Welcome to the Children’s School Family!

The start to our 2011-2012 school year was a challenge because of the flood on August 19th, but with a positive attitude, collaborative stance, and the expert leadership and craftsmanship of the Carnegie Mellon facilities management team and their contractors, we successfully navigated the floodwaters, recovery process, and reconstruction. After just a week’s delay in our fall schedule, our educators, families, children, researchers, and undergraduates were ALL so excited to start learning that we have had our smoothest phasing in process ever. Thanks to everyone for your patience, flexibility, cooperation, and support! Special thanks to Jendoco supervisor Tony for his leadership throughout the reconstruction, his good humor, and his creative attention to ways we could better flood proof our space! Now, we can focus our attention on program activities and enhancements as together we seek to make the Children’s School the best learning environment possible for all of our learners. Here are some ways you can stay informed and get involved!

Communications

• Our main source of communication is our family newsletter and monthly calendar. General information for all families is included with this newsletter.
• Each teaching team also prepares a daily update on classroom activities, either via email or web distribution, as well as writing a monthly paper or web newsletter including specific information about the curriculum themes, along with the related activities and projects.
• We will send general school announcements via e-mail in addition to the newsletters. So please check that we have your current email address!
• Our fourth source of communication is the Children’s School website: www.psy.cmu.edu/childrensschool. Be sure to check the Children’s School Art Gallery on our website! Each month we will feature different children. This month’s artists are: 3’s Friends Mae B., Greta L., Nile O. and Benjamin P.; 4’s Friends Lynn C., Elena E., Yu M., Paul P., John R., and Liam S.; Kindergarten Friends Kasim J., Charlotte S., and Yujin S.

October Open House Events

Wednesday, October 12th from 4:30 – 6:30pm Four Year Old Classes
Wednesday, October 19th from 4:30 – 6:30pm Three Year Old Classes and Kindergarten

Staff / Parent Discussion re: School Choice Friday, October 14th from 9:30 - 11:00am
(child care provided for infants, toddlers & three year olds)

October 21st to 31st - Dr. Carver, Mrs. Bird & Mrs. Perovich visit Duksung Women’s University

No School on Friday, October 28th CONFERENCE PREPARATION DAY for STAFF
**Family Committee News**

The Family Social Organization (FSO) got off to a great start with 2 play dates before school was even in session! Approximately 20 families joined us at the Carnegie Library and My Little Outback in Squirrel Hill, and we enjoyed catching up with old friends and meeting families new to the Children’s School. We are planning a trip to see the Silk Road Acrobats in October, and many other fun events throughout the school year. If you have suggestions for an activity you’d like to see planned, please contact Aparna Brown, mom of Delia in the Kindergarten, at apanabrown@gmail.com.

Mrs. Rosenblum will soon be contacting committee volunteers to arrange organizational meetings. It is not too late to volunteer! We can use help on our Family Social Organization, Library Committee, Sewing Committee, Fundraising Committee, Small Repairs and Construction Committee, Gardening Committee, School Pictures Committee, Book Club/Fair Committee, Library Cabinet Decorating Committee, and Teacher Appreciation and End-of-Year Picnic Committee. Please e-mail Mrs. Rosenblum at rosenblu@andrew.cmu.edu if you are interested in helping.

**So Many School Choices!**

How do families make the best choice of elementary school for each of their children and decide when to make the transition? Please join us for a review of school choice principles and discussion of strategies for exploring school options.

**Friday, October 14, 2011 from 9:30 – 11:00 AM at the Children’s School**
- Preschool 4’s and Kindergarten children will be in school.
- Child Care will be provided for children 3 and under in the Red Room.

NOTE: Though the Pittsburgh Public School web site still lists September 1, 2012 as the birthday cutoff for kindergarten entrance in 2012, the district has changed for the 2012-2013 year to a cutoff of October 1, 2012. In other words, a child who turns 5 by October 1 will be eligible for kindergarten (or 6 by October 1 for 1st grade).

**On-Line Usborne Book Fair**

From October 3rd through October 31st, we are running an on-line Book Fair. We chose Usborne Books because they present high quality content in developmentally appropriate ways, using a variety of engaging styles, with materials that are durable. We will have a display available in the office, so that you can peruse their texts before ordering.

