

Carnegie Mellon University Children's School

November 2022 Family Newsletter

Gift of a Pumpkin Patch

A HUGE thank-you to CMU's Facilities Management and Campus Services (FMCS) for donating 100 pumpkins to the Children's School and to FMS volunteers Frank, Rachel, Steve, and Greg for turning our playground into a Pumpkin Patch!! The children had a marvelous time picking their perfect pumpkin!



November / December 2022 Dates

2nd Quarter: Monday, October 31st through Wednesday, December 21st

NAEYC Accreditation Site Visit Window: October 31st to November 18th

Conversation re: School Choices: Tuesday, November 8 from 9:00-10:30am
Danforth Lounge in Cohon University Center

Parent / Teacher Conferences

Afternoon of Friday, November 18th or All Day Friday, December 2nd (No School)

Winter Break: Thursday, December 22nd through Friday, January 6th (No School)



Tartans, all in. Everywhere.

So far, our COVID-19 risk mitigation practices seem to be working and Allegheny County is currently a low transmission region, so we have no plans to change our protocols in November. Remember that the daily health screening and commitment to staying home when sick is preventing the spread of ALL communicable illnesses, so that practice always helps!



#GivingTuesday – November 29, 2022

November 29th is the eighth annual Giving CMU Day, a day to bring together everyone in the Tartan community to support the areas of CMU that mean the most to them. By making a gift to CMU this #givingCMUday, you directly impact students and their educational experience. #givingCMUday will be a great opportunity to support the Children's School and the CMU community! Please consider a gift to the Children's School to ensure that our teaching and learning is sustainable well into the future! Watch your email for more information on this event.



#givingCMUday

Community Service Committee

Our Community Service Committee met in September to plan some great projects for the coming months. We will kick things off on October 31st with a can opener drive to benefit the CMU food pantry. Can openers may be sent to school with your child anytime between October 31st and November 4th. For those who like to plan ahead, please see the schedule for upcoming community service projects below. If you are interested in helping with any of these efforts, please contact Kim Yetter at kyetter@andrew.cmu.edu.



October 31st – November 4th Can Opener Drive

November 7th – 30th Coat and Clothing Drive to benefit Womenspace East Shelter.

December 1st to 20th Book Drive

Thanks to the members of the Community Service Committee for their efforts: Carol Welsh (Leo 4's), Christine Larson (Aiden 3's), Alysia McCray (Amelia 3's), Natalie Marshall (Max 4's), Laura Dickey (Gabriel 4's), and Annie McLaughlin (Zoey 4's).



Thank You, Garden Committee

On October 10th, members of the Garden Committee volunteered to clean the hillside garden in preparation for Fall planting by the children. Maria (Fernando, 4's), Leslie (Finn, 4's), Mark (Jimmy, 4's), and Bridget (Caroline, K) removed the pumpkin vines and sunflowers that were planted by the children last spring, pruned back the perennials, and weeded the garden beds. Earlier in the week, the children harvested the pumpkins from the vines. The sunflower plants were brought to the playground for exploration.



Greeting and Dismissal Car Safety

If you need to park and walk into school during Greeting or Dismissal time, please do not walk through the driveway to the Green Awning entrance. Instead, use the Alternate Safe Walking Entrances shown here:



Special note to families who are greeted at the Green Awning: For safety reasons, please do not back into a Greeting/Dismissal Spot 1. Please keep the Garden Wall to your right as you drive through the parking lot and then proceed to Spot 1.

Fall Parent / Teacher Conferences

The fall conferences are great opportunities for parents and teachers to discuss their views of each child's development. Watch for an email inviting you to schedule your parent-teacher conference for November 18th or December 2nd. The educators look forward to meeting with parents to review the child's progress and plan strategies for further partnership in their education.

At the Children's School, our conferences are structured by the developmental objectives that are the focus of our program design, and our educators have been trained to combine techniques for natural classroom observation, administration of informal, age-appropriate tasks, and collection of photographs and artifacts to develop an informative portfolio and narrative report for families.

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



Teachers will highlight the progress they have seen in each area at school. We encourage parents to prepare for their child(ren)'s conference(s) by considering the progress they have noted at home, particularly in the context of family discussions of the daily classroom blog updates. 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 your views with your child(ren)'s teacher(s) facilitates productive dialogue about how your child is progressing in home and school environments. It's always interesting to see the parallels that exist between the two contexts, as well as the differences that are often evident. Parents can also ask any questions they have about our assessment procedures and then join educators in a dialogue about strategies each can use to support children's growth.

So Many School Choices

For the older children, the conference dialogue helps parents choose the next school so that its program best matches the child and family. When considering schools, be sure to note the birthday cutoff because many children with fall birthdays will need a pre-kindergarten year prior to traditional kindergarten. Attached to this newsletter is a helpful handout on Elementary School Options. In addition to this handout and the conference opportunity, Dr. Carver will host an informal, in-person question & answer session with interested families about School Choices on Tuesday, November 8th from 9 to 10:30am in the Cohon University Center's Danforth Lounge. We are privileged that you have entrusted your children to us and look forward to our continued partnership in their education.

Recommendations for Elementary Schools

Many families are working on elementary school applications. If any require a recommendation from us, please obtain a Request for Release of Student Records form from Miss Hancock (412-268-2198 or lh37@andrew.cmu.edu). Send your request and the completed form via email to Miss Hancock. In December, she will send your child's conference report to the school(s) of your choice.

