Week of the Young Child

April 6th to 12th has been designated “The Week of the Young Child” by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. NAEYC encourages early childhood communities to organize projects and events that create broad visibility and support for the importance of the early years as a way of sharing the responsibility of ensuring the well being of diverse children and families. As a laboratory school affiliated with a Psychology Department, we contribute to the success of all young children by facilitating high quality research, offering a model program that serves as an example for practitioners and as a field placement site for pre-service teachers, and offering seminars and workshops as professional development for our colleagues. In partnership with other local programs, we also support their development of excellent programs and services for young children and their families. Watch for our Week of the Young Child card in your child’s backpack and know that we send it to a broad range of colleagues on campus and in the community.

Enrollment Updates

2014-2015 School Year: We currently have 23 children registered for the Kindergarten, 27 children registered for the Morning 4’s, and 24 children in the Morning 3’s. The Afternoon 4’s program has 10 registered children, and Afternoon 3’s has 7 children. There is still space in the morning and afternoon Extended Day Programs. Mrs. Rosenblum is conducting tours with prospective families, so we anticipate full classes for the 2014/15 school year. Thanks to all of the families for referring your relatives, friends, and neighbors to us!

Summer Camp Enrollment: There are also spaces remaining in our Summer Camp. This year’s camp theme is Senses and will be run by members of the Children’s School teaching staff. Camp runs for four weeks in June and the hours are 8:45 AM - 1:15 PM. Please act soon if you want to register your child for one or more weeks of camp.

April Dates

Friday, April 4th – NO SCHOOL for children / Conference Preparation Day for Educators
Friday, April 11th – NO SCHOOL for children
Afternoon Parent / Teacher Conferences

Enjoy CMU’s 100th Spring Carnival “Best of the Best” April 10th to 12th
http://www.contrib.andrew.cmu.edu/cmuchest/]

Friday, April 25th – Parent / Teacher Conferences – NO SCHOOL for children
Teacher Appreciation / Year End Celebration

This year, the Teacher Appreciation Luncheon will be held on Friday, May 2\textsuperscript{nd}. This event is an opportunity for Children School families to show their appreciation for their children’s teachers and the other staff members of the school by preparing, setting up, and cleaning up for this staff-only meal.

The Year-End Celebration Picnic will be held after the Kindergarten Graduation Ceremony on Friday, May 16\textsuperscript{th}. The Children’s School will be providing the main course, and we need volunteers to provide paper products, salads and desserts, as well as to help with the set up and clean up.

The committee will meet to plan these two events on Monday, April 7\textsuperscript{th} at 9 am and 1 pm, respectively. Please join us if you can! Even if you cannot join us on that date, there will be volunteer opportunities for both of these occasions. Please contact Maggie Rosenblum if you can attend (rosenblu@andrew.cmu.edu).

Advocacy for a Better World

More than 1.5 million people from 194 countries have voted for the changes that would make the most difference to the world. “MYWorld is a United Nations global survey for citizens. Working with partners, we aim to capture people’s voices, priorities and views, so world leaders can be informed as they begin the process to define the next set of global goals to end poverty. To cast your vote, go to http://www.myworld2015.org/index.html. Please consider adding a write-in vote for “access to high quality early childhood education.” In addition to that priority, at least one Children’s School educator chose each of the 16 given priorities among the six most important. Top votes among our staff went to a good education, freedom from discrimination and persecution, access to clean water and sanitation, and affordable and nutritious food. Which priorities are most important for you and your family?

While you’re in an advocacy mode, please visit http://www.prekforpa.org to ask Pennsylvania legislators to ensure that every preschooler has access to high-quality early childhood education so that they enter school ready to succeed.
Family Social Organization

March has been a fun-filled month for the FSO, and we've enjoyed seeing so many of you at events outside of school. We started March with a visit to the Gemini Theater, where dozens of Children's School families enjoyed a performance of Aladdin, had the chance to meet some of the stars, and took a backstage tour of the theater. Special thanks to Jessica Morowitz for planning such a successful event. We also had a blast at Phipps Conservatory, where our children got to meet worms and discover how they live, eat, and move. We then got to tour Phipps and have lunch together as a group. Our final program of the month was at First Tee of Pittsburgh. Children in the 4's and Kindergarten had an opportunity to play golf using a golf simulator and putting green - many for the first time!