Simply log onto the Usborne website at [www.usbornebycremers.com](http://www.usbornebycremers.com), click on Active eFairs and place your order. The Children's School will be able to purchase books with the points awarded for each family’s order. So the more books you order for your family - the more books that will be made available to your Children's School family! Anyone can order - so make sure to let grandparents and friends know about the sale!
Playground Nearing Completion

With the help of the Perfido, Weiskopf, Wagstaff & Goettel architecture and planning firm and the consistent hard work of the Jendoco Construction Corporation, our temporary playground is nearing completion. We appreciate the PWWG architects collaborating with us to design a safe and engaging outdoor learning environment, as well as the CMU project managers and Jendoco construction crew working creatively as the inevitable issues arose that required adjustments. So far, our sheds have been built and our materials moved into them, the climbing tunnel, sandbox, and “gazebo bambino” (pictured with Jendoco supervisor Rick) have been installed and surrounded by wood mulch. Kindergartner Elias helped test the stability of our new bike path, which is now ready for our riders. Our benches and planter boxes have been assembled so that they are ready for use. This week, the fence is being installed so that the landscapers can begin planting and sodding. We are eagerly anticipating the delivery of our shade pavilions so that they can be installed next week. The children have already had opportunities to observe the work in progress and to walk the bike path; they are very excited to begin using this wonderful outdoor space as soon as it is safe for them.

Meanwhile, other workers organized by Jendoco have erected scaffolding on the west façade where the current Children’s School playground is located so that they can begin the Margaret Morrison masonry restoration. Water damage has caused chunks of terra cotta and cement from the building to fall periodically over the past 12 years, and patching attempts have been unsuccessful, so restoration is the safest and most strategic choice. The extensive restoration is projected to take 18 months, and you can follow the progress on CMU’s Campus Design and Facility Development web site (http://www.cmu.edu/cdfd/mmch-restoration-project/).

Perhaps You Wondered …

… why we always schedule family events during dinner time without providing a meal. Excellent question! We have experimented with different timing over the years, as well as with providing more substantive food. We’ve learned that our attendance is best in the late afternoon and that the snack is enough to help children who are too excited to eat a full meal during the event to wait for a later dinner. Earlier hours were hard for working parents, and later hours both interfered with older children’s evening activities and disrupted bath and bedtime routines. We plan the events so that families can comfortably attend for the first hour, the middle hour, or the last hour – whatever works!

Watch this column in future newsletters for answers to questions parents raised on last May’s online survey. If you have any questions or concerns throughout the school year, please do not hesitate to talk with your child’s teacher, with Ms. Hancock or Mrs. Rosenblum, or contact Dr. Carver directly. We value your perspectives and are grateful for your constructive input!
Physical Education Highlights

We will begin our Physical Education this year by teaching yoga. Yoga helps children develop strength and suppleness, improves physical coordination and mental concentration, and increases self-awareness and confidence. After becoming comfortable with the technique, yoga can calm and relax young children because of the moments of stillness and calm. Children are naturally flexible, so the positions will not be difficult. The young children will also enjoy the animal role-play used to explain the different positions. The balancing and relaxing aspect of yoga may take more practice. The positions used in class are designed for fun, so give your child lots of encouragement and let the practice be playful, rather than strictly following the positions.

Practice Tips for Preschoolers and Beginning Yoga Students (see www.yogakids.com)

• Wear comfortable clothing with bare feet.
• Use an open space with a non-slip surface (such as a yoga mat).
• It is best not to practice yoga immediately after eating (this is recommended for any exercise).
• Practice with your child so he or she can copy you.
• Let your child move at his or her own pace, but give support when necessary.
• Yoga is meant to be fun, so do not expect perfection from your child when trying poses.
• Don’t force your preshooler into a pose or let him or her hold any pose for too long.
• Allow your child to play with each pose before moving on to the next one.
• Encourage your child to keep his or her breath flowing. Preschoolers are not too young to practice controlled breathing. Make sure to move slowly in and out of poses.
• Discourage your child from putting weight onto his or her head (especially Downward Dog).
• Most important, keep yoga simple and playful!

Support the Children’s School 5K Team !!

The Pittsburgh Association for the Education of Young Children (PAEYC) is proud to announce the 1st Annual 5K for Learning—a 5K race and 1 mile walk supporting PAEYC programs and services. Don your sneakers and join early childhood educators and families with young children at the North Park Boathouse on Sunday, October 23, 2011. Help us to raise awareness about the importance of play, physical activity, and education for our youngest learners.

