

Carnegie Mellon University Children's School

December 2012 Family Newsletter

A Season of Giving

At the Children's School, we began our fall season of giving by participating in Carnegie Mellon University's Food Drive. Since the campus-wide "Cans Across the Cut" event did not fit our schedule this year, we held our own "Cans Around the Playground" event. The Children's School family collected 305 non-perishable food items and \$25 for the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank. We were able to make a line about half way around the bike path on our playground!



CANS AROUND THE PLAYGROUND



For more ideas about involving your family in generous giving during the upcoming holiday season, see the "Perhaps you wondered ..." article and opportunities on the next page.

December Dates:

Friday Afternoon, November 30th - Parent Teacher Conferences for 3's
Regular School Schedule in the Morning

Saturday, December 1st - Waterfront Barnes & Noble Book Fair (children's activities 12-3pm)

Tuesday, December 4th - Extended Morning 4's Open House 12-1pm

Thursday, December 6th - Extended Morning 3's Open House 12-1pm

Thursday, December 20th - Last Day of the Semester for Children

Friday, December 21st - Professional Development for Staff

No School for Children - December 21st through January 6th

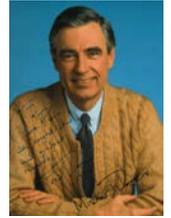
Staff and Children return to school on Monday, January 7th

Have a Wonderful Winter Break!!

Perhaps you wondered ...

... How you can help children become generous givers and gracious receivers.

At all times of year, we seek to help the learners at the Children's School to become generous givers and gracious receivers. Whether giving and receiving affirmation, help, or actual items, we aim to emphasize respect and gratitude. As Fred Rogers explained, "Everyone has needs and everyone has something to give. As different as we are from one another, as unique as each one of us is, we are much more the same than we are different" (*The Giving Box: Create a Tradition of Giving with Your Children*, 2000, p. 13).



For example, when collecting food in November, we explained to the children that some of our neighbors in Pittsburgh do not have enough food or enough money to buy food. We can help them stay healthy by sharing nutritious food with them. At other times, people may share food with us, perhaps when we are traveling or when someone in our family is sick. We also emphasize the



importance of expressing gratitude verbally or by drawing or writing. During the Games Unit, the Extended Day friends made large "I Spy" boards and graciously offered our substitute teacher, Mrs. Mack, to take them to the preschool where she teaches Mondays through Wednesdays. They were excited to receive the following letter from Mrs. Mack's class: *Thank you, Ms. McMichael & the Children's School for sharing your "I spy" board with us. We enjoyed looking for the items and counting things. From Your friends at the Crafton Heights Community Preschool.*

Here are some ideas for giving suggested by Children's School families.

- **Tote Bags** - Every year, Aparna, Joel, and Delia Brown (Kindergarten Graduate 2012) hold a tote bag drive for the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank. The Food Bank serves more than 120,000 people each month. Reusable bags help families carry their groceries home in a manner that is efficient and dignified. We don't want families to pass up food items like fresh produce or large bottles of juice because they are difficult to carry, or to have their disposable bags break while walking in our hilly region or riding the bus. We invite you to bring gently used and new tote bags, backpacks (children and adult), gym bags, etc. to the office (or give them to the teachers during greeting) by Thursday, December 20th.

- **Used Books and Magazines** - Please bring your used magazines and books to the Children's School office beginning on December 1st. We will collect magazines and books for the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh's "adopt a book/magazine" program until the last day of school on Thursday, December 20th. Magazines and books for adults and children are welcome, but please remove your subscription information from all magazines. If you have any questions, please email Jessica Morowitz (Anna, K) at jessicachristiemorowitz@gmail.com.

Holiday Sharing at School

If you would like to show your appreciation for any of the Children's School staff members at the holiday time, we suggest a simple gift, a gift for the classroom (books, puzzles, etc.), or a donation to the school that the teachers can use to choose new classroom or professional development materials. Involving your child in the decision and/or creation of a card or gift focuses the activity on the joy of giving rather than on the gift.