Please join us for one of our many exciting programs coming up in April!

**Friday, April 4th** (10am-2pm) Lions and tigers and bears, Oh my!
Please join the Children's School for a fun family trip to the Pittsburgh Zoo and Aquarium. Participants will attend the Wonders of Wildlife assembly, have lunch, and then do a self-guided tour around the zoo and aquarium. Please pack your own lunch unless you plan on purchasing something at the concession stands.

**Cost:** The cost of the assembly for children age two and up is $10 regardless of whether or not they are zoo members. Adults who are members of the zoo are free. Non-member parents/guardians pay $10. Please send an envelope with cash, your child's name, number of participants, and whether or not you are a member of the zoo to Ms. Drash immediately.

**Wednesday, April 9th** (after greeting) Final Book Club of the year!
Meet at Resnik Café. We will continue our discussion of a short story called "The Caretaker," which can be found in the book *The Shell Collector: Stories by Anthony Doerr*. As always, reading of the book is not required to join the discussion!

**Friday, April 11th** (10am) Morning at the Movies!   **MOVIE:** RIO 2!
Meet at the Waterworks Cinemas in Fox Chapel. The theatre opens at 9:30am, and the movie is at 10:00am.

**Cost:** $7/person (includes movie ticket, small popcorn, and drink). Please send an envelope marked, "FSO Movie" with names of those attending and cash by Tuesday, April 8th.

Feel free to contact us with any questions!

Julie Paris and Amee Chaudry, FSO Co-Chairs
Family Bird Bonanza

On Thursday, March 6th, almost 350 Children’s School family members and friends participated in our Family Bird Bonanza. Together, we played a variety of bird-related games, visited the Blue Room bird gallery, met a live macaw from the Pittsburgh Aviary, explored owl pellets and worms, decoupaged a bird necklace, sampled fruit snacks that birds and people eat, toured the kindergarten bird-seum, and relaxed with bird books and puzzles in the “peaceful room”.

![Image of children participating in various bird-related activities at the Family Bird Bonanza.]
More Bird Bonanza Explorations

During our Birds & Flight unit, we discovered how amazingly diverse birds adapt to their habitats so they can both survive and thrive. We learned about birds’ life cycles, behavior, diets, camouflage, etc., as well as the physical science of their unique features, such as beaks and wings. We also considered the ways that we can help birds by protecting the environments in which they live.
Family Spotlight: A Wonderful Welcome!

Hello... we are the (Colonna) Lancaster family: Don is a Regulatory Compliance Officer with BNY Mellon, Carolyn is a professional mom (also a graphic designer) and Jackie (who turns 4 in May) is a Blue Room friend at the Children's School.

Don and I met in Boston and later moved to Charlotte, NC. From there, Don was recruited to his current job here in Pittsburgh. The job was originally to be in New York and was changed at the last moment. So we moved here to Pittsburgh sight-unseen to an apartment we found online--our only Pittsburgh experience was "walking" our Shadyside neighborhood via Google Streetview. I was eight months pregnant when we moved, so Jackie was born here in Pittsburgh.

Pittsburgh has been an amazing city for Jackie's early years - with so many cultural, educational and inspiring options nearby... museums, theaters, restaurants, a botanical garden, a zoo, an aquarium, an aviary, festivals, a carousel, farms, parks and playgrounds. We have taken full advantage of all of these offerings!

One of our favorite aspects of Pittsburgh has been our experiences with the Children's School. Jackie heads off to school each day with a huge smile on her face and when I come at dismissal time that smile is even bigger. I love knowing that Jackie is truly cared for at school, by her teachers, by the staff and by her classmates. She is always so proud to share with us the art she creates, the songs she sings, the experiences she has and the new things that she learns.

The Children's School has also been wonderful for us adults. We love the level of communication the school offers with the daily blogs, monthly newsletters and open house nights. It allows us to truly feel like part of Jackie's experience. And as relative newcomers to Pittsburgh, it has been wonderful to be welcomed into the Children's School community. We have attended nearly every event put on by the FSO--which has been fun for Jackie and for us (thank you FSO!!). Through the Children's School, we have all made beautiful friendships that I know will last for years to come.
Usborne Book Fair

The Children’s School will be sponsoring an Usborne Book Fair on April 7th and April 8th from 8:30 am – 3:00 pm in the hallway. Samples of the books will be on display and Usborne consultant, Anne Lee, will be on hand to answer any questions.

