Wonderful Fall Open House Events!

What fun we had sharing our favorite routines and activities with our friends, siblings, parents, and extended families. Thanks for taking the time to engage in the experience with us!

November Dates

Sunday, November 7th – Daylight Savings Time Ends – Turn Clocks BACK One Hour

NO SCHOOL – Friday, November 12th – Parent Teacher Conferences

Shopping Night at Ten Thousand Villages – 6-8pm Thursday, November 18th
Raising 10% of Sales for Purchasing an Imagination Playground

Friday Afternoon, November 19th - Parent Teacher Conferences
Regular School Schedule in the Morning

No School for Children – November 24th through 28th – Happy Thanksgiving!!
Building Basics

Once you’ve had a chance to explore the buildings in your own neighborhood, venture downtown to explore our city’s tallest buildings. Since 1970, the US Steel Building has been our tallest skyscraper, standing 841 feet for 64 stories. The BNY Mellon Center ranks second, at 725 feet for 54 stories, and PPG Place ranks third at 635 feet for 40 floors. When you tour, notice the contrasting building materials, styles, and shapes. There are many different ways to make buildings tall and beautiful, yet stable!

Family Committee News

• The School Picture Committee had a very productive meeting. Parent volunteers are scheduling times to take photos of our children at school. We will then select and make them available to our parents. If photography is a hobby of yours, please call Mrs. Rosenblum to schedule a time to come snap a few shots! We are making memory cards available, so let us know what type your camera takes.

• The Library Committee met on October 15th to discuss the procedures for re-shelving and pulling books, labeling and repair, and weeding out old and out-dated texts. We also discussed what books we would like to see ordered for our library.

• The NALS Silent Auction Committee will be meeting at 9 am on November 5th.

• The Book Fair Committee will be meeting at 10 am on November 5th.

We can always use more volunteers, so please feel free to contact Mrs. Rosenblum to sign up for any of our school committees.

On-Line Usborne Book Fair

It’s not too late to support the Children’s School by ordering Usborne books. Just go to www.usbornebycremers.com, click on Active eFairs, and place your order by Friday, October 29th!

Ten Thousand Villages Shopping Night

Shop at Ten Thousand Villages on November 18th from 6-8 pm, and a percentage of your purchase will be donated towards our purchase of the Imagination Playground. Your Holiday gifts can give three times, to the recipient, the artisan, and the CMU Children’s School! Visit http://www.tenthousandvillages.com/home.php to learn more about this multicultural, fair trade store located on Forbes Avenue in Squirrel Hill.

Food Drive & Cans Across the Cut

Send a non-perishable food item to school between November 1st and 10th. On November 10th, the children will participate in Cans Across the Cut, a yearly event in which University teams compete to see which group can gather the most canned-good donations to benefit the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank. Teams line their donations side-by-side to reach across the cut!

November Web Artists

Kindergarten Friends: Esther P., Levi M.-S., and Ryder S.
Family Spotlight: Home Away From Home

My name is Liz Farley, and I have two children enrolled at The Children's School. My daughter Charlotte is in the Green Room, and my son Ryder is in the Kindergarten. This fall we have the task of finding a new school for Ryder for next year. It's an exciting new adventure. But visiting the new schools has made me realize that the Children's School has become like a second home for our family. We have all grown so much since we first arrived at the Children's School three years ago. It's very hard to think of moving on.

I am an Architect and Interior Designer. I believe functioning within a well-designed space builds self-confidence and reinforces self-esteem. My first impression of the Children's School was how nice looking the classrooms were. That's very important to me. A bright, clean environment can foster bright, clean thoughts. The sunlight pours in through the big windows. When the students sing, "What's the Weather," they can actually observe the day's weather. The Discovery Area creates a public space for all the classes to interact and have small group experiences - like a town square. At the same time, it accommodates different levels of understanding and cognitive ability. It's a place where you want to spend time exploring. I know that Ryder and Charlotte had the same reaction that I did; they just wanted to spend time there.

Ryder loved being a "Blue Room Friend" from the minute he walked through the door. He was engaged and challenged, while having so much fun that he couldn't wait to return on Monday mornings. That first year, Charlotte visited the school many times. She felt like a student long before actually becoming one. Our first year breezed by without a hitch. But then when Charlotte started in the Red Room, it was a surprisingly hard transition for her. This challenging time was when my relationship with the school grew far beyond visual appreciation to one of real respect. I was so impressed by the interest the educators showed in making Charlotte comfortable. Everyone took special care to engage her. For example, Miss Mangan downloaded songs she knew Charlotte liked on her personal iPod so they could listen to them together. Every teacher showed me, in some way, that the school values each student as a person and individual. It was incredibly comforting in a very distressing time. Now Charlotte is completely adjusted and loves coming to school.

