Week of the Young Child

NAEYC (The National Association for the Education of Young Children) designates the week of April 16th to 20th as the Week of the Young Child. 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. Consider observing this week with your family by celebrating Music Monday, Tasty Tuesday, Work Together Wednesday, Artsy Thursday, and Family Friday.

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. To honor young learners on campus during the Month of the Young Child, the Children’s School will be celebrating with the Cyert Center, the Reggio-Emilia inspired full day early learning center at CMU. On Tuesday, April 17th, educators and children from the Cyert Center will joined us on our playground from 10:15 to 12:15 for outdoor activities and a simple snack. The rain date is Wednesday the 18th.

Enrollment Updates

2018-2019 School Year: We currently have 66 children registered for the next school year, but there are still spaces in all age groups, especially the afternoon preschool. We also have a few spaces still available in our Morning Extended Program. We would appreciate you making referrals to your friends and neighbors. Mrs. Rosenblum is happy to conduct tours for prospective families!

Summer Camp Enrollment: There are also spaces remaining in our June Summer Camp. This year’s camp theme is Plants & Dirt and will be taught by Children’s School educators. You can register your child for one, two, three or four weeks, and the hours are 8:45 am until 1 pm, Monday through Friday. Please contact Maggie Rosenblum at rosenblu@andrew.cmu.edu if you would like to enroll your child. We’re looking forward to exploring how to help plants grow!

April Dates:

- Friday, March 30th – NO SCHOOL for children
- Conference Preparation Day for Educators
- Friday, April 13th – 9:30-11:00 am – Educator / Parent Discussion re: Raising Children in Violent Times (Child care for 3’s & under provided)
- Friday, April 20th – NO SCHOOL for children
- Parent / Teacher Conferences in the Afternoon
- Enjoy CMU’s Spring Carnival “Myths & Legends” April 19th to 21st (https://www.springcarnival.org/)
- Friday, April 27th – Parent / Teacher Conferences – NO SCHOOL for children
Happy Birthday, CMU Children’s School

Please join us for a birthday party for the Children’s School on Sunday, April 8th from 1:00-3:00pm. This event for the whole family will include activities and games, a sing-a-long, and, of course, birthday cake! RSVP to cmuchsch@andrew.cmu.edu.

Watch for more information about other 50th Anniversary Year Events!

- July 2018: Ice Cream Social
- August 2018: Musical Showcase
- Fall 2018: Children’s School 50th Anniversary Gala

If you are interested in helping to plan any of these events, please contact Miss Hancock (lh37@andrew.cmu.edu) or Mrs. Rosenblum (rosenblu@andrew.cmu.edu).

50th Anniversary School Spirit Gear

In honor of the Children’s School 50th Anniversary year, special 50th Anniversary School Spirit wear is available to order. Please use the enclosed order form if you are interested in purchasing any items. We take cash or checks made payable to CMU Children’s School.

50 for 50 Fundraising Effort

As part of our 50th Anniversary Year, we set a goal to raise a minimum of $50,000 for the Children’s School. These funds will provide resources to enhance the learning experience for the constituents of the Children’s School such as playground shade and bike track resurfacing, educational programs, learning materials, and technology updates, etc. If you would like to contribute to this fund, please visit the “Ways to Give” page on the Children’s School website or call CMU’s Annual Giving Office at 412-268-2021.

Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day

On April 26th, the Children’s School will be supporting the Carnegie Mellon University’s “Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day”. Over 200 children are hosted at CMU annually, as they shadow their parents and take part in various campus sponsored activities. We will be hosting one group of 15 children on the afternoon of April 26th. Since the preschoolers will be studying GAMES, our guests will try a variety of games and receive Children’s School beach balls as gifts.

Year End Celebration

The annual Year-End Celebration Picnic for all Children’s School families will be held after the Kindergarten Graduation Ceremony on Friday, May 18th. The Children’s School will be providing the main course, and we need volunteers to provide paper products, beverages, salads and desserts, as well as to help with the set up and clean up. Committee meetings to plan this event will be held on Monday, April 9th at 9 am and 12:45 pm. Please join us if you can! Even if you cannot join us on that date, there will be volunteer opportunities for this event, so watch for an email about using a Google.doc to indicate how you can help. Please contact Maggie Rosenblum if you have any questions (rosenblu@andrew.cmu.edu).
Join Us for Garden Tending

Weather permitting, we will need some adult volunteers to help with garden clean-up and to prep our garden beds for planting. Tasks include:

- garden clean-up such as removing leaf debris
- pruning plants on the hillside
- prepping garden boxes on the wall for planting by the children later in May

If you are available to help in the garden April 23rd – 25th, please contact Miss Hancock at lh37@andrew.cmu.edu.