Committee Appreciation

• Book Fair

Thanks to the Book Fair committee members - Beth Lott, Ann Kelton, Elinor Nathanson, Jennifer Huffman, Jessica Simcox, Susan Ward and Amy Kim - and all the volunteers for helping to organize our December 1st Book Fair at the Barnes and Noble at the Waterfront. From 12 noon until 3 pm, there will be craft activities available for children. Mrs. Bird and her brother, Ken Thompson, will be providing musical entertainment at 1pm. Families, grandparents and other friends of the Children's School will have the opportunity to support the school by shopping any time that day or for a week online. We will receive Barnes & Noble gift cards totaling 15% of purchases up to \$2,000 and 20% of purchases from \$2,000 through \$10,000.

If you or any friends or relatives are not able to join us on Saturday, you can still go to www.BN.COM/bookfairs and use our **Bookfair ID#10783546**. By using our ID# when you shop online through December 6th, a portion of your purchase price will go to the Children's School.

• Library

Thanks to our library committee members for meeting and learning how to help us maintain our newly organized and labeled book cabinets. If you have a few minutes at greeting or dismissal time and would like to learn how to re-file books for us, e-mail Maggie Rosenblum at rosenblu@andrew.cmu.edu.

Ten Thousand Villages Event Success



TEN THOUSAND
VILLAGES®

Thank you to everyone who supported our fundraiser at Ten Thousand Villages. The event was well attended by Children's School families and staff as well as community members who just happened to be shopping in Squirrel Hill on Thursday, November 15th. Our net sales were \$1,588.73 so our event raised \$238.31 (15%) toward our scholarship fundraising goal of \$60,000. Every little bit helps!

Online Shopping Funds Scholarships

Planning to do some online holiday shopping? Be sure to use GoodShop.com and shop on behalf of the Children's School. A percentage of your purchase will be donated to our school's Scholarship Fund. Since beginning our GoodSearch/GoodShop relationship in late October 2009, we have raised \$815.85 which is about \$1.00 a day for simply searching the Internet and doing your family's regular online shopping.

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.com 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!



December Web Artists

3's Friends: Alexander D., Julia G., Simon M., and Joya N.

4's Friends: Sam B., David D., Nana K., Emma M., and Ari P.

Kindergarten Friends: Neve G., Aaron H., and Shahrzad O.



Upcoming Screenings re: Ears & Eyes

This year, the Easter Seals Speech, Language, Hearing and Middle Ear Screenings will be held at school on Tuesday, January 8th and Wednesday, January 9th. The rate for screening is \$20 per child.

The speech pathologists play a series of **Talking and Listening** games with each child that take about 15 minutes and provide a snapshot of each child's development in the areas of hearing and listening, direction following, understanding and use of language, speech sound production, voice quality, and fluent communication. Written results are provided, and the Easter Seals specialists are available to answer any additional questions. If you are interested in having your child screened, please complete the enclosed permission form and return it to the school office with your check made payable to Easter Seals by Monday, January 7th.



The Blind & Vision Rehabilitation Services of Pittsburgh will be conducting screenings for vision issues on Monday, February 4th and Tuesday, February 5th. Please note that this screening is free of charge. A permission slip for this screening is also enclosed with this newsletter.

Please contact Mrs. Rosenblum at rosenblu@andrew.cmu.edu if you have any questions.

Family Social Organization Reminders

Save the Date:

- Sunday, January 27th - Party at **Gymkhana** (admission will be about \$10 / child; we have rented the gym for our group only! This event was a big hit last year!)

Plans that are still in the works:

- Winter - a night out for grown ups!
- February - maybe a cooking class for the children a musical gathering or a visit to **Assemble** in Garfield
- March – “Bubble Time” at the Pittsburgh International Children's Theater
- May - Pittsburgh International Children's Festival

If you have any questions or want to help with the Family Social Organization, please contact Beth Lott at elisabeth.lott@gmail.com or 412-243-2626.