Each student will receive a flyer this week that has an order form on the back. This flyer will list only a small percentage of the Usborne books available. To access the full catalog, please go to: http://www.myubam.com or visit the book display on the 7th and 8th of April.

Completed order forms should be returned to Maggie Rosenblum by April 14th with checks made payable to Anne Lee. The profits from the book sale will allow the Children’s School to receive free books from Usborne to build our library collection.

Pittsburgh Gives for Library Enhancement

Pittsburgh Gives’ Day of Giving provides an opportunity for you to maximize your charitable contribution to the CMU Children’s School! The donated funds will be used to support our Library Enhancement Project, which involves having custom-made library cabinets built for us. The Day of Giving 2014 will be on Tuesday, May 6th and will run from 6:00 am until 12:00 am (midnight). This 13-hour event is part of Give Local America, the national day for community foundations across the country. This event will replace the day traditionally held in October.

To ensure that your donation reaches the Children’s School, log on to PittsburghGives.org. Select Carnegie Mellon University from the List of Eligible Organizations and make your donation. Please notify Miss Hancock at lh37@andrew.cmu.edu that you have made a contribution via the Day of Giving and that you want it to be designated to The Children’s School. She will send a list of the Children’s School donors to the University Advancement Office who will allocate the donation and matching funds to The Children’s School.

Organizations will receive a pro-rated portrait of the match pool. The match will be capped at $1,000 per donor transaction per organization. For example, if an individual donor makes a gift of $5,000 to one organization, only $1,000 of that gift will count towards the match calculation.

Donations will not be accepted by third parties. The donor must make the online contribution and he/she will be receipted directly for that donation by the Pittsburgh Foundation. Donations are MasterCard/Visa credit card gifts only on May 6, 2014 in the given time period at www.pittsburghgives.org - checks, stocks, or cash will not be accepted.
New Outreach Approaches

During the 2013-2014 year, Children’s School educators have experimented with several new approaches to sharing our best work with regional colleagues. For example, Mrs. Rosenblum and Mrs. Bird have begun experimenting with providing mentoring for novice early childhood educators in other centers by interacting with them during observations at the Children’s School, as well as by visiting them in their own classrooms to offer support and resources relevant to the areas of growth identified by the educators and their directors. They are currently exploring ways to extend this mentoring to include family providers.

• Observation Days – On Columbus Day in October and Martin Luther King, Jr. Day in January, we offered our first “observation days” for educators whose centers were closed for those holidays. We focused this year’s events on Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math (STEAM) Education, so we provided seminar, discussion, and observation time related to the ways we integrate STEAM topics into our daily activities and our thematic units. In October, about 20 educators observed during the preschool Recycling unit and the kindergarten Elements of Art unit, while about 10 educators and our 12 Duksung practicum students observed in January during our Building unit.

• Tailored Workshops – In February, Miss Mangan and Dr. Carver designed a full morning workshop for the educators at the three Angels’ Place centers (North Side, Brookline, and Swissvale). These centers offer free child care for single parents so that they can stay in school, and they offer parenting classes and other resources to support engaged and effective parenting. At the time of our workshop, the organization had just experienced a sudden leadership change, so we spent the morning emphasizing the ways that considering varied perspectives can help open the teams to new possibilities for the future that can be achieved via committed partnership. We used The Art of Possibility framework that has been the basis for our own staff development this year, and we shared many of the children’s books that have helped ground our discussions (as well as being the basis for Dr. Carver’s Director’s Corner articles this year).
Undergraduate Spotlight

Sandra Kalanyan’s first memory of the Children's School was of hearing the joyful voices of the children as they enjoyed their outdoor playground when it used to be at the basement of Margaret Morrison, while I worked in my first year architecture studio four stories above them. During the beautiful months of fall and spring, our windows would always be open, allowing the sounds of their innocent freedom to waft up and fill us with some of their joy as well. At the time, it struck me as strange that preschoolers were occupying the same building and the same environment as college students and professors, but now, I see the beauty of the idea and understand just how much the children have to learn in such a stimulating environment. I am now in my fifth and final year of the architecture program, and have had the privilege of working with the children personally, learning invaluable lessons along the way.