Fair Trade Coffee Fundraiser

The Children's School is partnering with Building New Hope in a new coffee fundraising effort in which 30% of the proceeds raised will be donated to the Children's School.

"Building New Hope is a volunteer-driven nonprofit organization based in Pittsburgh and Nicaragua. In Nicaragua, we partner with a worker owned organic coffee cooperative, operate two supplemental schools for at-risk youth, and provide high school scholarships for students in need. In Pittsburgh, we engage with local schools and universities, faith groups, farmers, non-profits, community groups, and businesses to promote healthy ecosystems and to spread awareness about how fair-trade relationships can help to reduce poverty and inequalities. Our reach may be broad, but our mission is simple: help those in need by providing educational opportunities and fair prices for goods and services."

The coffee is certified organic, shade-grown, bird-friendly, fair and direct trade coffee. Regular and dark roasted beans are single-source and come from El Porvenir in Nicaragua. The decaf is certified organic and fair trade, is decaffeinated using a chemical-free Swiss water process, and is sourced from cooperatives in Latin America.



BUILDING NEW HOPE
Fundraise for your cause



For more than 30 years, Pittsburgh-based group Building New Hope (BNH) has been on the ground in Central America helping agrarian communities achieve sustainable economic opportunities and providing access to education.

BUILDING NEW HOPE WITH EVERY CUP OF COFFEE

Our medium and dark roast coffee comes exclusively from El Porvenir, a worker-owned cooperative in Nicaragua.

It is certified organic and bird friendly, fostering diversity and providing habitats for migrating birds. Fair trade and shade grown coffee like ours helps keeps communities healthy.

WE ARE MORE THAN COFFEE!!

We pay our partner farmers 50% above the official fair trade price. In Pittsburgh we promote healthy ecosystems and spread awareness about how fair trade relationships can help reduce poverty and inequalities.

CONTACT US:
info@buildingnewhope.org
 412-421-1625
 6401 Penn Ave. 3rd Floor, Suite 300
 Pittsburgh PA 15206
www.BuildingNewHope.org




WE OPERATE SCHOOL PROGRAMS FOR AT-RISK YOUTH, AND PROVIDE GRANTS FOR EDUCATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED:

- Drink our coffee
- (order at www.buildingnewhope.org)
- Donate
- Volunteer
- Fundraise for your cause
- (Ask us about hosting a coffee fundraiser.)

Order coffee online between November 4th and 11th via the directions below. Coffee will be available for pick up at the Children's School on Friday, November 18th or Monday, November 21st.

1. Visit <https://www.buildingnewhope.org/product-page/fundraise-with-bnh>

2. Choose the size, grind, roast, organization, and quantity.

Make sure you choose "CMU Children's School" as the organization.

Click "add item to cart" and, when a little window opens with the products, click "view cart".

3. Under order summary, select from the drop-down menu "Fundraising Pick-up Point" as your delivery option.

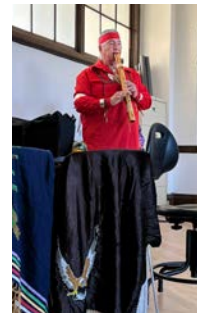
4. Select either "Paypal" or "Checkout" for other payments different from Paypal.

5. At the "checkout page", complete all the information and continue.

7. You will be redirected to the "Review and Place your order" page. After reviewing your order click "Place Order".

Indigenous Peoples' Day

On October 21st, the Preschool 4's and Kindergarten classes had the great pleasure of experiencing a visit with Lenora and Earl Dingus. They are both Native American storytellers, and Earl is also a traditional Native American flute player. Lenora shared traditional Native American stories about animals and the natural world, and Earl delighted us all by playing several different traditional Native American flutes. They explained to the children that Native Americans are a diverse group of people who come from many different Nations or Tribes in the United States. Lenora is a member of the Seneca Nation, and Earl is a member of the Cherokee Nation. They also explained to the children that they were wearing traditional Native American garments, that this clothing is not a costume, and that it would not be appropriate to dress up as a Native American for Halloween. Finally, the children all learned how to say Hello in Cherokee – Osiyo! (pronounced See-Yo). Thank you, Lenora and Earl, for a wonderful visit!



NAEYC Accreditation Site Visit SOON



We have learned that our site visit window will be from Monday, October 31st to Friday, November 18th and that our visit will be just one day, with the orientation, tour, and three 1-hour classroom observations in the morning, and then the program and classroom portfolio reviews, plus the facility check in the afternoon. We anticipate getting a call the morning before the site visit will occur, and we promise to keep you informed. It's exciting to have worked so diligently to meet the continually evolving standards of excellence and now have an opportunity for a national assessor to observe our program in action!

Children's School Spirit Wear ½ Price Sale

The University issued new Trademark and Licensing guidelines for branded merchandise which required us to update our logo. In preparation for the slight design change, we are having a ½ price sale on "old logo" items such as t-shirts, sweatshirts, and hoodies.

Child Tees	\$5.00
Child Sweatshirts	\$7.00
Child Hoodies	\$10.00

Sizes are limited. Please contact the Main Office via cmuchs@andrew.cmu.edu if you are interested in making a purchase!

MORE Fall Open House Events



Life, Love, and Learning Together

Volunteers Appreciation

Thanks to Project Committee members Bridget McCullough for putting together the new mud kitchen sink for the playground and to Daniel Dickens for helping to cut pine pieces for a woodworking project!