Adopt our Garden for a Summer Week

During July and August, our garden will continue to grow but needs some friends to help with watering and weeding.

If your family would be interested in adopting our garden for a week in July or August, please contact Miss Hancock at lh37@andrew.cmu.edu or 412-268-2198.

April Gallery Features

3’s Friends: Aras B., Rowan B.-P., and Emma Anne K.

4’s Friends: Jayden S., Oliver S., Claes W., Raj W., and Tigerlily W.

Kindergarten Friends: Harris B., Leo H., and Chudi U.

Scholarship Funding Update

In March, we received additional contributions to our Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) and Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit (OSTC) programs. Through the EITC and OSTC, eligible Pennsylvania businesses can earn tax credits while providing financial assistance for children to attend preschool or an approved K-12 school. In addition to the donations mentioned in previous newsletters, we have also received contributions from The Buncher Company, Five Points Artisan Bakeshop, NexTier Bank, and UGI Storage Company.

If you would like more information or can help us to build a list of prospective businesses, please contact the Main Office.
Family Social Organization Opportunities

**Back by Popular Demand! The FSO Returns to the Squirrel Hill Food Pantry**

We’ve partnered again with the Squirrel Hill Food Pantry to give Children’s School students another opportunity to learn about the work of the food pantry and get hands-on experience with participating in helping neighborhood children. On **Friday, April 13th at 3pm**, children will decorate a paper bag and then fill it with food and treats for a child in need. They’ll also tour the food pantry and learn about the work being done there. This event can accommodate 12 children each with an adult chaperone along with a donation item from the list. Please RSVP to kensei.phillips@gmail.com to confirm your space and select a donation from the need list.

Not able to attend but still want to utilize this learning moment with your child? Donations from the need list can be dropped at the Children’s School and will be transported to the food pantry on the day of the event. Contact kensei.phillips@gmail.com to find out what we need or list your donation directly on the public Google sheet: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1FLBWMXx_T-PvG3myXy_W3BiqSH5mizLfrRzvX3hKB-l8/edit?usp=sharing.

**Children’s School Visits the Zoo**

Mark your calendars for April 20th when the FSO helps celebrate the success of the Children's School's "Animals in the Wild" exploration with a trip to the Pittsburgh Zoo. It's a perfect way to get outdoors, see live animals and follow-up on the thematic curriculum. Further information will be coming from event organizer Alexis Tuckfelt (Ruthie PM 4's, alexiscoupe@aol.com).

**Flight Trampoline Park**

On **Saturday, May 12th**, please join the FSO at Flight Trampoline Park from 10:00 am - 11:00 am. This will be our last event of the year! Flight Trampoline Park offers a large trampoline area for children taller than 46 inches, as well as a Kiddie Court for children under 46 inches with small trampolines, a bounce house with a slide, and a foam pit. While we are there on Saturday, May 12, children under 46 inches, will be allowed to jump on the "big" trampolines from 10:00 am - 11:00 am. **During that time, children taller than 46 inches will not be permitted to jump on the big trampolines.** (Most of the Children's School friends are under 46 inches, meaning this rule should only affect older siblings.) After 11:00 am, children taller than 46 inches will be allowed to jump on the big trampolines and children smaller than 46 inches will only be allowed in the Kiddie Court area. Cost is $9 per child, per hour. Each family will be able to pay separately as they arrive, for however long they’d like to stay. Please tell them you are with the CMU Children's School to get the $9 price. All children will receive a pair of "flight socks", included in the price. All families will have to sign a release before their child can jump. Please RSVP to Jeni Hergenreder at jhergenreder@gmail.com. For more information or to complete a release online, please visit: www.flighttrampolinepark.com. RSVP to Jeni by Friday, May 4th so she can give the trampoline park an estimate of how many participants we’ll have. We hope to see you there!

**The FSO Book Club** has finished Wendy Mogel’s *The Blessing of a Skinned Knee*, so there will be no more discussions this spring. Thanks to all the parents who led and participated! If you have ideas for books to read in the future, please share them with Sarah Deutsch at sarah.deutsch@gmail.com.
FSO Fun in March

Families joined on Sunday, March 18th at AmazingYoga Oakmont for sun salutations, breathing and relaxation techniques while traveling on an exciting yoga adventure.