Lost and Found

We have accumulated quite a collection of jackets, barrettes and other items of unmarked children's clothing. If your child is missing anything, please look in our lost and found box in the hallway or send a note to your child's teacher with a description and we will see if we have it!

Winter Health Pointers

WINTER WEAR: As the chilly winter weather approaches, please replenish your child's extra clothes container with apparel appropriate for the season, as well as clothes to accommodate their physical growth. Layering your child's clothing for school days is helpful. While the temperature in our building is fairly constant and comfortable, some children may feel too warm or too cold on any given day. Wearing a t-shirt under a sweater allows the child to adjust to a personal level of comfort. Even in the winter, we go outside daily except in very extreme weather conditions. Please send labeled hats and mittens to school every day. On snowy days, please also send labeled snow pants and boots. Feel free to provide a set of outdoor clothes to be kept in your child's locker.

PARTICIPATION IN THE SCHOOL DAY: Our school day is filled with active and interesting projects that are planned in advance to ensure appropriate adult supervision. To that end, we ask that children come to school only if they can fully participate in the day's activities, including outdoor play and gym. If your child is not well enough to fully take part in the day, please keep the child at home because we do not have staff members available to supervise children indoors while the rest of the class is outdoors or at gym.

Friendly Reminders about Parking

As you know, if you are coming to the Children's School for a conference, birthday snack or just to visit, you may park in the Margaret Morrison Parking Lot. Each space in the parking lot is marked with an "S" for Staff, "L" for the Infant Laboratory, or "V" for Visitor to the Children's School. ***Never park in the spaces marked "L" for the Infant Laboratory or behind Donner Hall, which is a private lot 24 hours a day. You WILL receive a ticket.*** There are only eight "V" or Visitor spaces available for families to park in the Margaret Morrison Visitor Lot, so please do not park there for other campus errands. Please use the pay-as-you-park Garage on Forbes Avenue if there are no "V" spaces available. When parking in the Margaret Morrison Parking Lot, your yellow dashboard parking permit must be visible.

Developmental Benefits of Constructive Play



Dr. Carver's Practicum in Child Development class just completed a display across from the library in the Children's School hallway to highlight the many important skills that children learn from playing with a wide variety of blocks and other construction materials. Please take some time on your next visit to learn from the way they have shared their learning about the progression of development during the early childhood years.

Clean, Safe Water for Everyone

According to World Vision, an international relief organization focused on building a better world for children, “around the world, one in six people has no access to safe water. According to researchers, well over half of all childhood deaths are connected to dirty water.” Statistics from www.worldvision.org indicate that every day more than 4,000 children die of waterborne and sanitation-related diseases (e.g., cholera, giardia, and typhoid). World Vision and other non-governmental organizations such as Water Aid (www.wateraidamerica.org) work to provide safe water and sanitation for everyone in the world. Small contributions can make a big impact for children and families. For example, in August, the administrative team honored the staff with a \$200 gift to Water Aid, which is enough to pay for a hand pump to serve 10 households in Nepal or provide sanitation and hygiene programs for 8 people.



Beginning in January, as we prepare for our Whole School Unit on WATER, we will talk with the children about the importance of clean, safe water for a healthy life. You can help them begin thinking about the role of water in our community by noticing the many ways that we encounter water each day and discussing the ways that people, animals, and plants depend on water for life.



We will also talk about the ways that people can help everyone in the world to have safe water. For example, scientists have invented ways to purify water quickly and inexpensively, such as water treatment tablets and PUR water purification powder, making water up to 99.99% safe. Others design irrigation systems to help families in dry areas with food shortages to grow more food year-round. Individuals can also raise money to drill wells for those who do not have the type of plumbing systems that we enjoy. A traditional well just 60 feet deep can provide more than 600 gallons of clean, safe water per day - enough for 150 people. Having a well close to home also enables more children to attend school rather than walking long distances to fetch water.

