esteem & Independence:** Play contexts invite children to express their own ideas and understanding while they explore and master new materials. Children thrive when they have a choice of meaningful activities and open-ended options for using a variety of materials. Such choices invite children to take initiative in their own learning and foster intrinsic motivation – the desire to work on a task primarily because it is satisfying.

**Interaction & Cooperation:** Children play in diverse ways. They engage in “solitary play” apart from others or in “parallel play” near another child who is using the same materials but engrossed in his own activity. Interaction begins with “associative play”, which involves some conversation, sharing of materials, and similar actions but no coordination of goals. True “cooperative play” emerges as children begin to develop shared goals, such as a coordinated scenario in the dramatic play area, a joint building endeavor in the block area, or a team game on the playground. The more children play together, the better they understand other children’s points of view, demonstrate empathy and caring, and develop conflict resolution skills.

**Communication:** As children interact during play, they learn to use language in new ways to describe their play, negotiate sharing, plan joint goals, etc. Their vocabulary increases as they learn words for new objects and actions in our changing theme-related centers (e.g., the paleontologist’s office in the green room, or train station in the red room, or the tipi in the kindergarten).

**Discovery & Exploration:** Children’s indoor and outdoor play provides many opportunities for developing and testing theories about how things work in the world. Sand, water, light, and block play enhance children’s understanding of physical realities of everyday materials. Changing materials in the centers as new themes are introduced provides frequent catalyst for new experiments.

**Physical Capabilities:** During play, children’s whole bodies are engaged in learning, which builds both small and large motor skills naturally. Increasing physical prowess builds self-esteem and enables greater independence in play.

**Artistic Expression & Appreciation:** Dramatic play, art and writing center explorations, and other music and movement opportunities offer children a variety of media for expressing their ideas and learning to appreciate others’. These experiences build skills in each of the other domains as well, thus expanding children’s learning via play.

Parents can support play in many of the same ways that we do at school, by providing space, opportunities, and materials, as well as arranging “play dates” with peers and visiting public play areas where children can interact with groups of different age children. Space where children can play without fear of damaging furniture or injuring themselves, time to choose and become engaged in their own play activities, and simple, interesting materials are key ingredients. Feel free to come observe play at the Children’s School and to share your ideas with us.
Input about New Murals for Our Entry!!

Thanks to generous year-end donations from two Children’s School families, the Children’s School community is about to embark on a new **muraling adventure** - redoing the outdoor mural in our parking lot and extending it up the “rainbow” stairs to the school entrance by the office. Our plan is to create a mural that expresses the essence of the Children's School for our community. Yes, we're a school, but what makes the Children's School different? Why do we choose to learn and grow here?

To get started on this project, we are soliciting input from families. Please answer the following questions to help us create a design that incorporates the diverse perspectives of our community.

When you talk with your children about school, what do they share about their time at the Children's School?

What three words would you use to describe the Children’s School?

What makes the Children’s School different or special?

How have you seen your child grow while at the Children's School?

What images come to mind when you think of the Children's School? What do they represent?

We would love any input that you have for any or all of the questions, either using this form or via email by February 15th to Dr. Carver at sc0e@andrew.cmu.edu. If you have other questions, would like to know more about the process, or would like to volunteer, please email Mrs. Flynn at jbflynn@andrew.cmu.edu.

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**Muraling Process and Timeline**

Our process will involve the use of parachute cloth, a material that will enable us to paint the mural indoors in small sections and then permanently adhere it to indoor and outdoor walls. Think of extra strong wallpaper cut into sections.

Our goal it to develop the design in February and work on the mural in March and April so that it is complete before the end of the semester.