Raising Children in Violent Times

In today’s world, parents and educators have the challenge of considering how to navigate the news of violence while attempting to raise children who promote peace. Please join us on Friday, April 13th from 9:30 to 11:00am for a discussion of how children understand and learn about peace, conflict, and violence. We will consider ways to foster give and take discussions among children, help children understand and appreciate diversity, and teach children to resolve conflicts peacefully. We will discuss practical strategies for responding to violent play and helping children deal with violence in the news. Preschool 4’s and Kindergarten children will be in school, and child care will be provided in the Red Room for 3’s and younger siblings. School will be in session; please park in the East Campus garage or at one of the metered spots near the school.

Please RSVP to Miss Hancock at lh37@andrew.cmu.edu and include the names and ages of the children who will need child care.

Site Visit for NAEYC Accreditation Renewal

On March 5th and 6th, an assessor from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) spent about 9 hours at the Children’s School observing our classrooms, reviewing our administrative and classroom portfolios, evaluating our facilities, and rating the observable features of our program quality. Though, most likely, we will not receive word of our accreditation renewal decision for several months, all of the immediate indicators during the site visit were positive. The assessor notified us that we met all of the “required” criteria, she noted no health and safety violations, and her review of our administrative portfolio revealed no “missing evidence”. All of these items would require immediate action, which is why the assessor provides that feedback on the final day of her visit. We look forward to additional feedback from NAEYC and will share the results with you as soon as they are available. Thanks for your support throughout the 5-year renewal process!
“Animals in the Wild” Family Festival

On Thursday, March 8th, about 220 Children’s School family members from 58 of our 71 families celebrated our whole school unit at our Animals in the Wild family festival. Families enjoyed talking with Lorren and Sandy from the Humane Animal Rescue League and observing two animal ambassadors, a wood turtle named Gustave and a box turtle named Rocky, watching them eat strawberries and greens, and learning about how they are adapted to their habitats. They also explored our classroom worms and specimens from the Carnegie Museum of Natural History with regular magnifying glasses and a digital “Zoomy”. Many families bravely watched a video clip of an owl regurgitating a pellet of undigested parts of the animals it had eaten, and then they dissected an “owl pellet” to see what bones they could recognize with the help of an identification chart.
More Animals in the Wild Activities

At the family festival, children showed their families the yoga poses they had been learning and taught the animal songs they had been singing, as well as playing a variety of favorite animal games that are part of our school collection or were invented by different groups of children. Also, the kindergartners prepared a scavenger hunt of animals they studied from habitats around the world. To add even more creativity, families could make animal headbands in the Blue Room, visit the office to get their photo taken, and work in the Make Shop to create their own animals with varied materials. Children could also make a bird feeder with cereal to take home to share with their neighborhood birds.
Family Spotlight: The Triple A’s

Hello! We’re the Triple A’s, as my mom affectionately calls us. We are Pittsburgh natives and our family includes: Aubri (5), who is in the Kindergarten class at The Children’s School; Anyssa (14), Aubri’s big sister, who is in the eighth grade and wants to be an “engineer of some sort” (her exact words); and myself, Angelica (pronounced An-ja-lee-ka), a Senior Policy Analyst by day and of course Aubri and Anyssa’s mom. I’d be remiss if I didn’t mention my mom, Joann, who many of you may see bringing Aubri to school, picking her up after school, and attending daytime FSO events because I am ALWAYS at work.

When deciding on where to send Aubri for preschool, I knew I wanted more than what the “typical” local preschools were offering, but I couldn’t find the “right” place. My aunt, who works at CMU, suggested I consider The Children’s School. I then remembered that my cousin attended The Children’s School over 17 years ago! Taking my aunt’s advice, I visited the website, read about the program, and was sold on this being a good fit for Aubri. My mom (because, of course, I had to work) and Anyssa visited the school with Aubri, and they too were sold. Especially Aubri. She was so eager to attend that she kept asking if she was going to school tomorrow, and it was only April. This is now Aubri’s second year at the Children’s school and she LOVES it! – last year she was in Mrs. Cherin’s class (PM 4’s).

When asked, “What do you like most about school?” Aubri says, “Learning, painting, switching jobs, and playing with toys (blocks, Legos, on the rainbow rug).” “Oh, and snack time because I eat a lot there.” Aubri also likes playing outside with her classmates, especially riding bikes and sledding. Her favorite FSO events so far have been going to see Ferdinand and the Just Ducky tour. Aubri has such a creative spirit with an imagination that never ceases to amaze me. What I like most about The Children’s School is that the teachers foster her creative side without sacrificing the learning.