International Children's Digital Library (ICDL)

The Fred Rogers Early Learning Environment (*Ele*) at <http://ele.fredrogerscenter.org/> is “an innovative online space where early educators, families, and others who care for young children can come together in a safe environment to find and share digital resources that support early learning and development in children from birth to age 5.” Several of our educators attended a session about the site at the September PAEYC Conference and suggest that you explore it, particularly the online book feature.

Welcome.
My name's *Ele*.
I'm so happy
you're here.

By clicking on Activities and then your child's age and books, you can choose to read / hear books online in many languages. For example, if you choose to read *The Royal Raven* (by Hans Wilhelm), you can hear the story in simplified or traditional Chinese, Croatian, Dutch, German, Italian, Korean, Macedonian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak, and Spanish. Note that you can also offer to be a translator to help expand the site's collection. If you do a search within the activities for ICDL, you can download a few free books for your iPad or iPhone.

Family Spotlight: Painting, Playgrounds & Play

My name is Leslie Aronson. My husband, Michael, and I are the parents of Ruby (AM Red Room, turning 3 in December) and Maya (born this past June). We also have a black lab, Mesi, and a cat, Mabel. Michael, a Squirrel Hill native, is a manager at GlaxoSmithKline, founder of several health and safety-related businesses, and a licensed paramedic (not currently practicing). I am a clinical social worker and have a part-time private psychotherapy practice, in addition to being a stay-at-home mom. I'm originally from Syracuse, New York and have been living in Pittsburgh since 2006.



Many people visiting our home have been offered a check up by "Doctor" Ruby, toy doctor kit in tow. In addition to her passion for helping people feel good, Ruby has a love of painting, playgrounds, and of course, playing with her baby sister. Maya is a very social and smiley baby who is currently into practicing new vocal sounds.



As a family, we enjoy going for walks, visiting the zoo, hosting brunches, and summer trips to Newport, Rhode Island, where we spend time at the beach and the annual folk music festival.



The Children's School is a great fit for our family. Our connection with the school dates back to 1979, when Michael was a preschool "friend" in Ms. Ehnes' class. That's him right in front of the teacher! He still remembers some of the children in his class, and, according to his mother, he liked the playground the best.

In addition to Michael's fond history, the school's role in psychology academia appeals to me. As a former undergraduate major in Human Development, I remember observing a similar laboratory preschool for a class called *The Role and Meaning of Play*. I was (and remain) fascinated by what children's play can teach us about individual children as well as about human psychology in general. I am so happy for Ruby (and eventually, Maya) to be a part of a school that is attentive to and knowledgeable about healthy psychological development.

The start of school this year has been Ruby's first experience in a structured environment away from her parents. It has been such a pleasure for Michael and me to learn even more about our daughter than we already knew, against the new backdrop of an enriching school setting. I love watching her from my car at dismissal time as she returns inside from the playground, holding a friend's hand, happily singing and swaying, pigtailed bobbing.



Undergraduate Spotlight



Hello Children's School friends and families! For those of you who I have not met yet, my name is **Hayley Rahl**, and I am a junior psychology major with a concentration in developmental psychology, health psychology, and an art minor. I am from northern Virginia and have worked there as a nanny, daycare teacher, and camp counselor. In Pittsburgh, I was an intern for Dr. Carver's *Practicum in Child Development* course last semester and enjoyed working with the PM Blue Room friends. This semester I am a classroom assistant in the preschool. I am also a student researcher at the Children's School, currently playing the Emotions Game, which assesses whether children rely more on visual cues or auditory cues to determine how someone feels. Working with friends at the Children's School is a blast and has become a highlight of my week! The best experience from last semester was when the Blue Room friends took a bike ride around campus. This semester the art projects have been wonderful! My plans for the future include grad school for child clinical psychology, and as much traveling as possible. I hope to see you around the Children's School!



"Find ways to play."