The PAEYC 5K for Learning is a day of play for the entire family. Visit www.pghaeyc.org to register the runners and walkers in your family for the 5K - all ages are welcome. If strolling the 1-Mile walk is more your speed, enjoy a $10 family registration. The 5K will step off at 9 a.m. followed by the 1-Mile walk at 9:15 a.m.

As part of our staff preparation for our Whole School Healthy Mind and Body Unit, we are all trying to get more physical exercise. Mrs. Armbruster, Mrs. Flynn, Ms. McMichael, Ms. Mangan, Mrs. Opferman, Mrs. Rosenblum, and Mrs. Tomer have formed a team to represent the Children’s School in this PAEYC event. Please feel free to join them by registering for yourself or your family. If you are not available run or walk, please consider sponsoring our team for the event. You can send a check made payable to PAEYC to Ms. Drash in the school office.
Family Spotlight:
Four 4 Four

My husband John and I were first introduced to the Children’s School in 2005 when our oldest son, Jack, entered the Morning 3’s Program. Because Jack was our first child, we choose not to enroll him in the extended day program, fearing that it might be too much for him. We learned very quickly that it was mom and dad (actually, mom) that had the biggest separation issues and quickly rectified our mistake the following year when Jack enrolled in the Extended 4’s Program. Jack loved making new friends and exploring new territories, and John and I fell in love with how the School’s intellectually challenging environment is wrapped in warm and nurturing arms.

No surprise that our next son, Luke, couldn’t wait to enter the Extended 3’s and, subsequently, the Extended 4’s Programs. Jack continued on to “big-boy” Kindergarten. Next came Mark, who joined the Extended 4’s Program in 2010 and finally our fourth son, Clark, joined the Extended 3’s Program just this year while Mark is thoroughly enjoying himself in Kindergarten.

The thing that amazes me the most about having four boys is how different they all are. Jack is our quiet thinker. He enjoys reading, chess, golf and playing the cello. Luke is our energetic artist. Luke loves to draw with oil pastels, play the violin and lacrosse and to run! Mark is an inquisitive and joyful soul. Everyday is “awesome” and anything that has to do with nature and science is right up his alley. He was even nicknamed “Nature Mark” by his Children’s School friends last year. Lastly, Clark is our fourth blessing who is interested in whatever his three older brothers are doing!

Henne Jewelers in Shadyside is where you will find John six days a week. A former CPA, John is the fourth generation of Henne to carry on the family business. John especially enjoys his commute to work from our Fox Chapel home during the school year when he starts his day by taking the boys to school.

Lastly, I worked for a number of years as an attorney for Reed Smith LP before taking a “mommy sabbatical.” Little did I know how challenging my days would become. Even on the most difficult days, I would make the same decision over and over. All it takes is a big smile and sloppy kiss to remind me.

We are so thrilled to be a part of the Children’s School family. Walking through the School’s doors brings a feeling of homecoming for me that I’m sure will last long after Clark graduates from Kindergarten in 2014. See you in the car line!

Dara Henne
Easy Ways to Support the School Financially

GoodSearch/GoodShop [http://www.goodsearch.com/default.aspx]
Free and Easy way to raise funds for the Children’s School!

This is the easiest thing we’ve ever asked you to do! Register with GoodSearch.com and then, every time you shop online or search the internet, a donation will be made to the Children’s School!

Here’s how: GoodShop.com works with more than 2,500 stores (including Target, Apple, Petsmart etc.) and every time you purchase something, a percentage will be donated to us! Also, GoodShop also offers over 100,000 of the most up-to-date coupons and free shipping offers so you can save money at the same time. It’s win win. GoodSearch.com is a Yahoo powered search engine that makes a donation to us each time you do a search.

Join the rest of our community in using these sites to help us easily raise money to support our mission. Get started by clicking the “Good Search” button on the Children’s School website!

Giant Eagle Apples for the Students

Each time you shop at Giant Eagle® using your Giant Eagle Advantage Card®, you can earn points for the Children’s School – points we can redeem for great educational tools. The points are automatically credited to the school through the Giant Eagle Advantage Card®.