As a family, we mostly like relaxing and watching movies together at home. Our latest favorite is Coco, which was great by the way. When we do venture out, we like going to restaurants, the movie theatre, Dave and Buster’s, the Science Center, the Children’s Museum, and shopping. We haven’t taken many vacations, but we have visited Disney World TWICE. Aubri also enjoys spending time with her dad, Sha, who is her “favorite person in all the land” (and that may be an understatement) and her two half-sisters, Shaterra (12) and Peyton (3), both of whom she adores (that too may be an understatement).
N4C Conference in Albuquerque, NM

From March 14th to 17th, Mrs. Rosenblum and Dr. Carver attended the annual conference of the National Coalition for Campus Children’s Centers with about 200 educators from campus-based early childhood programs. In our presentation, we shared diverse ways to promote creativity among educators by creating a culture of creativity, providing resources, collaborating, and using a range of creativity techniques. We also compiled ideas from 37 of our 60 participants who submitted input forms and then shared the list with everyone who attended the conference.

We attended presentations on topics such as promoting resilience in young children, helping both educators and young children to process their emotions, using digital media to better connect with parents, and encouraging children to engage in more nature-based experiences. We visited a full-day program affiliated with the University of New Mexico and spent a fun evening with colleagues at the Explora science center. After a recent staff dialogue about culturally-sensitive ways to teach about America’s indigenous peoples, we took the opportunity to learn about the 19 Pueblo tribes by visiting the Pueblo Cultural Center, as well as to explore the diverse New Mexico cultural history by taking a driving tour of the city and visiting the Albuquerque Museum. We extended our investigation of Animals in the Wild by visiting the Rattlesnake Museum, where we encountered 34 of the 84 varieties of rattlesnakes. We shared meals with colleagues from the states of Florida, Nevada, Colorado, Illinois, Kentucky, New York, Minnesota, etc. Dialogue with such diverse educators over the course of several days provided the opportunity to more deeply reflect on our own practice and consider possibilities for enriching our work with educators, families and children.
Undergraduate Spotlight:

In addition to benefitting from the help of diverse CMU undergraduates, the Children’s School occasionally partners with high schools to provide career experience for high school students, including the talented Hanna O'Donnell, who is a senior at City High School.

My experience at CMU’s Children’s School is easily one of the most eye opening and humbling experiences I’ve had in my 18 years. It not only has been a great time with the staff and students, but it has given me relationships with people who have helped me find myself and my career path. Every day is an adventure here at the Children’s School. You never know what you’re going to walk into, but that’s the exciting part! I have loved this opportunity to work with the teachers and students in all different types of environments outside of the classroom, from the gym, to Schenley Park, to the playground, and so much more. I have also loved interacting with students from all over the world who don’t speak much English, seeing them learn and interact in very similar ways. I am thankful and humbled that I have been a part of the Children’s School family. It truly has been a blessing to have had this opportunity with this amazing group of teachers and students.

Kindergartners Decorate for Dietrich Day

Dietrich Day on March 28th is designed to celebrate all that CMU’s Dietrich College of Humanities & Social Sciences has to offer, which includes the Children’s School. The festive afternoon of food and games on the CFA Lawn will include a nacho bar, an obstacle course, desserts and sweets, a mobile photo booth, oversized lawn games, and bedazzled unicorns made by our kindergarten friends. The mythical unicorn is Dietrich College’s mascot, perhaps to open our minds to possibilities!

Undergrads Support Spring Carnival

On Friday and Saturday, April 20 and 21, from 8am to Noon, the CMU Alumni Association will sponsor a KidZone Area in a tent on Frew Street with a balloon artist, face painting, coloring, free t-shirts, and the opportunity for children to build and race their own LEGO® buggy on our track. The Midway rides open at 11am on Friday and Saturday, with most rides costing between $.50 and $2.00. For a full carnival schedule, see http://www.alumni.cmu.edu/s/1410/alumni/index-social.aspx?sid=1410&gid=1&pgid=785.