So writes Stephen C. Lundin to corporate executives and businessmen in *Fish!: A Proven Way to Boost Morale and Improve Results*. It's **Jackie Mishol's** favorite challenge. Jackie writes, "As a sophomore Dramaturgy major - which is in essence a triple major in drama, history, and English writing - I am always searching for ways to incorporate fun in my work. At The Children's School, I couldn't be happier to work with professionals who are able to find the joy in their everyday routine. Here I have the opportunity to make memorable moments and find fun as I switch between roles and activities throughout the day, and it's been a challenge more than gladly accepted! As the oldest child of six, I have been working with children for almost as long as I can remember. My work credits include dance instruction, mentoring, and camp counseling of children ages eighteen months through teens, in addition to performing professionally for children and families. Some of my performance highlights include doing shows with Daffy Duck from *The Looney Tunes* cartoons, dancing with Dorothy the Dinosaur from *The Wiggles*, and interviewing young guests on a waffle shop talk show right here in the city. My time at The Children's School this year has been cut unexpectedly short

upon my acceptance of a role as a performer with the Walt Disney Company next semester, but as I work through the company's college program in Florida, I'll carry all of the experience I have gotten here at The Children's School with me. Joining the staff this September allowed me to make some of the standout happy moments of my sophomore year happen with the wonderful faculty, staff, and students I encounter each day. Working with the children has brought many a smile to my face, and from talking superheroes at dismissal to sharing discoveries on the playground, I am so happy to have gotten the opportunity to bring smiles to other people's faces, too.



Undergraduate Spotlight: Student Teacher Reflections

Kristi Frisch, a student teacher with Mrs. Tomer in the 3's Program, writes, "Working at the Children's School has been a wonderful experience. The staff and students have all been extremely welcoming to me. From the first day I arrived, it was obvious that the staff truly care about their students. The students have so many resources available to them, and it has been enlightening to see how these enhance their education. I quickly learned that these students are receiving the best education possible at this school. My experience with my mentor teacher, Mrs. Tomer, has far exceeded my expectations. Working alongside the entire 3's team has taught me more than I ever expected. Even the children have taught me so much! I will never forget my experience here and I am already sad to be thinking about how my time here is coming to end. I will be forever grateful for the wonderful experience I have had at the Children's School!"



Katie Bouvy, a student teacher with Mrs. Opferman in the 4's Program, reflects, "As a senior at Pitt studying Early Childhood and Special Education, I've spent 4 years in classrooms across Pittsburgh, but none have come close to giving me the same depth of experience that I've received here at The Children's School. Not only do I learn something every day from the amazing family of educators and advocates here, but also from the children—about art, about play, about how to be a better person. I love the sunny atmosphere of the school, how it allows the students to be confident exploring their environment, and how every step is a teachable moment. William Arthur Ward described educator quality with a comparison, 'The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires.' Not only do I see our children being inspired by their teachers every day, but I have also been inspired by them. Being placed in such a warm, creative, open, and inspiring setting has helped me feel more confident than ever that teaching is what I was born to do. I've deeply appreciated my time with The Children's School family, and I hope to have the opportunity to return in the future."



Carolyn Kroll, a student teacher with Mrs. Perovich in the Kindergarten, notes, "It's hard to believe that my experience in the kindergarten classroom is nearly complete. The last 15 weeks involved hard work, creative planning, evaluations, and - of course - twenty-four bright and enthusiastic children. My experience working with the kindergarten team, the school staff, and the children has been positive and endearing as I anticipate a classroom of my own. Initially, I did not know what to expect. I have to admit that I was a little apprehensive, but the school has been welcoming and the kindergarten team was open to my contributions and lesson ideas. Mrs. Perovich provided appropriate guidance as I worked to develop and implement lessons. She gave me valuable advice and suggestions that I look forward to using in my continuing preparation as an early childhood educator. Just as your children have learned a great deal since September, I too, find myself a more mature, better prepared, and eager pre-service teacher. Together, we all have progressed toward a brighter future. Thank you for supporting me as a student teacher; I am grateful for all of the kindergarten memories."