If you are interested in joining a Children's School Committee, it's not too late! You can use this link to register: <https://forms.gle/kwxoSuvruwKbNN6EA>.

Family Social Organization (FSO)

We're happy to announce the return of the Children's School's **F**amily **S**ocial **O**rganization. The main thing the FSO does is plan whole school events and enrichment activities that take place outside of the school day. This weekend is the first meet-up of the year but stay tuned for additional events planned throughout the school year. If you'd like to join the planning committee, please email carolannwelsh@gmail.com. Thanks to Carol Welsh (Leo 4's), Eileen French Jordan (Pepper 4's), Annie McLaughlin (Zoey 4's), and Emily Perlow (Henley 3's) for volunteering to serve on the FSO committee!

Whole School Playground Meetup - Organized by the FSO - THIS SATURDAY!

Playdate at the Highland Park Super Playground

<https://engage.pittsburghpa.gov/highland-park-super-playground>

Location: Highland Park

Date: Saturday, October 29

(raindate: Sunday, October 30)

Time: 1pm-2:30pm

Halloween costumes encouraged.



October Book Fair Update



Thanks to everyone who supported our first book fair of the year!

Thanks to your generous support, we were able to raise \$271.28 to purchase new books for our school library! Additionally, many great books were purchased from the classroom wish lists. Thank you so much for these amazing donations.

If you didn't get a chance to shop this time, don't worry! We will be holding another book fair at the end of November so you can stock up for winter. More info to come!

Visit with University Police

On October 14th, our University Police department visited with the 4's and Kindergarten classes. As part of Community Outreach, the police talked with the children about their job as campus helpers. Then, the friends had the opportunity to try on a police vest, sit in the police car, blow the siren on a police motorcycle, and take a closer look at a police bicycle. We are grateful for our University Police team and the support they provide to us each and every day!



CS Parent Discussion Group

Educational Consultant, Maggie Rosenblum, convened the first meeting of our Parents Discussion Group on the morning of Thursday, October 20th from 10am until Noon. The readings were two brief articles (see links below). The group discussed the four types of parenting styles (Authoritarian, Permissive, Neglectful, Authoritative) and compared "Gentle" parenting to Authoritative parenting. The group then shared advice regarding how to handle specific parenting issues such as picky eaters, bedtime struggles, not sharing, and temper tantrums.



- The harsh realm of gentle parenting (New Yorker, March 23, 2022)
<https://www.newyorker.com/books/under-review/the-harsh-realm-of-gentle-parenting>
- The authoritative parenting style: An evidence-based guide (Parenting Science)
<https://parentingscience.com/authoritative-parenting-style/>

There is still time to join the group, indicate your availability, and suggest topics by completing the form here: <https://forms.gle/VYxfkiyiZhLBeqwUA>. The next meeting will be on December 8th from 9:30 am until 11:30 am. We will be sharing self-care advice for parents. If you would like to join us, please email Maggie Rosenblum at rosenblu@andrew.cmu.edu.

Scholarship Updates

Educational Improvement Tax Credit Scholarship Organization (EITC) and Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit Program (OSTC)

The Children's School participates in the state's Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program as well as the Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit (OSTC) program. Through EITC, eligible Pennsylvania businesses can earn tax credits while providing financial assistance for children to attend preschool as well as grades K-12. Through OSTC, eligible Pennsylvania businesses can earn tax credits for contributing funds to provide tuition assistance in the form of scholarships to eligible students K-12th grade residing within the boundaries of a low-achieving school to attend another public school outside of their district or nonpublic school.

<https://dced.pa.gov/programs/educational-improvement-tax-credit-program-eitc/>

In 2021-22, The Children's School provided the following funding:

2021-22 Pre-K Educational Improvement Tax Credit Program (PKEITC)

- 25 children received funding to attend Pre-K at 4 approved Preschools in Allegheny County.
 - 1 child attended Pittsburgh Urban Christian School.
 - 2 children attended Angel's Place.
 - 13 children attended Crafton Heights Community Preschool.
 - 9 children attend the Children's School.
- \$3,280 was the average amount of scholarship awarded.
- The total amount of scholarship provided was \$82,002.

2021-22 Educational Improvement Tax Credit Scholarship Organization (EITCSO)

- 1 child received funding to attend our full day, licensed, and NAEYC accredited Kindergarten.
- \$880 was the average amount of scholarship awarded.
- The total amount of scholarship provided was \$880.

2021-22 Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit Program (OSTC)

- 33 children received funding to attend 14 different schools:
 - 30 children in Allegheny County
 - 1 child in Fayette County
 - 2 children in Westmoreland County
- \$3,400 was the average amount of scholarship awarded.
- The total amount of scholarship provided was \$112,200.

If you would like more information or can help us to build a list of prospective businesses, please contact Miss Hancock (lh37@andrew.cmu.edu).

Ann Baldwin Taylor Scholarship Fund

In 2015, the Children's School established *The Ann Baldwin Taylor Early Childhood Scholarship Fund* to provide assistance for children to attend the Children's School whose families demonstrate financial need. The fund is named for our founding director who led the school from 1968 to 1993. In 2021-22, three children attending the Children's School received scholarships from this fund.

If you would like to contribute, please visit our website's Giving page and select *The Ann Baldwin Taylor Early Childhood Scholarship Fund* under the Online menu:

<https://www.cmu.edu/dietrich/psychology/cs/giving/index.html>

Scholarship Updates ... continued

Central PA Scholarship Fund

In addition to the above-mentioned programs, individuals or corporations can work with the Central PA Scholarship Fund (CPSF) to designate scholarship funding to the Children's School. In 2021-22, 9 children attending the Children's School received funding from CPSF.