Here’s how:
1. Register at [www.gianteagle.com/about/apples-for-students](http://www.gianteagle.com/about/apples-for-students)
2. Provide our School ID #0151
3. Each time your Giant Eagle Advantage Card is scanned through March 17, 2012, your purchases automatically earn our school FREE educational awards.

This year, we hope to earn enough points to get a flat screen monitor for group shows of theme-related video clips, slide shows of classroom photos, etc. As our children learn new ways to use technology to support their learning, we want to enable them to share with their classmates and families electronically.

Educational Improvement Tax Credit Program (EITC)

The Children’s School participates in the Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program. Through the EITC, eligible Pennsylvania businesses can earn tax credits while providing financial assistance for children to attend the Children’s School. If you would like more information or can help us to build a list of prospective businesses, please contact Educational Administrator, Linda Hancock at [lh37@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:lh37@andrew.cmu.edu) or 412-268-2198. In the past two years, we have received EITC donations from First Commonwealth, Duquesne Light, Highmark Casualty Insurance, and UPMC Health Plan, so please also join us in thanking these businesses for their support.
Positive Discipline Pointer:
Clear & Consistent Behavior Expectations

At times of transition, children adjust best when adults provide clear expectations and stable routines for safe and smooth interactions. Consistency is key for facilitating productive adaptations to new situations. That’s why the Children’s School staff spends so much time during September teaching children the expectations and routines of our school days. Taking the time to establish these practices so that they become comfortable and automatic will free both children and adults to responsibly focus on deeper learning and more challenging activities as the year progresses. We take special care with cooking, woodworking, and campus trips because of the extra safety concerns involved. One way that you can help the children at both school and home is by modeling the same behavior expectations with the same words that the children hear at school. We’ll all benefit from working across contexts to:

Be a kind friend.  
Follow the routine.  
Use your words.  
Use walking feet.  
Put everything in its place.  

Listen the first time.  
Stay in your own space.  
Use inside voices.  
Use things appropriately.

Thanks for working collaboratively with us to make school a safe and positive experience for everyone!

Holidays at the Children’s School

At the Children’s School, holidays are viewed as educational opportunities that give us the chance to learn about our diverse school community. As part of our emphasis on family identity and respect for diversity, we encourage children to talk about their family traditions, and we share stories related to the meaning of holidays. We plan age-appropriate activities to involve the children in preparing for simple school celebrations and to help them contribute to family events (e.g., basic cooking, making gifts, and so forth). We limit our school celebrations to very brief spans of time (typically one day), attempt to maintain our regular school routine, and, as always, are ready to provide extra attention and comfort as needed. Because the children may prepare their own special snack related to holidays and because many children have dietary restrictions (especially related to nuts, candy and other sweets), please do not send any food as gifts for children. In all of these ways, we can create meaningful celebrations with the young children in our educational context.

At the Children’s School, the children do not “dress up” for Halloween because children can be scared by costumes and costumes often cause toileting difficulties.
Who Can Help?

Administrative Structure & Roles

The Children’s School has a team of four professionals to jointly meet the administrative needs of our active laboratory school. We all strive to know all of the children and to interact with them frequently. We are all available to serve the educators, students, families, and researchers. At the same time, we will each focus distinctive talents in different areas, so here are some helpful hints about who to approach for which issues.

Left to Right: Ms. Drash, Miss Hancock
Dr. Carver and Mrs. Rosenblum

Dr. Carver, the Director, takes primary leadership for program and staff development. She recruits educators and coordinates all professional development and outreach efforts. She observes the classroom frequently and provides support for new curriculum development, alternate teaching strategies, ways to meet individual student needs, etc. She also serves as a resource for parents with questions about child development, education, special needs, and family issues. Dr. Carver coordinates all uses of the Children’s School as a psychology laboratory, including undergraduate courses, graduate student research, and faculty research. As a teaching professor in the Psychology Department, Dr. Carver also teaches a Child Development course, supervises the Child Development Interns, teaches the graduate course on Educational Design, serves as an academic advisor, and participates in other department events.

Miss Hancock, an Educational Administrator, will handle program administration issues, including the school calendar, ordering of materials, safety drills, monitoring the school’s primary email account (ed-admin@andrew.cmu.edu), handling of student allergies and medications, re-enrollment and recommendations. She will also coordinate requests for Carnegie Mellon services, particularly those responsible for facilities and security. She takes a lead role with teacher mentoring and consultation regarding classroom and student issues for the kindergarten staff and families.