Research Spotlight

The Chinese Word Game

This experiment involves children playing an iPad learning game (uTalk) with Chinese words and pictures of simple colors and body parts, to test how easily children can learn new second language words in a game context. Professor Erik Thiessen and his research team hypothesize that although the task will be harder for children than adults, the children will show learning of new Chinese words. Also, they hypothesize that older

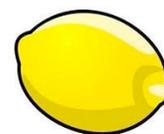
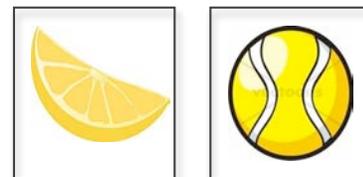


children will learn more due to increases in memory and attentional capacity. Finally, they hypothesize that the greater simplicity of the color labels (compared to more complex pictures for body parts) will lead to better learning in this limited training context. There is little exploration of how effective training techniques designed for adult language learners are when they are used with children. However, the fact that children are more successful language learners in general means that providing useful and age-appropriate language learning experiences before puberty is an important goal. Therefore, we aim to modify existing training approaches for younger learners. Ideally, instructed practice like this game would be only one component of a richer, more interactive second language learning program.



Perceptual Similarity and Young Children's Understanding of Categories

In this series of studies, Dr. Anna Fisher (mother of Sasha, K), graduate student Karrie Godwin, and their research team are investigating the role of conceptual and perceptual information in category-based reasoning and induction in early childhood. In the **Animal Name Game**, children are given a category and asked to generate as many items as they can that belong to that particular category. For example, children may be given the category 'Pets' and asked to name as many pets as they can think of (e.g., *dog, cat, fish*, etc.). In order to better understand how children make category decisions when different sources of perceptual and conceptual information are in conflict, children will play one of three different games. In the **Similarity Game**, children are told that objects that look similar go together. For example, children might see a whole lemon, a lemon wedge, and a tennis ball. Children would then be asked to identify which objects go together based on physical similarity (e.g., shape, color, size). In the **Matching Game**, children are told that objects that are the same kind of thing go together (in this case, the whole lemon and the lemon wedge). In the **Reasoning Game**, children learn that one of the objects has a particular novel property, and then must decide whether this property can be generalized to the other two objects.



User Testing of Technology Innovations

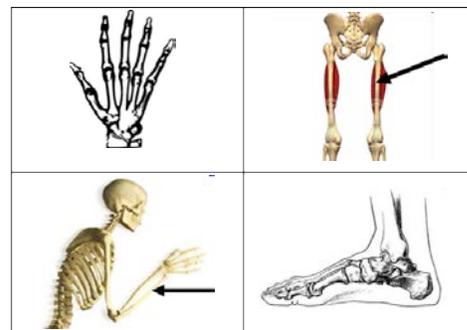


The Children's School is a partner in several design projects, so our children participate in user testing of prototypes. The **ENGAGE** team is designing computer games to teach physical science concepts, together with assessments to document children's learning. Also, the **Message from Me** team is currently prototyping an iPad version of the family communication tool that we already have in our classrooms.

Research Spotlight, continued

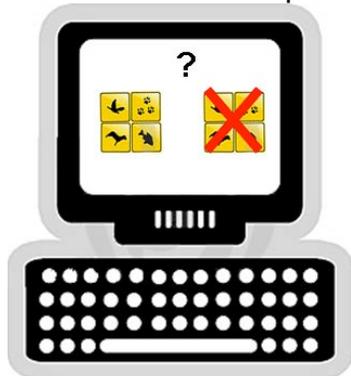
The Impact of Attention Allocation on Learning and Retention