CPSF is a Special Purpose Entity (SPE), which is a pass-through partnership that exists solely for the purpose of earning Educational Improvement (or Opportunity Scholarship) Tax Credits. The Central PA Scholarship Fund is a non-profit that administers various SPEs at no cost to the school.

Who Qualifies?

Any individual or any corporation who pays PA income tax is eligible. There are also options available to individuals who work for non-profits and retirees. CPSF acts as an intermediary, providing individuals and companies who would ordinarily have trouble giving to EITC and OSTC an option to utilize these worthwhile programs. The minimum donation to join the SPE is \$3,500.

How does it work?

Donors complete a Joinder Agreement (simple one-page document) that acts as a reservation for the amount of credits for which you wish to apply. You will need to estimate your 2021 or 2022 tax liability for your planned donation. The reservations are taken on a first come, first served basis.

Additional Questions?

Contact Linda Hancock at lh37@andrew.cmu.edu or CPSF directly via Tami Clark at 814-942-4406/814-682-9035 or tami@cpsfcharity.org.

Academyati (my academy)

Part of Dr. Carver's role as Dietrich College's Associate Dean for Educational Affairs is to design and implement the undergraduate General Education program (<https://www.cmu.edu/dietrich/gened/>).

That program applies to Dietrich's students in Pittsburgh and on our campus in Doha, Qatar. Last week, Dr. Carver had the opportunity to travel to Doha for presentations and meetings about the GenEd program, but she also got to visit Academyati (<https://www.academyati.qa>), one of the 12 pre-university schools operated by the Qatar Foundation that also funds CMU's Qatar Programs. *"Academyati is an innovative school that ... [has] returned to the basics of human learning and motivation. By exposing our children to experiences and challenges as a way of learning, we aim to fuel children's independence, empathy, curiosity, and creativity ... Our vision is for children to grow as ethical creators who are aware, confident, empowered and can bring positive change to their world."* We are exploring options for future collaborations, as well as involving Academyati in the International Association of Laboratory Schools (IALS).



Family Spotlight: Roots in Pittsburgh & Lebanon

Hello, Children's School Families! We are the Sakr family, Majd, Nisrine and Alex. We are very happy to call Pittsburgh our home. Majd moved to Pittsburgh from Beirut, Lebanon, when he was 19 years old to study at the University of Pittsburgh. Despite living in different cities in the US and abroad, Majd always returned to Pittsburgh. We met in Beirut. I was the financial manager of a catering company, enjoying the wonderful Mediterranean weather of Lebanon, the good food, and the breathtaking views of the mountains and the sea. When Majd accepted a teaching position at Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar (CMUQ), we were both excited to be part of a community of international schools and universities that were building the capacity and shaping the future of a nation. I kept working remotely as a financial consultant for a company in Beirut. Majd was heading the computer science department and then the research office at CMUQ. Moving to the dichotomy of mellow but rapidly evolving Qatar was a culture shock but the hardest part was getting used to the very hot (100°F in the summer) and humid climate of the desert nation. After 7 years in Qatar and a lot, rather too much, travel for work, exploration and visiting family in Beirut, we decided to move to Pittsburgh.



Prior to moving permanently to Pittsburgh, my first visit to the US was to be a member of a support crew for Majd and 3 other cyclists as part of the Race Across America, riding from San Diego to Annapolis in 8 days. Despite the challenge of having to drive a large RV and navigating unfamiliar cities and roads, I could have never thought of a better introduction to this beautiful and diverse country. We moved to Pittsburgh in 2013. Majd accepted a position as a teaching faculty with the school of computer science at CMU; by that time, I was remotely managing a winery that Majd and I had started in Mount Lebanon (the original Mount Lebanon, in Lebanon).



Alex was born in 2019 and our life was transformed in many wonderful ways! Alex turned 3 this past August. It has been only a couple of months since he joined his friends in the Red Room at the Children's School, but we can already see the big impact of those few months. His passion for role play, especially assigning the roles and commanding the narrative is now nourished by the stories read at school. Every day, we re-enact the stories of the big bad wolf blowing down the block structures and the troll living under the bridge where we repeatedly build and rebuild the bridge. Alex loves listening to music and dancing, going a bit too fast on his scooter or bike, and asking his mom to tell him stories where he is ALWAYS the heroic protagonist.

Continued on next page ...

Family Spotlight ... continued

But Alex's greatest passion, for now, is getting in the driving seat of any lawn mower, tractor, or construction truck in sight. He also loves to race his father on the stationary bikes in our home gym. He likes to spend time at the Carnegie Library (mostly chatting with the wonderfully kind librarians), the Science Center, and Carnegie Museum of Natural History. As a family, we enjoy spending our weekends in our cabin adjacent to Moraine State Park. We love cooking, playing outdoors, taking our kayaks on the water to watch the sunset, and exploring the many parks and trails around Pittsburgh via hiking or cycling.

For our summer vacation, we still enjoy traveling and exploring other cultures, but we always make sure to stop in Lebanon so Alex can spend time with his many, many, aunts, uncles, cousins, and, of course, grandmas and grandpa.

We knew on our first visit to the Children's School that it would be a great match for us and Alex. Our belief is confirmed daily as Alex walks to school with Majd, happily chatting and looking excited about the day to come. We look forward to seeing Alex grow, learn, explore, and be challenged at the nurturing, stimulating and loving environment of the Children's School.



