

Undergraduate Spotlight

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, either as student employees, interns, or volunteers. 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. Photos are posted on the Family Communication bulletin board.



Child Development Interns

- Jill Ackman is a senior Psychology major interning in the AM 4's to gain experience in education.
- Sarah Anderson is a junior Fine Arts major exploring options for combining her interest in early childhood with a career involving the arts (PM 4's).
- Cecilia Franchi (right) is a junior Psychology and Statistics major interning in the AM 4's class. Cecilia also works at the Carriage House Children's Center.
- Joo Hwan Shin is a senior Psychology major interested in a career in clinical psychology (PM 3's).
- Ashley Taylor (right, green shirt) is a junior Psychology major exploring options for both research and teaching careers (Kindergarten).



Senior Student Teachers from Pitt's CASE Program

Brittany Bauer, Caitlin Florek, and Brianna Amoscato 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, Krissy Opferman, and Holly Blizman respectively.



Brittany says, "I am from just east of Pittsburgh and love to visit my parents, two sisters and two dogs that still live there. I also have a cat named Belle who lives with me! I love to play and attend sporting events (especially the Pirates and Pitt!!). I love to cook and enjoy all of the unique culinary events around Pittsburgh. I enjoy being active, riding my bike and being outdoors. When I have free time, I love to read! I hope to share my love of books with all the students in the classroom."

Caitlin is from Claridge, PA. She also has her American sign language certificate. In her free time, she reads, enjoys movies, spends time with her family and is president of a dance group at Pitt.



From Brianna, "In addition to academics, I am a flute player in the University of Pittsburgh marching band, a Summerbridge tutor and a flute teacher at the Falk Laboratory School. I am looking forward to a semester filled with innovative thinking, creative methodologies and countless teachable moments."

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Hi, I am Marisa Wiltsie, a senior psychology major at CMU. After graduating, I plan to continue my work with children as a school counselor, or possibly as a grade school teacher. So, the opportunity to work directly with children is very valuable. I have spent time in the Children's School for research, and I have had experience through some of Dr. Carver's college courses.

However, this year, actually working in the Children's School, I get the opportunity to interact more closely with the children. Being able to be involved in their daily activities, rather than observing as an outsider, makes all of the theories I have been learning about in my psychology classes that much more accessible and real. Also, seeing in practice the solutions and techniques that the teachers I work with use to help the friends solve disputes or encourage them to try something for the first time is more valuable than anything I could get from a textbook.



I also enjoy being able to share my love of reading with the friends! Often times while waiting for their turn to be dismissed, a child brings me a book to read. Inevitably, more friends will gather, bringing more books for us to read. It is one of the best feelings in the world to see their faces light up with wonder as we read together! They smile and giggle as we make the story come to life.



In addition to being a wonderful learning experience for me, getting to spend time at the Children's School is an absolute treat! It is energizing to see the creativity and passion with which the friends go about their days. I could not think of a better way to start the day than with the smiling faces of all of the friends as they come to school! Spending time with the friends is a nice way to exercise my inner child. After all, how often do college students get the chance to play in the sand box or with some play dough? I look forward to continuing to get to know all of the friends and hope that I can help teach them important lessons, just as they have been teaching me.

Undergraduate Research

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 impact of pretend play re-enactment of stories on children's empathy for the characters
(The Knuffle Bunny Game, AM 4's and K)

The impact of ownership understanding on sharing (The Playdough Game, PM 3's and K)

The impact of adult encouragement on task persistence in the face of possible and impossible goals (The Water Challenge, AM 4's)

The impact of toy exposure and adult modeling on perception of gender stereotypes (The Toy Game, AM 4's and K)

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Arielle Cohen has always loved working with children and is so happy to be working with the wonderful group of children at the Children's School! She writes, "I love seeing them grow and learn through all their different experiences. I particularly enjoy seeing their creativity. It's always an adventure, whether it's watching them come up with imaginative games on the playground, hearing them tell stories, or marveling at their artistic creations in the classroom. Even though I've only been here a couple months, I can already see their ability to express themselves growing."