Moving on is really sad for us. But I know that the Children's School has laid an amazing foundation for Ryder. It has given him the basic belief that learning is fun and school is a great place to go. I know Ryder will move on to his new school with a positive attitude and a solid knowledge base. I must admit, though, that I have had to promise Ryder that he only has to attend a new school for a few years, and then he can return to CMU for college with all of his Children's School Friends!
Trick or Treat for UNICEF

By collecting change while Trick or Treating with their parents, children can learn to make a big difference for children everywhere by helping UNICEF to provide nutrition, medicine, education, and other things children need in order to thrive. If your family would like to participate, use the collection box included with this newsletter and return it to the Children’s School next week. Thanks!

For more information on how young children relate to Halloween, see Hedda Sharapan’s article on the Fred Rogers Company web site at http://www.fci.org/pro-dev/october.html.

Family Social Organization (FSO) Play Date

The Family Social Organization organized a fun play date on October 8th, when families came to Bartlett Park to enjoy a gorgeous day and make new friends. Join us for our next play date on Friday, November 12th at 10:30am. There is no school that day, because of Parent-Teacher Conferences, so all of the children can come for all the fun. We are hoping for another beautiful day!

The Bartlett Street Playground is located in Schenley Park at the intersection of Panther Hollow Road, Greenfield Road, Bartlett Street, and Hobart Street. This is a family event, so caregivers are expected to stay. Siblings are welcome. There is a picnic shelter so feel free to bring lunch.

In the event of inclement weather, we will meet at My Little Outback, which is located at 1936 Murray Avenue in Squirrel Hill. Cost of admission is $8 per child, and there are often coupons in the Clipper Magazine. Socks are required for play.

We are excited about our trip to Reilly’s Farm on Friday, October 29th. We’ll try to get some fun hayride and pumpkin patch pictures to share in the newsletter next month!

Please contact Beth Lott at elisabeth.lott@gmail.com or 412-243-2626 with any questions.

Giant Eagle’s Apples for Students

The Giant Eagle Apples for Students program makes it easy to support your favorite schools. School supporters like you can donate their spending electronically through the Giant Eagle Advantage Card®. Each time your card is scanned between now and Monday, March 14, 2011, your purchase will count toward FREE equipment for our school. The Children’s School has been able to purchase at least 2 items for each age group for as long as we have been part of the Apples for Students program!

It’s easy to register! Here’s how:

1. Register at 1-800-474-4777 or www.gianteagle.com
2. Enter our School ID # 0151
3. Shop with your Giant Eagle Advantage Card®.

If you have children at more than one school, you no longer have to choose only one to support. When you register, you will be given the option to enter up to five school ID’s and your purchases will be divided among the schools you choose.
Fall Parent / Teacher Conferences

The fall conferences are great opportunities for the teacher and parents to discuss their views of each child's development. This year, parent conferences are being conducted primarily on Friday, November 12th and Friday afternoon, November 19th. Specific schedules are included with this newsletter. Please remember to call Ms. Drash to reserve your particular conference time.

**NOTE: In contrast to prior years, school will be in session on Monday and Tuesday, November 22nd & 23rd.**

At the Children's School, our conferences are structured by the developmental objectives that are the focus of our program design. For the fall conference, teachers of three year olds will emphasize the first three domains of development and teachers of four year olds will emphasize four, while kindergarten teachers will cover all six domains. The primary reason for this difference in emphasis is that the preschoolers are in school for less than half as much time as the kindergartners and typically require a longer period of adjustment to the school environment and routine.

- Self-Esteem and Independence
- Interaction and Cooperation
- Communication
- Physical Capabilities / Health & Safety
- Discovery and Exploration
- Artistic Expression and Appreciation

We encourage parents to prepare for their child(ren)'s conference(s) by considering the progress they have noted, particularly in the context of family discussions of the preschool and extended program daily emails and the kindergarten web page. One strategy is to identify one adjective to describe your child in each of the areas that will be discussed. Another is to recall one prototypical anecdote for each category. A third is to consider the school activities and events related to each area that your child has discussed with you. Finally, you might specify one goal related to each domain that you would like to see your child achieve during the next six months. Sharing these thoughts with your child(ren)'s teacher(s) facilitates productive dialogue about the ways that your child is progressing in both home and school environments. It’s always interesting to see the parallels that exist between the two contexts, as well as the distinct differences that are often evident.