Undergrads Tori Iatarola and Camille Williams are working with their sorority, Kappa Alpha Theta, on a Titanic-themed booth. It’s Camille’s first time experiencing this CMU tradition! New volunteer Hannah Fernandes is working on the Santa’s Workshop booth with the Delta Gamma sorority.
Research Spotlight:

The Bug Game

Psychology graduate student Emily Keebler is working with Dr. Anna Fisher to extend our understanding of the different instructional techniques that are better suited to helping young children learn different types of categories. The research team is interested in whether visual context affects children’s category learning. More broadly, they are examining the role of attention in learning more and less challenging topics and the possible implications for designing early education materials. In The Bug Game, kindergarten children learn about fictional bugs through verbal descriptions and visual examples. The researchers are not using actual academic content, such as real bugs, in order to conduct valid tests of learning (i.e., children’s answers in this game are related to how well they learn completely novel categories, rather than how much they know prior to playing the game).

After the experimenter introduced a category of bug, children viewed a series of bug pictures and classified each picture as belonging or not belonging to that category. When preparing their materials, the researchers manipulated the visual context in which children learn about the bugs so that some categories are shown on an unembellished background, and some are shown on vibrant, patterned backgrounds with related features of the habitat. In the game, children learn different types of categories. In some categories, all of the bugs look fairly similar, such that children can rely on perceptual similarity for categorization. However, for the more difficult categories, membership relies on one pair of critical features with all other features being incidental, such that the children need to focus their attention more precisely to determine if a bug belongs to the category. The researchers’ goal is to determine whether the presence of visual embellishments differentially affects category learning for easier and harder categories, based on different attentional demands.

The Spot the Difference Game

One of the groups from the undergraduate Research Methods in Child Development course is examining whether the timing of reward affect children’s performance on a task, specifically whether getting partial rewards intermittently during a task is more motivating for Preschool 4’s and Kindergartners than one large reward at the end. Each child is shown three sets of two nearly identical drawings and instructed to point to the differences between them. The experimenters either give children 5 small stickers after each of the comparison tasks or 15 at the end of the set of tasks. Children then use the stickers to decorate a picture to take home with them. The researchers will be comparing the accuracy and speed with which the children locate the differences between the drawings to test whether it will vary based on whether they receive intermittent small rewards or one larger reward at the end. They will also test the children’s intrinsic motivation to continue the game without reward by asking if they want to do extra Spot the Difference tasks after they decorate their picture with stickers. Previous research suggests that intermittent rewards may increase task performance and that extrinsic rewards may decrease intrinsic motivation to do tasks purely for their enjoyment, challenge, etc. This study is the first to investigate both issues simultaneously.
Director’s Corner: Renewing Wonder

As this year’s Whole School exploration of Animals in the Wild draws to a close and spring commences (whether the weather aligns with the calendar or not), I find myself burrowing beneath the intellectual principles of life “in the wild” to focus on observing the amazing patterns of animal life with their young. Like many children and adults in Pittsburgh, I watched in awe as the Hays Bald Eagle Webcam showed the first eaglet hatching. What amazing persistence from a new life that is, at the same time, so fragile. Watching the adult eagles so gently care for their young and so fiercely struggle to protect them is a similar paradox, akin to human parenting that requires a balance of warmth and structure, attachment and letting go, devoted attention and distance, etc. With animals, much of the challenge of balancing these seemingly opposing qualities is instinctual, with each different species following a pattern of parent-child interdependence and communication that is uniquely adaptive. Human families have an even richer array of effective parenting styles that uniquely suit their heritage, current context, and individual profiles. At the same time, 25 years of collaborating with parents at the Children’s School has taught me that many joys and woes of parenting are widely shared across the surface level differences between families, such as pride in children’s accomplishments and worries about their futures.

At the beginning of our unit, I asked the group of parents who attended our theme introduction to view a series of photographs entitled “Parenting in the Wilderness”. You can watch the brief slideshow at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xtE0FBHFYag. Here are a few that resonated with numerous parents.

Perhaps you can identify with the challenge of balancing an often overwhelming load, the simultaneous pride and pressure of constantly being a model, or the anxious gaze as your precious child takes first steps farther from home. All of these experiences are a natural part of the process for parents, educators, mentors, etc. One way to embrace them is to renew our sense of wonder, to admire the beauty of the child, savor the surprise of the unexpected interaction, marvel at the mistakes we make, admire the ingenuity - even of the challenging behaviors, and capitalize on our own and our children’s capacity for starting fresh each day with curiosity about what may transpire, what we can learn, and how we can support each other. As Socrates said, “Wonder is the beginning of wisdom.” May this season of our partnership in nurturing young children be wonder-full, so that together we become increasingly wise.