Arielle is an art loving, pre-med, psychology major who is not exactly sure what she'll end up doing. "Right now, I love the idea of working in developmental pediatrics. I am fascinated by development and education through childhood and early adulthood, and I have experienced it in a few different ways. I am a co-director of Carnegie Mellon's *Strive for College*, which is a local chapter of a national non-profit that aims to help disadvantaged high school students through the college application process by providing mentors who are current college students. I also study the history of the Juvenile Court with Dr. Steven Schlossman. I feel very lucky that I've been able to learn from a wide variety of ages and populations, and the Children's School is an integral part of that!"



Student Teacher Reflections

• **Brittany Bauer** (AM Young 3's with Mrs. Tomer)

This field placement has been one of the best educational experiences I have had over the last 4 years at the University of Pittsburgh. Seeing all of the hard work and planning done by the teachers at the school inspired me throughout the semester, not only in my work with the children here, but also in my classwork and gym class. I have learned so many skills that I am able to translate into other facets of my life.

No words can truly express how meaningful this experience has been. Working with Mrs. Tomer has been wonderful; she is a wealth of knowledge and is an exceptional mentor teacher. All of the teachers in the school are welcoming and great examples of what I aspire to be in the future.



Everyone has a unique background, so there are many enriching experiences that developed, and I was happy to be a part of the process. Working with the children has been so much fun! Each one has grown over the semester, and I have been fortunate to see this growth and development; it is so enriching interacting with the children everyday! All of the extra work I put into different activities for the Children's School has prepared me for the future and proved beneficial, propelling my studies even further. Thank you to the families, teachers and especially Mrs. Tomer and Dr. Carver for allowing me to have this experience and learning opportunity.



Student Teacher Reflections, continued ...

• Caitlin Florek (AM Middle 4's with Mrs. Opferman)

I cannot believe my time at the Children's School is coming to a close. I have had so many great experiences and memories of my time here. Every morning, I was able to start my day with the smiles of all the students arriving at the school. They knew that the day was planned full of fun learning activities. The staff has been so welcoming and caring to all the students, parents, and three student teachers. I could not ask for a better place to have my first real teaching experience. I was so lucky to have a team that worked together so well and allowed me to join in with my ideas. I will miss the staff and every one of those children who have changed my life as a future teacher and a person. This was one of my best experiences and I'm always in awe on how well everyone gets along and collaborates. I know I can take everything I learned from this school and apply it to a future classroom.



• Brianna Amoscato (Kindergarten with Mrs. Blizman)

It is hard to believe that my valuable teaching experience in the Kindergarten is coming to a close. The last 16 weeks have been filled with hours of hard work, creating lesson plans, completing student evaluations, learning classroom management techniques and successfully differentiating instruction. I must admit that I was somewhat overwhelmed upon first entering the Kindergarten classroom with a group of 22 intelligent and creative students. However, my mentor teacher Mrs. Blizman and the other Kindergarten teachers, Mrs. Perovich and Mrs. Armbruster, welcomed me into the team with open arms and encouraged me to explore new teaching techniques and instructional strategies. In addition, they helped me implement new lessons and look at teaching from a different perspective. Mrs. Blizman



gave me valuable advice and suggestions that I will take with me as I begin a new journey in a new classroom next semester. I feel incredibly fortunate to have had the opportunity to experience a warm, innovative, supportive and caring environment such as the Children's School as a pre-professional teacher. I will miss the Kindergarten students immensely as they have taught me that *Childhood is a journey not a race*. Their joy and the smiles will remain with me forever.

Undergraduate Spotlight

Emily Lawlis writes, "Working with the children at the Children's School is not only a joy, but it also provides peace and stress relief. As a sophomore chemistry major at CMU, hard work and stress go hand in hand. It is too easy to become immersed in classes and homework and to lose perspective of why we do all the work that we do. Teaching and helping with the children strengthens and grounds me."