Mrs. Rosenblum, also an Educational Administrator, will concentrate her administrative efforts on family support, beginning with recruiting and initial admission, but also including tuition payments, scholarship assistance, family involvement, general family resources, committees and special events. She will also coordinate undergraduate support staff and arrange classroom coverage when teachers are absent. She also takes a lead role with preschool teacher mentoring and consultation regarding classroom and student issues for the preschool staff families.

Along with Dr. Carver, both Educational Administrators will collaborate to produce the monthly newsletter, to maintain strong relationships with local schools, to broaden our public relations, to secure funding for special projects and scholarships, and to maintain the school’s NAEYC accreditation.

Continued…
Administrative Structure & Roles continued …

As the Administrative Coordinator, Ms. Drash manages the office operations and equipment, answers the primary school phone number, keeps student records, takes messages for teachers, and monitors all observation and research activities. She handles visitor entry and exit via the security system and is the person to whom ALL forms are returned. She maintains all of the school’s databases and distributes the park cards and dashboard passes for the parking lot. She also keeps our reception areas stocked with family resources, particularly for school choices and community services.

Most importantly, we’re all here to help provide an excellent early childhood program for your children. If you have a question or concern and are not sure which administrator to approach, feel free to ask your child’s teacher or to call the school office. We’ll be happy to direct your call. You may also contact us through email for quick questions or comments you may have.

Dr. Carver (sc0e@andrew.cmu.edu) 412-268-1499  
Miss Hancock (lh37@andrew.cmu.edu) 412-268-2198  
Mrs. Rosenblum (rosenblu@andrew.cmu.edu) 412-268-3476  
Ms. Drash (adrash@andrew.cmu.edu) 412-268-2199  
FAX 412-268-5627

THANK YOU !!

While we dealt with the Children’s School flood recovery and reconstruction, the Psychology Department provided space for our administrative team (in the former office of Nobel Laureate Herb Simon) and a seminar room to house our whole staff for three weeks. Thanks to Shellie Sherman, Mike Scheier, and Susan Kinchelow for making the space arrangements and to the entire department for their hospitality, flexibility, and support. We also appreciate the efforts of Rochelle Croom, Jim Hawthorne, and Tyler Farren in dealing with our purchasing and technology needs so capably.
Keeping Parents Informed about Research

The **Research Spotlight** section of the monthly newsletter is one way Children’s School parents can learn about research in progress. Also, each time your child participates in a study that involves playing a “game” with a researcher (i.e., as opposed to merely being observed), he or she will get a **participation sticker** suggesting that you, “Ask me about the … game” and a **study description** detailing the task. We also have **recent articles** resulting from Children’s School research posted on the school web site ([www.psy.cmu.edu/childrensschool](http://www.psy.cmu.edu/childrensschool)) and a notebook of articles in the office.

**Observations for Psychology Assignments:** Students from Dr. David Rakison’s Child Development class will be doing periodic observations this fall. For each assignment, they observe specific differences between preschoolers and kindergartners in motor skills, social interactions, etc.

**Research Methods Class Studies:** Students in Yevdokiya Yermolayeva’s Research Methods course will start with a lab to explore whether using color cues to highlight the one-to-one correspondence between two rows of objects will help children understand that the number of items does not change when they are spread further apart or pushed closer together. Then they will work in groups to conduct a study of their own design, which will be approved both by their teacher and by Dr. Carver.

Feel free to contact Dr. Carver to discuss any questions you have about research.

### Research Spotlight

**The Classroom Game**

Karrie Godwin, a graduate student working with Dr. Anna Fisher, is replicating a longitudinal study of children’s **selective attention** that she pilot tested last year. 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. The researchers are teaching children 15 mini-lessons in a small group format. For 10 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 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 be asked to circle the picture, from among four choices like those to the right, that they saw in the book.
Testing Reasoning Skills

Graduate student, Karrie Godwin is working with Dr. Anna Fisher and several other research assistants to investigate young children's reasoning skills. In particular, they are interested in investigating the relationship between young children's reasoning skills and other general cognitive processes such as memory, attention, processing speed, and language ability. Because the study involves diverse measures, our 3 and 4-year-old children will participate in multiple research sessions with Karrie over the course of a month’s time, and then again in the spring. As usual, parents will receive descriptions of each session on the day the child participates.