The conference dialogue will help parents to choose the next school for their child so that its program will best match the child and family. We have brochures and flyers for many local schools in the office. We have also posted Open House information for other schools on a bulletin board outside the office. **For families applying to private schools** that require recommendations, in January, the teachers review their conference reports, make any modifications to reflect progress and then submit them to Miss Hancock for mailing to relevant schools. Parents must sign a release form before conference data can be sent to schools as part of the application and placement process.

In addition to the conference opportunity, Dr. Carver is available to discuss any questions or concerns you have about your child's development or about our program. We are privileged that you have entrusted your children to us and look forward to continued partnership in their education.
Election Day Impact on Children

On Tuesday, November 2\textsuperscript{nd}, Pennsylvanians will elect a new Governor. This election is important for you and your child. Why? Because the Governor helps set priorities for early care and education
\begin{itemize}
  \item health and safety
  \item quality and
  \item accessibility
\end{itemize}

Past Governors have used their positions to advocate for the needs of young children. Through their support Pennsylvania now has:
\begin{itemize}
  \item Keystone STARS quality rating system
  \item expanded support for Child Care Works
  \item expanded Head Start
  \item Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts and
  \item Keystone Babies
\end{itemize}
... all of which provide high quality early learning experiences for young children.

While these programs have helped many Pennsylvania youngsters, more than 60 percent of eligible children still do not have access to them. It will be up to the next Governor to make sure that all eligible children can participate. Without this support, children and families could lose these opportunities.

Pennsylvania’s children and families have a lot at stake in who becomes our next Governor, as well as in the outcome of Pennsylvania’s US Senate election. Children can’t vote, but you can.

Your vote -- and your voice -- will send an important message to Pennsylvania’s next Governor and US Senator about the importance of:
\begin{itemize}
  \item Ensuring Health and Safety
  \item Maintaining Quality Programs
  \item Expanding Access to Early Care and Education
\end{itemize}

\textit{Learn} about the candidates’ views on early childhood education by exploring their web sites and the comparative briefings of non-partisan organizations, such as the League of Women Voters.

\textit{Vote} for the candidate of your choice November 2\textsuperscript{nd}. Polls are open from 7 am to 8 pm.

\textit{Find} your polling place at [https://www.pavoterservices.state.pa.us/Pages/PollingPlaceInfo.aspx](https://www.pavoterservices.state.pa.us/Pages/PollingPlaceInfo.aspx).

Information courtesy of \textbf{First Steps Pennsylvania}, a statewide non-profit, non-partisan campaign dedicated to engaging in education about the importance of early childhood education with candidates, the early care and education community, parents, and the general public.

116 Pine Street, Harrisburg, PA 17101 (717-236-5680)
\texttt{www.firststepspa.org}
Research Spotlight

Building Robby’s House Game

Dr. Dan Hufnagle and Dr. Lori Holt are investigating how context influences sound perception in children. The children help Robby the Robot (in the center of the picture below) to build his house by repeating the name of the building block that they hear. Another robot (upper right) tells the children over headphones what kind of block is needed, either “da” or “ga”. The child then tells Robby, who chooses one from the appropriate pile of blocks. Before the robot says the name of the block, it either beeps or says, “Please say what this word is.” Sometimes the name of the block is ambiguous (acoustically between “da” and “ga”). For adults, the context influences what sound they hear, depending on the pitch of the tones or words. We are interested in whether these sounds influence children in the same way they do adults in order to determine how the effect develops. The answer to this question will help us understand the nature of auditory perception.

The Da and Ga Game

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

Your Baby Could Be A Scientist!

The Carnegie Mellon University Infant Cognition Lab and Language & Learning Lab are looking for infants between 3 and 26 months to participate in our safe, quick, and fun studies. We are interested in how babies learn about the world around them. Our studies last no more than 45 minutes, and take place in the infant labs located next to the Children’s School. We will have your child watch a computer display and play with some small toys while we observe his/her behavior.

To learn more or schedule participation, please contact us!

(412) 268-6122
cmu.icl@gmail.com
Undergraduate Research

Dr. Erik Thiessen’s Developmental Research Methods students are preparing their final projects for the semester. Though the research procedures are still being finalized, the topics are listed below. Families whose children participate will receive fuller parent descriptions via the child’s backpack. Everyone can read the study descriptions on the Research Bulletin Board outside the Children’s School Office. Notice the interesting range of important topics in early childhood development!

