

Children's Media

This fall, we've had several families request advice about children's television and media use, so here we share the two best sources of research-based information for families and educators.

- **Common Sense Media** is "the leading independent nonprofit organization dedicated to helping kids thrive in a world of media and technology. We empower parents, teachers, and policymakers by providing unbiased information, trusted advice, and innovative tools to help them harness the power of media and technology as a positive force in all kids' lives." (<https://www.commonsensemedia.org>).
- **The Erikson Institute's Technology in Early Childhood (TEC) Center** "empowers early childhood educators to make informed decisions about the appropriate use of technology with children from birth to age 8." (<http://teccenter.erikson.edu>).



Toys for Tots Donations

Would you like to do the best you can to make a child's holiday? That's just what **Toys for Tots** strives to do. If you would like to donate a new unwrapped toy to Toys for Tots, you can take your donation to any Toys R Us or Babies R Us location. There is also a donation location at CMU's Wean Hall 4212. If you would like to find a drop off location near you or to volunteer please visit toysfortots.org.

Undergraduate Spotlight

Hi! My name is Grace Dzina and I am a senior at Carnegie Mellon, majoring in Social and Political History. After stumbling upon the Children's School during observations for a class a few years ago, I discovered a new world of learning at Carnegie Mellon. Away from the stress culture at the collegiate level, I found myself immersed in a world of friends who were filled with excitement in learning about the world around them. It was a world into which I knew I wanted to immerse myself, rather than simply observe.



I have always had a love of working with children, but my experience prior to coming to the Children's School was always on the softball field or in the pool. The experience I have gained here in the classroom has opened my eyes to a whole new side of child development. In helping with the friends, I have not only learned how to better engage with the friends, but I have also gotten to witness and adopt the skills each teacher brings to the classroom. Their examples have taught me about the intentionality that goes into each and every activity and interaction. The way in which they



leverage every point of contact to support learning process is remarkable. At the end of each work shift, I am left inspired by the friends' love and awe of learning and thinking. When the rigor of academia becomes overwhelming and frustrating, the children's pride in learning how to zip a coat and their joy in learning about the different parts of trees puts reality back into perspective. In return for my work at the Children's School, the friends have taught me the importance of excitement in knowledge and reminded me of the joy found in exploration.

Undergraduate Spotlight: Student Teacher Reflections

Danielle Sallmen and Andrew Lemberg are seniors in U. Pitt's Combined Accelerated Studies in Education (CASE) Program, a five-year undergrad and Master's program that includes a BS in Applied Developmental Psychology and a M.Ed. in early childhood and special education.



• **Danielle Sallmen** (AM Younger 4's with Mrs. Opferman)

My time at the Children's School has been filled with amazing opportunities and valuable learning experiences that I will carry with me through all future teaching endeavors. It has been a pleasure getting to work with all the bright-minded students and to watch them grow in the brief time that I have been here. Mrs. Opferman and all the other Green Room teachers have set great examples of what effective teaching looks like in the classroom, and the best teaching mechanisms to advance a student's learning. I am so glad to have been placed in such an outstanding school setting where the learning possibilities seem endless. It is hard to believe that my time here is coming to an end. Thank you to all the educators and faculty who have made my first student teaching experience a rewarding and enjoyable one. I will truly miss working with everyone at the Children's School.



• **Andrew Lemberg** (Kindergarten with Mrs. Blizman)

Having the opportunity to work with Mrs. Blizman and the other Kindergarten teachers this semester has been an incredibly insightful and humbling experience. The educators at the CMU Children's School are like a big family, and I immediately felt welcome and continue to be greeted by happy faces each morning. From the first day of school, I was impressed with how the classroom was arranged to prepare both teachers and students for success, and also with how well all three teachers worked together in harmony. It has been a classroom dynamic that I haven't experienced thus far in my time at Pitt, but observing the Kindergarten team has provided me an example of how effective it can be. I have been very fortunate to have Mrs. Blizman guide my progress as a young educator through development of lesson plans, daily work activities, and classroom management skills. The knowledge I have gained has been priceless, and I look forward to building upon and applying it to my studies, as well as wherever my future career takes me. My summary of my time at the Children's School cannot be complete without mentioning the students with whom I got to interact each day. Their willingness to learn, as well as their acceptance of me in the classroom, has been unbelievably heartwarming. Any challenge they presented has strengthened me for my future teaching, which is just one way that they have shown me that teaching is a two-way street and that, at times, I am as much a student as they are! Overall, my time in the Kindergarten classroom has been wonderful, and I look forward to visiting everyone in the future.