• The Thinking Game

In the Thinking Game, children are presented with a variety of reasoning tasks from the Weschler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence (WPPSI). They are presented with various objects and asked to answer questions about the objects or physically manipulate the objects (e.g., rearrange, build, or sort the objects). Children are also asked to label various pictures, complete a puzzle, and build a block tower.

• The Memory Game

In the Memory Game, children will listen to a list of words. Subsequently, children will be asked to remember the words from the list. In the first part of the game, children will be read a series of familiar nouns and asked to repeat them in the same order they were presented. For example, children may be presented with the words "duck, house, chair" and then asked to recite the words in order. In the second part of the game, children will be asked to repeat the items but in the reverse order in which they were presented. For instance, if children are given the words, "duck, house, chair", the correct response would be "chair, house, duck".

• The Help Zibbo Game

In this game, children will assist Zibbo as he organizes and counts objects. In this task, children will be told where Zibbo will put a particular object. Then children will be asked to predict where they think Zibbo will put other objects. For example, children may be told that "Zibbo will put his cup here. Where do you think Zibbo will put this cup/basketball?""). Subsequently, children will be shown pictures of various objects and asked to help Zibbo make “more-or-less” judgments about the pictures. For example, children may be shown 7 pictures of flowers (5 red roses and 2 white daisies). Then children may be asked to help Zibbo find out if they have more roses or if they have more flowers.

• The Similarity Game

Dr. Anna Fisher’s research team is investigating how young children learn synonyms. They are particularly interested in examining how factors such as co-occurrence in child directed speech (e.g. bunny-rabbit) influence how children learn synonyms. In addition, they are exploring whether children are able to use their knowledge of synonyms in order to solve reasoning problems.  Continued …
Research Spotlight continued …

• The Similarity Game continued …

In this study, the researchers will present children with reasoning tasks in which children must rely on their knowledge of synonyms in order to solve the problem. The goal is to determine the degree to which children utilize their knowledge of synonyms in various reasoning tasks. In the Similarity Game, children are shown identical pictures of doors or trees similar to the ones presented below. The children are told about objects that are hidden behind the doors/trees. For example, we might tell children that there is a turtle, a basketball, and a crab behind each door. The children learn that one of the objects has a particular property, and then the children must decide whether this property can be generalized to the other two objects.

Did you hear bee or pea?

Dr. Dan Hufnagle and Dr. Lori Holt are investigating how children learn sound categories. In Session 1 of this game, children hear a friendly space alien who is learning how to say words correctly. The children help the alien learn how to say bee and pea. Then, they hear those words many times and tell the experimenter which word they hear. Sometimes the sound is ambiguous (acoustically between “bee” and “pea”). In cases like this, adults rely on pitch as a clue. The experimenters are testing whether kindergartners similarly use pitch to disambiguate sound categories like “b” and “p” as a means of understanding how native language speech sound categories develop across time. The data from this session will establish a baseline for how strongly pitch affects the child’s responses. Adults judge a sound to be more “bee”-like when it has a lower pitch, all else being equal. A follow-up session then tests how sensitive children are to changes in pitch, such as those that might be encountered in listening to a person with a nonnative accent.

During Session 2 of this game, children hear bee and pea many times and tell the experimenter which word they hear. As in Session 1, sometimes the sound is acoustically ambiguous between “bee” and “pea”. The goal of Session 2 testing is to understand how kindergartners learn the cues that make up sound categories (like “b” and “p”) and how those categories develop across time. Session 2 emphasizes and de-emphasizes pitch to test how quickly children learn new patterns of how the secondary pitch cue relates to the sound categories. Adults learn to adjust perception very quickly when pitch varies, but psychologists do not yet know whether this quick learning is present early in language development. In an earlier experiment with different sounds (deer and tear), the same researchers found that pitch strongly influenced how children perceive ambiguous dear/tear sounds, but children did not learn to adjust the mapping of pitch to sound category when it varied in the experiment. In this follow-up study, the experimenters emphasize pitch more and use sounds for which adults are more sensitive to changes in pitch (“b” and “p”). Understanding whether children are able to flexibly remap how sound cues relate to speech categories will help psychologists understand the nature of auditory perception and language development.
Undergraduate Spotlight: Getting to Know You!!