In another series of studies, Dr. Anna Fisher, graduate student Karrie Godwin, and their research team are investigating how kindergartners allocate their attention in learning environments to determine how physical features of the environment (e.g., toys, posters, art work, etc.) can enhance or hinder children's ability to attend to the content of a lesson and whether the children's distribution of attention changes over time. They are also examining whether children's ability to effectively distribute their attention has consequences for both learning and retaining new content. First, in the **Science Game**, children are asked questions about various science content (e.g., which of the bones shown is the strongest bone in your body?). This pre-test helps researchers determine what children already know about the lesson topic. Next, as an orientation, in the **Read-Aloud Game**, children listen to a short story and then answer questions about its content, again by marking the picture that shows the correct answer. Then, the children will participate in the **Classroom Game** daily over a 2-week period (for a total of 8 sessions). On each day, a researcher teaches the children a mini-lesson in a small group format. For 4 of the lessons, the physical environment includes items that are typically found in early childhood classrooms but that may be potential sources of distraction (e.g. posters, artwork, manipulatives, etc.). For the remaining 4 lessons, the physical environment only includes visual aids and materials directly relevant to the lesson. Each lesson lasts approximately 10 to 15 minutes. During each lesson, children listen to a short non-fiction story and then answer content questions to test their initial learning of the material. Finally, in the spring, the children's long-term retention of the science content will be assessed via the **Story Game**.

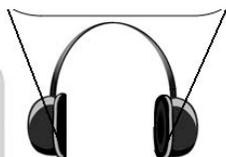


The Animal Name Game

In this study, Dr. Anna Fisher's research group is investigating the relationship between young children's reasoning skills and other general cognitive processes such as memory, attention, processing speed, knowledge organization, and language ability. In the Animal Game, children are presented with a series of word pairs. Children are asked if the second word of the word pair is an animal. For example, children might hear the word pair "bunny – rabbit" and then decide if the second word ("rabbit") is an animal or not. Children respond by pressing a *yes* or *no* button on the computer. Researchers anticipate that children's performance on the Animal Game will improve with age and that it will correlate with their performance on the **Help Zibbo Game** and the **Similarity Game** (See October 2012 Newsletter).



"Bunny ... Rabbit"



Director's Corner: Teachers are the Key

Reviewing the daily classroom messages, visiting the school, and participating in Parent / Teacher conferences all give parents an opportunity to witness the **central role of teachers in their children's education**. NAEYC recognizes the importance of high quality teaching by dedicating two standards in the national accreditation system to teaching practices and teacher professional development.

Standard #3 (**Teaching**) focuses on using effective developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate teaching approaches. Standard #6 (**Teachers**)



ensures that accredited programs build a teaching team that has the educational qualifications, knowledge, and professional commitment necessary to promote children's learning and development and to support families' diverse needs and interests. We are fortunate to be embedded in a university culture that continually strives for best practices in all aspects of the education process and also provides the human resources support for all campus employees. This context enhances our laboratory school's ability to both lead and innovate in the realm of early childhood teaching.



- Naturally, we begin with recruitment and retention of effective educators who share our passion for building a caring learning community that is responsive to children's and adults' interests and needs, designing a rich learning environment, and promoting meaningful learning that helps everyone deepen their conceptual understanding of relevant topics and strengthen skills in all domains.

- The CMU human resources system helps us search broadly for educators with relevant college degrees and experience, provides excellent benefits and continuing education resources, and offers coaching for our administrators so that we can best integrate our staff as a team and support each individual's unique personal and professional growth.

- We have the freedom to plan our school calendar and schedules such that we can both fulfill our laboratory school responsibilities and design the best professional development for our staff. Both TIME and RESOURCES are essential. Having nearly two weeks at the beginning and end of each school year to focus on professional growth, plus weekly team planning and staff development time enables us to meet and exceed the accreditation requirements. We can provide the fundamentals for staff orientation, health and safety training, and seminars in ethics, child development, assessment, special needs, etc. In addition, we can effectively utilize opportunities to learn via active involvement in collaborative advancement projects. For example, instead of simply taking a seminar on issues related to diversity, we can engage our staff in a book study on dual language learners and initiate an international practicum experience with Korean colleagues.

- Our schedule and excellent staff/child ratio also afford opportunities for individuals, teams, and the whole staff to reflectively focus on continual quality improvement. We are privileged to share our educators as leaders in the field, serving on local and national boards, mentoring pre-service teachers, collaborating on research projects, speaking and writing for national audiences, etc. In these ways, we invest in the quality of our educators and strengthen the whole team's ability to foster the best possible learning experiences for everyone involved in our laboratory school.