"As soon as I walk into the Children's School, my daily anxiety is lifted from my shoulders. Watching the children's excitement over learning activities reinforces my love for my own classes. Their joy and happiness when they accomplish something is similar to my own excitement when a tedious experiment actually works. The children's obvious thrill in creating, learning, and exploring reminds me of my own joy in discovery in the chemistry lab and encourages me to continue my studies. Helping the children to explore new ideas and concepts while having fun is the highlight of my day."

"It is challenging and, at times emotionally draining, work, but it feels good to serve and to impact their lives. I know that I have learned a great deal from my work experience at the school. It has given me the opportunity to learn patience, to tolerate and to understand others. Most importantly, I have learned to use a variety of approaches to help each child achieve his/her potential. All these qualities will no doubt benefit me in whatever career I chose."



Early Childhood Practicum Students

From January 18th through February 2nd, we will host four early childhood practicum students from Duksung Women's University (Seoul, South Korea) for an International Practicum Program (see photos on the next page). The Campus School at Carlow University, the Falk School at the University of Pittsburgh, and the University Child Development Center will each also host students, with the total group including 10 undergraduates and 2 graduate students. We look forward to learning more about the initiatives our South Korean colleagues are leading in early childhood and in reflecting with them about the cross-cultural similarities and differences in our values and approaches related to educating young children.



Thanks to the Moraski (Boden K and Brylie 3's) and Sekula (John K and Jane 4's) families for offering housing to these visiting students. There are still opportunities to help by preparing welcome bags for the students, offering to provide lunch for them at the school one day, providing transportation to cultural attractions, etc. If you are interested in helping, please contact Dr. Carver at sc0e@andrew.cmu.edu to discuss options.

Early Childhood Practicum Students, continued ...

Young Kyoung Lee
Junior
 Young 3's / Extended AM



Jeonghyo Kim
Junior
 Older 3's / PM 3's



Soobin Lee
Senior
 Older 4's / PM 4's



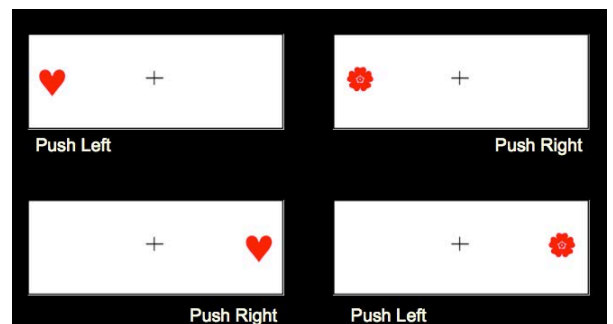
Jin-Hee Kim
Masters Student
 Kindergarten



Research Spotlight

The Hearts & Flowers Game

Graduate student Karrie Godwin and her advisor, Dr. Anna Fisher, are investigating the relationship between learning and other general cognitive processes such as attention, memory, processing speed, executive function, and general reasoning ability. In the *Hearts and Flowers Game*, they are measuring children's cognitive control and their ability to inhibit a behavioral response. In this computer game, children are presented with a series of hearts and flowers. Children are instructed to respond to each object as follows: When children see a heart on the computer screen, they are told to press the response button on the same side that the heart was presented (e.g., if the heart appears on the left hand side of the screen, the correct response would entail pressing the left response button). However, when children see a flower, they are instructed to press the opposite response button (e.g., if the flower appears on the left hand side of the screen, the correct response would entail pressing the right response button). Next, children are shown pictures depicting the sun or the moon. Children are asked to provide a verbal response that conflicts with the picture. For example, if children see a picture of the sun, they are instructed to say "night"; and when children see the picture of the moon, they are instructed to say "day". In other studies, children's skill at tasks that require such inhibition of the common response predicts their learning ability. Discovering the precise correlations will help researchers and educators know how to best facilitate children's learning foundations.



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Rafael McCauley started working at the Children's School midway through the first semester, and already knows it's the best job a student can have on campus. He says, "I get to spend a few (read: not enough) hours away from the stress and grind of Carnegie Mellon to spend quality time with some of the most adorable children you'll ever meet. I've always enjoyed working with children so this is a great opportunity to get back to doing something I enjoy.