Native American Heritage Month



November is Native American Heritage Month. This month serves as a time to celebrate the rich cultures, contributions, and traditions of Native peoples. The US government officially recognizes 574 different Native American tribes in the United States. Below are some ways to celebrate and recognize this special month with your families.

Read Books by and About Native People

- Reading together is one of the best ways to learn about different cultures. [ReadBrightly.com](https://www.readbrightly.com/), a literary website for children birth-teen, has compiled a fantastic list of children's books by and about Native Americans. You can access this great list here: <https://www.readbrightly.com/native-american-history-experience-kids-teens/>.
- <http://coloursofus.com/>, a website focused on celebrating multicultural children's literature, has assembled a wonderful list of 75 Native American children's books sorted by age. Click to review their selections: <https://coloursofus.com/32-native-american-childrens-books/>.
- Here at The Children's School, we strive to ensure that the literature we share with the children is both representative and respectful of diverse cultures. As part of this effort, we will be reviewing the books in our library related to Native Americans using this rubric from the National Museum of the American Indian. You may find this to be a helpful reference in choosing books for your family as well: <https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/pdf/Native-American-Literature-in-Your-Classroom-Worksheet.pdf>.

Native American Heritage ... continued

Learn About Our Region

- No matter where you live in America, Indigenous People lived on the land where you are now. This interactive map from <https://native-land.ca> is an amazing resource. Here, you can enter your address and learn about the Native People who used to live in the place you now call home.

Celebrate Locally

- November is a great time to visit The Carnegie Museum of Natural History. The Alcoa Foundation Hall of American Indians is an in-depth exhibit that focuses on the Indigenous People living in the Northwest Coast, the Southwest, The Plains, and The Northeast.

<https://carnegiemnh.org/explore/alcoa-foundation-hall-of-american-indians/>

- Plan a visit to Meadowcroft Rock Shelter and Historic Village. Meadowcroft has recreated a prehistoric Monongahela Indian Village. Here, families can experience what life was like for 16th century American Indians living in our region. <https://www.heinzhistorycenter.org/visit/meadowcroft/>
- The Council of the Three Rivers American Indian Center is a great resource for local Native American information. From land acknowledgement, to speakers and performers, to information on local Pow Wows, you can find a wealth knowledge here: <https://www.cotraic.org/native-american-community>.

Celebrate Virtually

- Check <https://nativeamericanheritagemonth.gov/> from The Library of Congress for lots of great ways to celebrate Native American Heritage Month virtually. This Web portal is a collaborative project of the Library of Congress and the National Endowment for the Humanities, National Gallery of Art, National Park Service, Smithsonian Institution, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and U.S. National Archives and Records Administration. There is a lot discover here about Native American history and culture.

Get Cooking!

First Nations Development Institute is sharing recipes from Native American tribes and organizations. Preparing some of these dishes is a meaningful way to bring some Native American culture into your home. <https://www.firstnations.org/knowledge-center/recipes/>

Performing Arts Connection

Explore the music of Joanne Shenandoah. Ms. Shenandoah was a Native American singer and composer who created new versions of American Indigenous music by blending them with her own infusions of flute, piano, cello, and guitar. Her album, All Spirits Sing, is a wonderful collection of Indigenous American children's music. You can learn more about Ms. Shenandoah here:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/30/arts/music/joanne-shenandoah-dead.html>

And you can explore her music here: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3RFXFfhQazSWguza-dN9qQ/featured>



Week for Campus Children

The National Coalition for Campus Children's Centers (N4C) launched a week to **Celebrate Campus Children** to raise awareness of the quality early childhood programs operating on college campuses across the country. During the week of October 3rd to 7th, each Children's School class gave gifts of kindness to the campus community in their own way. The Preschool 3's children drew with chalk on the campus walkway. The Preschool 4's class wrote and decorated encouraging messages and paraded them around campus. The Kindergartners painted "kindness rocks", which they then hid around campus to surprise those who find them. Each rock was labeled with a QR code that linked to The Children's School website. Our hope was to make a connection between the children that college students see each day on their way to class and the presence of The Children's School in the building.



Educational Design Class Visit

On Friday, October 7th, the masters students in Dr. Lauren Herckis' Evidence-Based Educational Design course came to observe the ways that our educators support children's learning in each of the developmental domains and monitor their progress over time. The students have been working on projects in their own areas of interest, so they were especially curious about how everything in the classroom arrangement, the routines throughout the day, the activities and lessons, and both the indoor and outdoors experiences are all intentionally designed to foster specific learning objectives.



Undergraduate Spotlight

Meet one of the undergraduate student employees working as a classroom assistant. All our undergraduate employees enrich the children's experience by bringing a diverse set of talents to our educational team.