As a campus laboratory school, the Children’s School offers research and observation opportunities to many undergraduate and graduate students from different departments across campus. In addition to these opportunities, we offer undergraduates a chance to work in the classrooms on a regular basis. In the Undergraduate Spotlight, we will be featuring each of our undergraduate assistants so that parents can learn about the students who work in the classrooms with their children. Below is a brief introduction so you can become familiar with the names your children might mention. Photos are posted on the bulletin board between the office and the preschool.

Student Employees

- Anne Blissit is a junior majoring in Civil Engineering and is returning for her second year with us. She also served as co-director for preschool “Musical Beginnings” day camps in her native Georgia.
- Abby Cryan worked with us at camp and over the summer. She is a junior majoring in biology and has interned at the Carnegie Museum of Art.
- Esther de la Torre is new to us this year. She is a sophomore majoring in Global Studies and has volunteered at the Homewood YMCA.
- Tyler Dossett is from California where she served as Teen President of Jack & Jill, a community service group. She is a psychology major who worked for us last year.
- Sam French is majoring in Theater Directing and founded Inkie’s Children’s Theater Company in Florida. He is returning to help in our kindergarten.
- Emily Gibson is a sophomore who is a Bachelor of Humanities & Arts major. She worked with us last year and helps not only in the classrooms but in the office.
- Marissa Gluskin is a Voice and Psychology major who is returning to us as a junior. She is originally from California.
- Ben Howe is a senior who is on the Carnegie Mellon swim team and who has interned for us in the past. He will be working as a substitute student employee when the need arises.
- Jiaqu Liu is a volunteer who comes to us as an exchange student from the University of Melbourne. She will be working in the kindergarten.
- Chuck McKain is a senior this year majoring in Psychology. He has interned for us in the past and served as a student employee.
- Lindsay McGregor is starting her third year with us. She is majoring in Psychology and Linguistics and takes education classes at the University of Pittsburgh. Cze-Ja, Chuck, Lindsay, and Maya are pictured to the left at last May’s undergraduate appreciation luncheon.
- Gabrielle Rueda, also known as Gabi, is a junior majoring in Global Studies. She started at the Children’s School last semester.

- Cze-Ja Tam is a Psychology major who is returning as a senior for her third year with us. She helps in the office as well as the classrooms, and she plays on the tennis team.
- Alexandra Tapak, also known as Alex, started with us last year and is a Psychology and Biology major who also plays on the CMU tennis team.
Undergraduate Spotlight continued …

Kyle Rood is a fifth year Architecture and Creative Writing student, a combination that lets him explore the physical world and the worlds of his favorite books. He has a long-standing love of making things, especially clothing and furniture, and he loves using the things he makes. In his last semester, he is trying to expand his skills further by taking classes in welding, glassblowing and bookmaking.

Working at the Children’s School has taught Kyle a great deal about being a kind friend, including listening, patience and that it is very hard to hold more than two hands at the same time. The inquisitive minds here have raised a variety of new questions, like why are worms slimy, and taught him to answer those questions very thoroughly and admit when he doesn’t know. Upon leaving Carnegie Mellon, he hopes these lessons will help him as he works to become a high school English teacher after graduation.

Child Development Interns

• Samantha Benkel is a senior Materials Science and Engineering major interning in the Morning 4’s this fall. During the summers, she works in a preschool in Arizona.
• Brianna Kent is a senior Psychology major also interning in the Morning 4’s. She spent the summer teaching 6th grade at the Pittsburgh Project on the north side.
• Kate Kupiec is a sophomore Psychology major interning in the Afternoon 3’s this fall. She has past early childhood experience teaching Bible School at her church.
• Sarah Musial is a junior Math and Psychology major interning in the Kindergarten. She has taught and coached swimming, as well as Sunday School, and she enjoys crafts and scrapbooking.
• Yu Zhao is a sophomore Psychology and Art major interning in the Morning 3’s. She has experience working as a tutor and counselor in a summer program.

Senior Student Teachers from Pitt’s CASE Program

• Maria Tedeschi, Allison Ross, and Brittany Woler are seniors in the University of Pittsburgh’s Combined Accelerated Studies in Education (CASE) Program, a five-year undergraduate and masters program that includes a BS in Applied Developmental Psychology and a Masters of Education in early childhood and special education. For their practicum experience this fall, they are teaching with mentors Charline Tomer, Jean Bird, and Donna Perovich respectively.
Professional Development Outreach

Professional Development is a high priority at the Children’s School because it supports our continuous quality improvement. For our high quality staff, much of our growth comes from preparing professional development experiences for other educators, as well as from collaborating with diverse partners on projects that will impact early childhood education. Here’s a sampling of our recent experiences.