I first took Dr. Carver’s Child Development course in my third year at CMU. Although I had little experience with children at the time, I found the subject fascinating and enjoyed the time I was able to spend observing the children. Comparing the course material to what I saw in the kindergarten classroom was very interesting and allowed me to gain a much deeper understanding of the behavior I was witnessing. Ever since taking the course, working at the Children’s School became a personal goal for me – I knew that it would be highly rewarding and would provide a short period of relief from the constant work load associated with the architecture program. It has proven to do just that.

Although I only started working at the Children’s School in my final semester at CMU, I couldn't be happier with my experience. Every day is a new adventure with the Green Room friends, whose energy and insight is wonderful to see. With their teachers as examples, I have learned the value of patience and have seen how much of a difference it can make for children when they are given a chance to figure things out on their own. I have also seen the deep level of learning they experience as a result of the units they explore for long periods of time. I was lucky enough to join the Green Room when they were learning about buildings, and was delighted to see their creations when it came to making paper bag houses, paper sculptures, and the collaborative effort of making a tall tower in the classroom! The exposure they have to all kinds of subject matter at such a young age is wonderful, and their ability to explore these units so deeply through the activities that their teachers organize is even more remarkable.

I am so thankful for the several hours of relief I am able to enjoy each week as I prepare to graduate and enter the world beyond. Although I’m not sure of my plans for the future, I do hope that I will find ways to engage with children and even work towards shaping their built environment as part of my career. I am grateful to the children and the teachers of the Children's School for welcoming me into their enriching world and allowing me to learn with them about buildings, birds, music, and much more!
Research Spotlight

The Flower Game

Professor Anna Fisher and graduate student Karrie Godwin are investigating the relationship between learning and other general cognitive processes such as attention, memory, processing speed, executive function, and general reasoning ability. In the Flower Game, they are examining how children allocate their attention in different learning environments. In particular, they are interested in examining whether children's ability to effectively distribute their attention has consequences for learning new science content. In this computer game, children are presented with a series of pictures of flowers. Children are told the name for each picture. At the end of the game, a memory assessment is administered to see which items the children learned. For example, after learning the names of different types of flowers, children may be presented with a picture of a flower and asked to recall the flower’s name (e.g., “What was the name of this flower?”).

The Fish Game

Fisher and Godwin’s Fish Game is a similar computer game in which children are presented with a series of pictures of fish. Children are told the name for each picture. At the end of the game, a memory assessment is administered to see which items the children learned. For example, after learning the names of different types of fish children may be asked to identify the barb (e.g., “Point to the barb”).

The Math Game

Graduate student Jing Tian is working with Dr. Robert Siegler to investigate whether individual differences and cross-country differences in early mathematical achievements are influenced by spontaneous focusing on numerosity. To determine children’s spontaneous focusing on numerosity tendency, the experimenter tells children several stories and asks comprehension questions regarding the information in the stories, including some questions about numbers mentioned in the stories. After the story task, the experimenter will play an imitation game with children. The experimenter puts a certain number of red chips into the Teddy Bank and asks children to do exactly the same afterwards, noting whether the child imitates the correct number of chips.

Then, the researchers use three short tasks to determine children’s early mathematical abilities.

- Asking children to give the experimenter a certain number of toys.
- Finding the proper place for numbers on a 0 to 10 number line.
- Comparing two numbers and indicating which is bigger.

Jing will calculate the correlation between the children’s math skills and spontaneous focus on numerosity, as well as comparing the performance of American and Chinese children. This study will add to our understanding of individual and cross-country differences in early mathematical abilities. Also, it has implications for improving the abilities of children with poor mathematical skills and helping them catch up with their peers.
Research Spotlight, continued …

The Hide and Seek Game

A math study being run by students in Dr. Anna Fisher’s Developmental Research Methods class is designed to investigate whether using concrete or abstract objects for counting has an effect on symbolic understanding of numbers in preschoolers. A *concrete object* refers to an object that is perceptually rich (colorful and visually stimulating) and familiar, such as a photograph of a farm animal. An *abstract object* refers to an object without a concrete existence that is perceptually poor (neither colorful nor visually stimulating), such as a black dot. It has been shown that counting concrete objects influences the counting performance of 4-year-old children. It is harder for children to count perceptually rich objects than it is to count perceptually poor objects. These student researchers are interested in whether this effect generalizes to the symbolic understanding of numbers.