- **Student Employee Kate Russo (Preschool 3's, T/R midday)**



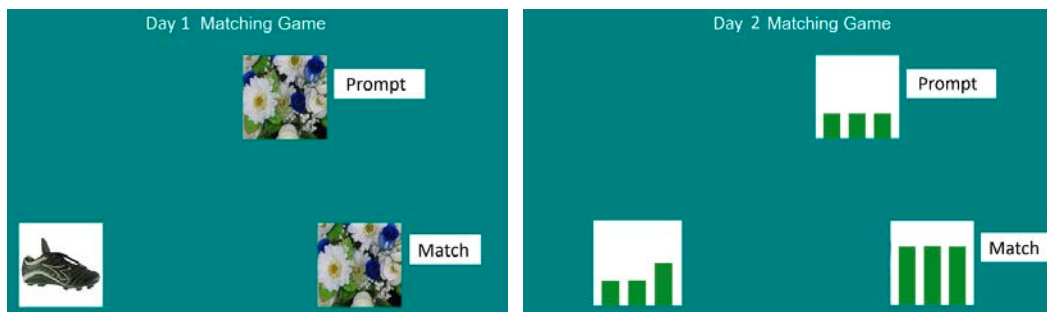
"Hi! My name is Kate Russo. I am a sophomore at Carnegie Mellon in the BHA Program majoring in Art and Social & Political History. I started working at the Children's School this fall. Outside of my classes and time at the Children's School, I am the co-director of the student-run Frame Gallery and a member of the women's club water polo team. Getting to know the children in the classroom and on the playground is a much-appreciated change of pace as the children never fail to put a smile on my face and the staff continually makes me feel welcome. I have always found spending time with children to be a refreshing and joyful experience, so I am so thankful to have the opportunity to be a part of the Children's School team. As the year goes on, I am especially excited about how I can use my love of art to further help the children engage with their creativity."



Research Spotlight

The Matching Game

Dr. Jessica Cantlon's research team is investigating how children learn abstract concepts and logical rules. This research has two parts conducted on two separate days. On Day 1, children play a game that involves discovering a matching rule. From two choices, they choose the one that is an identical match to the picture prompt. On Day 2, children play a similar matching game where the matches are based on patterns rather than exact identity.



Playing these games will help the researchers understand children's learning curves for discovering simple rules so that they can then progress to studying more complex rules involving analogies or

sequences. Logical reasoning is a critical skill throughout early education. Children use logical reasoning quite broadly – during reading comprehension, mathematics, science, and social interactions, etc. This study will allow researchers to better identify what aspects of logical reasoning are important to assess and cultivate in early childhood education.

Undergraduate Research Methods Course

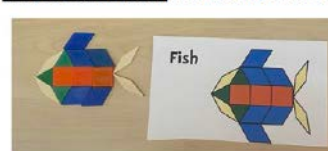
Dr. Erik Thiessen's **Developmental Research Methods** students are preparing their final projects for the semester. They are beginning to pilot test their projects on the topics listed below. Families whose children participate will receive fuller parent descriptions via the child's backpack. Everyone can read the study descriptions on the Research Bulletin Board near the office door. Notice the interesting and important topics in early childhood development!

- **Does awareness of time constraints hinder performance on a memory task?** (The Memory Matching Game, Preschool 4's and Kindergartners)
- **Does a commercial highlighting the accomplishments of a black female facilitate memory for facts about black characters in a simple story, compared to a commercial about a white female or no commercial?** (The Get to Know You Game, Preschool 3's and Preschool 4's)
- **Does affirming a growth mindset in children increase their persistence to continue with challenging tasks (both possible and impossible), compared to simple affirmations of positive attributes?** (The Shape Game, Preschool 4's and Kindergartners)

Possible task: all correct pieces available



Impossible task: no bottom blue fin



Research Spotlight

The Number Game

Drs. Jessica Cantlon and Lauren Aulet are investigating how children learn number symbols, such as Arabic numerals, and whether this process may be influenced by using spatial tools such as a number line. Over several sessions, children complete two tasks: a Number Line task and a Number Comparison task. In both tasks, children are shown Arabic numerals on a touchscreen computer and then answer questions about the numerals they are shown. Because young children's ability to understand basic numbers such as 1 – 9 and their ability to represent these numbers spatially has been shown to predict later math ability, we hope that by better understanding these processes, we will be able to develop educational interventions designed to improve children's mathematical abilities.



Number Line Task: Children are shown two marks on a number line and asked which one corresponds to the correct location of the numeral shown (see example image below). Specifically, researchers tell children that Abby and Cookie Monster have answered where they think the number goes on the number line. The child then indicates whether Abby or Cookie Monster answered correctly by tapping the character's image.

Number Comparison Task: Children are shown an Arabic numeral ranging from 1 – 9 and will be asked to answer whether the number is less or more than 5 by clicking the appropriate button on screen (bottom left button for 'less than 5' and bottom right button for 'more than 5').



The Storytelling Game

Researchers in Dr. Erik Thiessen's lab aim to understand how the presentation of a story can affect a child's reading comprehension and storytelling abilities. Children hear short, fiction stories by Thacher Hurd read by a narrator on a tablet. After each line is read, the child repeats the words. To test how the mode of a story affects children, the stories either have contingent animation, where the animation moves in response to the child's repetitions, or static animation, where the images do not move. At the end of the story, the narrator asks the child a series of a dozen prerecorded questions and the child answers out loud. The narrator automatically moves from one question to the next in a set amount of time without providing any feedback to the child on the accuracy of their responses, and the tablet records the audio of the responses. The researchers plan to compare children's responses when engaging with the contingent animation story vs. the no animation story to see how the modes of stories can affect children's reading comprehension and storytelling. These findings will help us understand how children learn and how modes of animation can potentially enhance their learning processes.