• On August 18th and 19th, we hosted nearly 50 educators for our annual Early Childhood Enhancement Workshops.
  - Meaningful Math: Numbers, Shapes, Patterns, Measurements & Data (Dr. Carver & Ms. Hancock)
  - Building: Beyond the Basics for Young Children (Mrs. Bird)
  - Reduce, Reuse, Recycle: Introducing Young Children to Environmental Responsibility (Mrs. Bird & Mrs. Rosenblum)

• White Light Exploration is a collaboration with artist Amanda Long that involves a movement experience with three light projectors to foster learning about traveling light, shadows, and mixing light colors. After all our educators piloted the experience with their children, Mrs. Flynn, Mrs. Opferman, and Mrs. Rosenblum developed a curriculum to accompany the White Light Unit when it travels to other early childhood programs. The Children’s Museum will be running the loan program, but we also have a unit for our continued use.

• Message from Me is a collaboration with the CREATE Lab & PAEYC, with funding from PNC’s Grow Up Great initiative. The goal is to develop technology to enhance family communication via child sending digital images with audio messages to adult cell phones or email. These pictures show the initial prototype that we tested in 2010 and the improved model that we will begin pilot testing in October. Our educators will then design the curriculum to familiarize other teachers with the technology and facilitate their classroom implementation. Please be sure to return the permission form if you want to participate!

• Duksung Women’s University Partnership - After hosting 10 early childhood students from Duksung in January 2011, three representatives from the Children’s School have been invited to give seminars and demonstration lessons in Seoul, South Korea. In late October, Sharon Carver, Jean Bird, and Donna Perovich will be interacting with Duksung lab school’s children, parents, and educators, the Early Childhood faculty & students, and the members of the local laboratory school association.
Director’s Corner:
Healthy Mind & Body

This year, we chose the whole school theme of **HEALTHY MIND & BODY** so that together we can learn how to take good care of ourselves and others. We will explore balanced strategies for healthy eating, exercising, sleeping, keeping ourselves clean and safe, etc. We will also talk about the ways we can feed, exercise and rest our minds so that we can do our best thinking and learning at home and at school. We invite you to join us in focusing our own efforts so that we can help the children build healthy habits that will last a lifetime.

As part of our staff preparation for the new school year, we read and discussed Dr. Wendy Mogel’s book, *The Blessing of a Skinned Knee: Using Jewish Teachings to Raise Self-Reliant Children* (Penguin Compass, 2001). Though our staff comes from diverse religious backgrounds, we all found that our experience resonated with Mogel’s key points. Here are some of my personal favorites, all of which relate both to parenting and educating children.

“The only things that are certain to be valuable are character traits such as honesty, tenacity, flexibility, optimism, and compassion – the same traits that have served people well for centuries.” (p. 44)

“The family is the laboratory, and you are teaching the science of living.” (p. 83)

“Your most lasting legacy, the only one that really matters, is how your children will treat their fellow creatures and the world you’re leaving them. It begins and ends with honor.” (p. 88)

“Real protection means teaching children to manage risks on their own, not shielding them from every hazard.” (p. 95)

“Chores give us a unique opportunity to teach our children family citizenship, self-reliance, responsibility, and a sense of the holy potential in every action.” (p. 157)

“We are offering them ourselves, and we are showing them the path to a rich and meaningful life.” (p. 234)

“Building strength and self-reliance in our children requires an investment of our time and thought, it requires planning and discipline, it requires a long view both backward to our heritage and forward to the future.” (p. 258)

At this point in our individual and family journeys, we have the opportunity to collaborate to enhance our children’s living and learning. Watch the monthly newsletters for ideas you can use at home, as well as opportunities for involvement in the school and the community. Enclosed with this newsletter is the Pennsylvania Department of Health guide for children and grownups, entitled “Let’s get MOVING! With Healthy Snacks and Play.”

In my future columns, I’ll discuss how educators and parents can together foster the “seven essential life skills every child needs”, as proposed by Ellen Galinsky in *Mind in the Making*. We hope you’ll join us in pursuing a healthy lifestyle for our minds and bodies this year!