Outside of the Children's School, you can usually find me in Gates-Hillman working on the latest ridiculous Computer Science assignment. Apparently this school's got the idea that they're pretty good at Computer Science, so they really like to challenge us. I'm only a sophomore right now, but I've made it this far, so I feel pretty confident about it. I also play for the men's Ultimate Frisbee team, Mr. Yuk. We go to tournaments throughout the year, but the actual season is in the spring so I'm just starting to get geared up for it now. I'm looking forward to more good years here at Carnegie Mellon and the Children's School.

Child Development Interns

Dr. Carver has five interns in her Practicum in Child Development course this semester.

- Marie Avilez (below left) is a Junior Ethics, History & Public Policy major with aspirations to improve education. She is working with the 4's Team on Monday and Friday mornings.
- Angela Mitchell (below middle) is a 5th year Architecture student who is interested in teaching architecture to children and designing children's spaces. She is enjoying the Building Unit with the 4's on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday mornings.
- Elisa Pabon is a Sophomore Biopsychology major interested in a career in developmental neuroscience. She works with the Kindergarten Team on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, as well as serving as a TA for Dr. Carver's large Principles of Child Development course.
- Ramya Sivakumar (below right) is a Senior Civil Engineering major interested in learning more about working with children. She is helping the 3's Team on Tuesday and Thursday mornings.
- Grace Sohn is a Sophomore double majoring in Psychology and Piano. She enjoys teaching piano and Sunday School and is supporting the 3's Team on Monday and Wednesday afternoons.



Undergraduate Spotlight

My name is Yu Zhao. When I think back about two years to when I first started working at the Children's School and remember all the children with whom I've had the privilege to interact and develop pleasant bonds, I realize that the whole experience of working at an educationally-driven yet laid-back environment has been one of the highlights of my college career. As a senior in the BXA interdisciplinary program for Art & Psychology (as well as an additional science curriculum due to my recent decision to go to dental school), I feel as if the Children's School has become my second home on campus because of the sheer joy and reward I feel when I help a friend accomplish a certain task or teach him/her the value of being kind to others. I always look forward to working because the presence of every lively child is like a sanctuary from the stressful and demanding workload from school. To be able to have witnessed whole cycles of some of the friends joining us as three year olds and then growing and flourishing into capable and intelligent kindergartners is something so special that not many people besides a young child's family get to appreciate! Having grown up as an only child, I've always wanted a little brother or sister. I feel almost as if each friend at the Children's School is my sibling who can brighten my day. Being able to work with so many wonderful young children has taught me countless important life lessons about responsibility, patience, and communication.

One of the most amazing things about the Children's School is the diversity of topics the children get to study at such a young age. From transportation and recycling to dinosaurs and birds, the plethora of ever-changing themes from month to month and the corresponding creative activities involved is not only captivating to the children but also eye-opening for me as well; I wish I knew half as much as these children know when I was their age! The children are like sponges that absorb new material with such open minds. What an enriching sight to behold! I love it when they've just studied something they find intriguing and cannot stop telling everyone around them how a certain phenomenon works. Sometimes they relay information in such an innocent yet original way that I cannot hold myself back from laughing. I also enjoy immensely the opportunity I get to plan new activities with the teachers. Being able to offer my input and think of novel ways to help the children explore different subject matter is something that makes me proud. Just like the children always say, "Everyone is a friend." Working at the Children's School has taught me a great deal about the value of friendship and the gratification of being able to help others. I know that with whatever I do in the future, I will always look back on my time here with fond memories.



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Sandra Kalanyan's first memory of the Children's School was of hearing the joyful voices of the children as they enjoyed their outdoor playground when it used to be at the basement of Margaret Morrison, while I worked in my first year architecture studio four stories above them. During the beautiful months of fall and spring, our windows would always be open, allowing the sounds of their innocent freedom to waft up and fill us with some of their joy as well. At the time, it struck me as strange that preschoolers were occupying the same building and the same environment as college students and professors, but now, I see the beauty of the idea and understand just how much the children have to learn in such a stimulating environment. I am now in my fifth and final year of the architecture program, and have had the privilege of working with the children personally, learning invaluable lessons along the way.