Research Spotlight

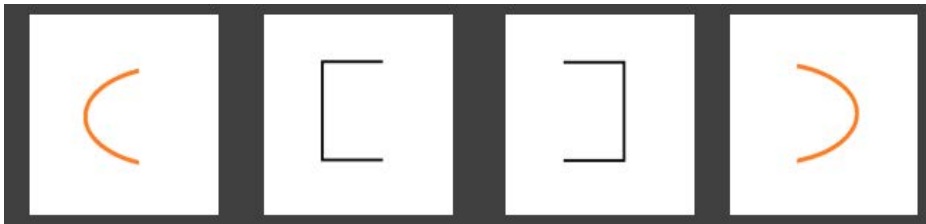
The Picture Game

Dr. Jessica Cantlon and graduate student Abhishek Dedhe are investigating **how children use simple logical rules to process complex visual patterns**. This game happens over several sessions. Researchers teach the child to complete two tasks involving visual patterns: shapes and brackets. Both tasks rely on logical rules about repetition, hierarchies, and symmetry. By having the child perform these challenging tasks, researchers can examine how the child's understanding of these logical rules improves. A visualization of the bracket task is included at the bottom of this page. The shape task looks very similar, except that it has unknown shapes that look like keyboard characters (@, !, #) instead of brackets.

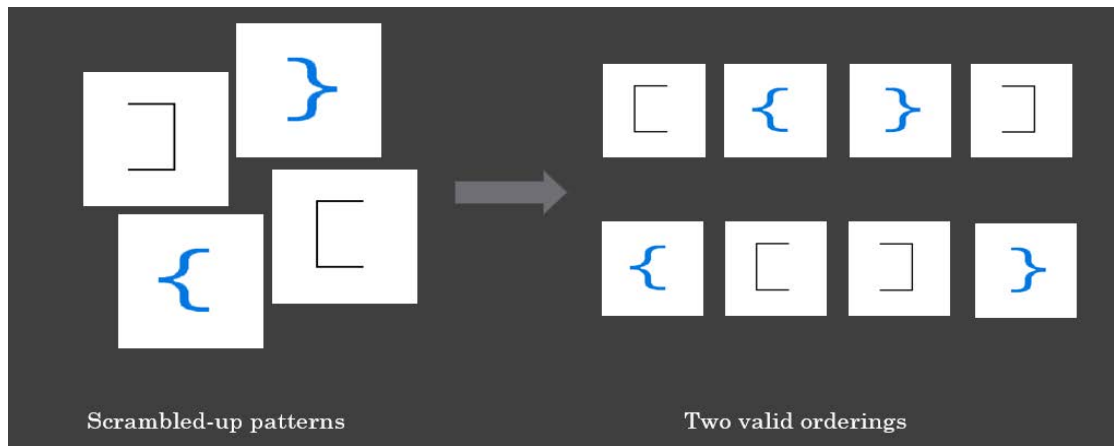


In the **Picture Game**, the child completes two tasks. Since each child progresses at their own speed, they might need more than one session to complete them. First, researchers teach the child the correct order of a sequence of four shapes or brackets. These four shapes or brackets are shown scrambled on the screen, and the child touches them in the correct order. Our robot friend Rajah helps the child know if they're on the right track. Once researchers establish that the child has understood the task, they are shown sets of scrambled shapes or brackets and asked to select them in the correct order. However, this time Rajah does not tell them whether they are right or wrong.

Bracket task:



For example, in one bracket task, the child is told that these four brackets occur in the shown order (first - second - third - fourth). They are then shown the following four scrambled brackets and asked to touch them in the correct order. In this case, there are two equally correct orders.



Research Spotlight ... continued

The Additional Picture Games

Researchers play additional games with the children to determine whether their **Picture Game** performance is related to any other cognitive process, such as working memory, motor skills, and language comprehension. They assess working memory because the more a child can remember the visual patterns in their heads, the easier the game should be. They are also checking whether the child can utilize these simple logical rules based on repetition, hierarchies, and symmetry in domains unrelated to vision. These domains include language and movement. All these tasks provide researchers with context when they examine results from the **Picture Game**. This context allows them to be more confident about the meaning of their research findings. It might even reveal some connections they might not have expected!



- In the **Zoo Locations Game**, researchers have zoos with different amounts of exhibits, each with different animals. After viewing the zoo's arrangement, children are given an empty zoo and asked to place each animal where they belong. This task checks children's working memory.

- In the **Picture Memory Game**, children see a picture of several common objects (like an apple or a kite) and then another picture with those same objects mixed with others. Researchers then ask them to point to the objects they saw on the prior page. This task also examines working memory, but in a slightly different way. Using both games together provides a clearer measure of children's working memory ability.

- In the **Number Game**, researchers ask the child to listen to a list of numbers and then repeat them both in forward and backward order. This task also taps working memory, but unlike the zoo location and picture memory games which measure visual working memory, this game measures verbal working memory.

- In the **Language Comprehension Game**, researchers show the child a picture of several colored shapes and ask them to point to specific objects they see (such as "the second small green circle"). This task allows us to examine general language comprehension (does the child know the meaning of "green" or "circle"?), as well as examining how the child combines different words to grasp the overall meaning (such as the difference between a "small circle", a "green circle", and a "small green circle").

- In the **Tower of Hanoi Game**, the child uses a classic toy consisting of movable disks that can be slid onto wooden poles. Researchers ask the child to move the disks from one pole to another according to certain rules (such as "you cannot put a bigger disk on a smaller disk"). This task examines whether your child can plan their future moves so that they satisfy specific conditions.