In the Hide and Seek Game, researchers showed the child five small boxes with different numbers of either farm animals or black dots on them. The child was shown a small teddy bear being placed into one of the boxes and then told that the big teddy bear likes to copy whatever the small bear does. Then a screen was removed from the table, revealing 5 big boxes that have numerals on them that correspond to the number of black dots or farm animals. Children were asked to find the big bear. The bear was hidden in the box with the numeral that corresponds to the number of black dots or farm animals on the small box where the small bear was hidden. After the Hide and Seek trials, researchers conducted a post-test to examine children’s numerical knowledge in the range of 1-10. This was tested with a sheet of paper with four numerals on each page, where the child pointed to the correct numeral out of four options when the researcher said a number.

![Image of farm animals and black dots]

3       5

It is important to understand how children learn symbolic representations of numbers. In many cases, teachers may use perceptually rich objects as an aid to hold the attention of young children, but this may actually hinder the process of understanding symbolic representation of numbers by acting as a distractor. The results of this study will help educators and parents better support young children’s math learning.

*NOTE: Four other project groups from the Developmental Research Methods class are still finalizing their studies, but families will receive study descriptions via the children’s backpacks on the day they participate as usual.*
Director’s Corner: Cooperative Games

After embracing our own passions and enrolling in the inspired causes of others, we can purposefully orchestrate significant transformations, as exemplified in The Art of Possibility. Zander and Zander advocate “Being the Board”, by which they mean renaming yourself “as the board on which the whole game is being played” (p. 141). In this practice, we quit playing the Blame Game, in which we focus on “shoulds” and “oughts” because we really cannot do anything about others’ choices, and we choose to focus less on gaining control and more on making a difference that will improve our experience of the situation.

At the Children’s School, our most dramatic example of this practice came after our school flooded in 2009 and then again in 2011. In both cases, we could have chosen to play a game of panic or pity, to be demanding or downtrodden, but we chose instead to play a more collaborative game of optimism and opportunity. In both cases, our approach led to positive relationships with the many professionals who assisted with our restoration and to productive renovations by combining our insurance funding with some capital reserves. If adults model such strategies for improving our experience of the situations we face, while also helping children to practice similar strategies in small ways, they can build strong skills for facing future challenges. For example, when distributing carpet squares, we have a saying that, “You get what you get, and you don’t get upset.” Being the board in this context might involve choosing not to whine about not getting your favorite purple carpet square and instead choosing to pretend that the green one you got is a lovely magic carpet.

A real life example written for children is “Wangari’s Trees of Peace”, by Jeanette Winter, a true story of Wangari Maathai, a Kenyan environmentalist and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize. Wangari faces the challenge of deforestation of her homeland and repeated opposition from the male-dominated government and business sector by changing the game and planting saplings herself while teaching other women to do the same. Her vision, determination, and creative incentives yielded widespread commitment to replenishing the trees and sustainably managing Kenya’s natural resources.

Zander and Zander’s next practice involves articulating a common vision of harmony, peace, and plenty. Leadership in “Creating Frameworks for Possibility” involves boldness like that of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. who shared his “dream of equality of opportunity, of privilege and property widely distributed …” or the teacher who shaved her head in order to help the healthy children in her group better connect with the classmate having chemotherapy. “Alexander and the Wind-Up Mouse” by Leo Lionni is a children’s story about envisioning new possibilities. Alexander, a real mouse who is tired of being chased and avoiding mousetraps, wishes to be a wind-up mouse like Willy, who everyone seems to love. The two become friends while Alexander pursues a magical means of becoming like Willy. When he learns that Willy is about to become trash with other old toys, Alexander considers a new, self-sacrificing option for the friendship to continue. Creating frameworks for possibility is about designing new games for living, where playing becomes more important than winning and everyone can participate fully. During the recent Bird Bonanza, families had the opportunity to experience some cooperative games designed to help children focus more on strategic play than individual success. We can all benefit from similar practices as we partner to enhance our teaching and parenting, particularly in contexts that involve circumstances beyond our collective control.