I first took Dr. Carver's Child Development course in my third year at CMU. Although I had little experience with children at the time, I found the subject fascinating and enjoyed the time I was able to spend observing the children. Comparing the course material to what I saw in the kindergarten classroom was very interesting and allowed me to gain a much deeper understanding of the behavior I was witnessing. Ever since taking the course, working at the Children's School became a personal goal for me – I knew that it would be highly rewarding and would provide a short period of relief from the constant work load associated with the architecture program. It has proven to do just that.



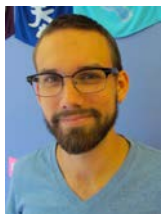
Although I only started working at the Children's School in my final semester at CMU, I couldn't be happier with my experience. Every day is a new adventure with the Green Room friends, whose energy and insight is wonderful to see. With their teachers as examples, I have learned the value of patience and have seen how much of a difference it can make for children when they are given a chance to figure things out on their own. I have also seen the deep level of learning they experience as a result of the units they explore for long periods of time. I was lucky enough to join the Green Room when they were learning

about buildings, and was delighted to see their creations when it came to making paper bag houses, paper sculptures, and the collaborative effort of making a tall tower in the classroom! The exposure they have to all kinds of subject matter at such a young age is wonderful, and their ability to explore these units so deeply through the activities that their teachers organize is even more remarkable.

I am so thankful for the several hours of relief I am able to enjoy each week as I prepare to graduate and enter the world beyond. Although I'm not sure of my plans for the future, I do hope that I will find ways to engage with children and even work towards shaping their built environment as part of my career. I am grateful to the children and the teachers of the Children's School for welcoming me into their enriching world and allowing me to learn with them about buildings, birds, music, and much more!



Undergraduate Spotlight: Farewell Seniors!



Sam French is a directing major who has worked for us since he was a freshman. "After graduating, I will be moving to New York City. This summer, I will be directing a new musical produced by the National Theater for Student Artists based on the life of Jimmy Carter. Afterwards, I will continue to pursue a career as a director and writer."

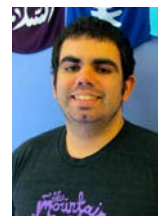


Emily Gibson has also worked for the Children's School for 4 years. "I will spend one last summer in Pittsburgh working at the Children's School camp and the Conflict Kitchen. In August, I plan to move to a new city and get involved in cultural community outreach programs. I am also applying for a Fulbright Scholarship to return to my study abroad home at the University of Oxford, where I will pursue a Master of Studies in Victorian Literature."



Sandra Kalanyan has only been with us for one semester but we have been glad to have her working with us. "My most immediate plans are to stay in Pittsburgh to finish constructing a long-term design/build project. That could take up to two months past graduation. After that, I will most likely move back to the Philadelphia area to search for architecture jobs in Public Interest Design, and/or spend time volunteering community development organizations or building for Habitat for Humanity."

Matthew Masticova has taken three courses with Dr. Carver and has worked with us in the classrooms since Fall 2012. "I plan on taking classes in ASL and bookbinding and spending too much money in Brooklyn. Outside of that, all bets are off, although I do plan on pursuing graduate studies in special education and fiction writing at some point. I hope to one day develop creative writing curricula that integrates multiple modalities of expression for high school students with developmental disabilities."



Angela Mitchell worked as an intern this past semester with the Morning Four's. "I plan on moving to Dallas, Texas to pursue a career in architecture. I hope to focus on architecture education for children or on designing educational spaces."

Corinne Rockoff joined us a work study after taking Dr. Carver's Child Development Practicum in the spring of 2013. "I'll be starting at George Washington Law School in August!"



Ramya Sivakumar worked as an intern with the Morning 3's for Dr. Carver's Child Development Practicum. "After graduating with a Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering, I will be moving to the greater Harrisburg area. I will join the Highway Division at Gannett Fleming, Inc. as a Transportation Engineer."