The Effects of Sibling Status on Playdough Sharing – testing morning 4’s to determine whether sibling status (only child, first born, later born) effects the amount of playdough that children choose to share with a classmate the child anticipates will join the play later (The Playdough Helper Game)

The Impact of Familiarity on Shape Memory – studying whether preschool 3’s and kindergartners do better on a memory game with familiar, regular shapes than irregular shapes that do not lend themselves to naming (The Shape Memory Game)

Verbal vs. Visual Time Pressure in a Maze Task – testing preschool 3’s and kindergartners to determine whether imposing a time pressure, either using an hour-glass timer or just a verbal mention of a 5 minute limit, affects how quickly children solve an age-appropriate maze, as well as the amount of detours they take in the maze (The Maze Game)

The Influence of Forewarning on Selective Memory – testing whether morning 3’s, 4’s, and kindergartners better attend to and recall the properties of a particular photograph of a person when told which of six images will be the focus of observation questions (The Remember Me Game)

The Effect of Room Scent on Altruism – comparing the tendency of 3’s and kindergartners to share a desired toy with an experimenter in a pleasantly scented room vs. an unscented room (The Moon Sand Game)

Undergraduate Spotlight: Getting to Know You !!

My name is Chuck McKain. I am a junior psychology major with a minor in religious studies. This is my second semester working with the four-year-old friends at the Children’s School, and I am very excited to be back. Working at the Children’s School has been an integral part of my undergraduate education and has taught me so much about cooperation, patience, and "being a kind friend." I have been able to apply these skills in various areas of my college career, including serving as a Head Orientation Counselor and working as an active brother in my fraternity, Sigma Phi Epsilon. Psychology is my passion, and I intend to pursue a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology after graduation. In my spare time, I enjoy drinking copious amounts of Starbucks Coffee and trying new restaurants with my friends. My dream job would be to work as a Clinical Psychologist during the day and write my own television show at night.
Director’s Corner: Building Self-Esteem & Independence

The Children’s School’s educational philosophy is based on theories and research in Developmental Psychology. We use "developmental goals" as a systematic framework for focusing our program design. Beginning with this newsletter, I will highlight one set of goals each month to make the rationale underlying our design decisions clearer, as well as to support families in fostering their children’s development with similar intentionality.

**Self-Esteem & Independence:** encouraging each child’s pride in individual characteristics, families, experiences, and accomplishments and each child's responsibility for personal care, actions, and words.

Psychologist Erik Erikson emphasized young children’s need to develop a sense of autonomy, the confidence to take initiative, and the motivation to industriously master culturally valued tasks. Jean Piaget highlighted children’s innate disposition to explore the world as curious scientists. In both theories, the role of adults is simply to provide a safe and encouraging environment for exploration. At the Children’s School, we view this developing self-esteem and independence as foundational for all of their other achievements. We let children know that they are special and that they belong by using their names and photographs throughout the classrooms, by displaying the products of their efforts, and by inviting them to contribute meaningfully to the group. By learning to value and manage themselves, including their bodies, their actions, and their emotions, children acquire a positive and proactive stance toward learning to interact, to communicate, etc.

Within each theme, educators highlight each child’s uniqueness in a variety of ways. In September, we encourage children to share their families and experiences with each other, while also teaching them to follow the rules and routines that keep everyone safe and comfortable. Units like the recent kindergarten emphasis on the Medieval Times afford opportunities to develop individual crests, use personal initials to note ownership, and learn from the ways people in another time and place resourcefully met their daily needs, had fun, and expressed themselves through the arts. The preschoolers’ current recycling unit strengthens children’s ability to impact their community by taking responsibility for managing resources and using existing materials in creative ways.

Carefully building mathematics skills, or skills in any academic domain, provides children with tools for solving problems that they encounter in their daily lives. They can use measurement to share equitably or tally votes to determine which game to play or snack to make. Practice noticing patterns encourages children to predict what will happen next, and basic counting and arithmetic procedures help children organize both time and materials. In all of these ways, children begin to view themselves as capable individuals with a “can do” approach to new situations.

Families can promote self-esteem and independence by allowing time and providing encouragement for children to master a wide variety of self-help skills, such as feeding, dressing, and bathing themselves, as well as taking care of their belongings. Finding age-appropriate ways for each child to contribute to the household work helps children to understand their value to the family and to feel confident offering help elsewhere. You’d be amazed at what children can do when given clear training and plenty of practice. Their satisfaction in accomplishment is a joy to witness!