- In the **Corsi Block-Tapping Game**, children are shown a screen display of up to nine identical spatially separated blocks. A researcher will tap on the blocks in a particular sequence and the child's task is to tap them in the same order. The sequence starts simple, usually with only two blocks, but it becomes progressively more complex. This task assesses the child's visuo-spatial short-term working memory.

Director's Corner: Curiosity

What makes you wonder? What questions prompt you to search with Google, phone a friend, or open a book? What did you learn from your exploration? Now consider *when* you are most likely to wonder and *when* you are most likely to pursue answers to your questions, or even let your curiosity lead you “down a rabbit hole” like Alice in Wonderland.



By choosing the title When You Wonder, You're Learning (2021), Behr and Rydzewski foreshadow the primary priority for nurturing young children as that of fostering inquiry. They also cite research that curiosity is wired into the human brain. “Babies as young as nine weeks old tend to focus on what’s new and unfamiliar rather than what’s constant or routine” (p. 14). Before babies can talk, they request information by pointing at objects while looking to a caregiver with interest in their eyes. With the advent of language, toddlers progress quickly to the frequent query of “why?” Research by Susan Engel on children’s curiosity reveals that the more curiosity they report feeling, the more powerfully their brains are primed for learning (p. 18).

Since learners gravitate to the questions they ask, our role as educators is to create an environment with enough novelty, mystery, and challenge to spark questions. Educators prepare children to value and pursue their questions by modeling curiosity themselves. At the same time, distraction by too much novelty can lead to curiosity that erodes focus rather than prompting deep inquiry, and some explorations are not safe for young children. Thus, educators create predictable routines in an organized and child-safe space, while building secure relationships with children so that they are confident enough to explore.

To channel children’s curiosity, educators listen to children’s questions and enthusiastically respond to their ideas and hypotheses. We scaffold children’s thinking by helping them articulate, “I wonder ... I think ... I learned ...” Also, research by CMU’s Dr. George Loewenstein shows that children “need to have some basic knowledge about a subject before they can develop a sustained interest in it” (p. 28), so our month-long thematic units and intentional connections with children’s background experiences provide that foundation.

At the Children’s School, we foster children’s *Discovery and Exploration* by designing indoor and outdoor opportunities for developing and testing theories about how things work in the world. Sand, water, light, and block play enhance children’s understanding of physical realities of everyday materials. Changing materials in the centers as new themes are introduced provides frequent catalysts for new experiments. Novel dramatic play areas offer safe spaces to explore human interaction, which can turn curiosity about people into empathy.

Parents can support curiosity in many of the same ways that we do at school, starting with modeling your own curiosity and inquiry processes, as well as purposefully listening to children’s questions. Provide space, opportunities, and materials for related inquiry, as well as arranging visits to public discovery centers where children can freely explore without fear of damaging materials or injuring themselves. Simply ensuring that children have unstructured time to choose and become engaged in their own play activities with basic, interesting materials can spark their questions and interest. Watch the classroom blogs for reports of the group inquiry happening at school so you can extend the learning at home. We invite you to share your own and your children’s questions with us so we can engage in learning together. When time is short, record questions for future adventures!

November

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
<p>3's: Trees 4's: Art & Artists K: Geology</p>	<p>2nd Quarter Begins</p>	<p>1 American Indian Heritage Month</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4 NO SCHOOL Conference Preparation Day</p> <p>Building New Hope Coffee Fundraiser through 11/11</p>	<p>5</p>
<p>6 Daylight Saving Time Ends - Turn Clocks Back 1 Hour</p>	<p>7</p>	<p>8 9:00 School Choice Discussion</p> <p>Election Day</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10 Music w/ Mrs. Hraber</p>	<p>11 Veterans Day</p>	<p>12</p>
<p>13</p>	<p>14 Nov. Safety Week</p>	<p>15</p>	<p>16 Miss Aylwin, Ms. Potter, Ms. Rau & Mrs. Rosenblum @ NAEYC Conference in Washington DC</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>18 1:00PM Parent Teacher Conferences</p> <p>Building New Hope Coffee Pick-up</p>	<p>19</p>
<p>20</p>	<p>21</p>	<p>22</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24 Thanksgiving Holiday NO SCHOOL</p>	<p>25 Native American Heritage Day</p>	<p>26</p>
<p>27</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>29</p>	<p>30</p>			



Children's School

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2022

School Choice Decision Making

Fall 2022



School choice decisions are really a MATCHing process.

Educators can help in the process by:

- **suggesting issues to consider,**
Feel free to customize the attached issues document for your family's priorities.
- **providing information about schools, and**
- **discussing your child's development.**

At the Children's School, fall conferences are opportunities for the teacher and parents to discuss their views of the child, which will help parents choose a school whose program will best meet the child's needs. Feel free to make an appointment with Dr. Carver if you need additional consultation.

*For families applying to private schools that require recommendations, the teachers review their conference reports, make any modifications to reflect recent changes, and then submit them to Miss Hancock for mailing to the relevant schools. **Parents must submit a release form for each school to which the conference report needs to be sent.***

What we cannot do, however, is make the match for you, because that is a matter of values, priorities, resources, and life circumstances that are unique to each family.

Above all else, remember that you are making choices among excellent options for talented children; there are many schools in which they can excel.

Issues to Consider When Choosing a School for Your Child

Prepared by the Children's School, Fall 2022

Focus on the MATCH between your child, your family, and the school rather than seeking an absolute best choice (i.e., one school that would be best for all children in all families). **Take a BROAD, LONG-TERM VIEW** including your priorities for future years' programs as well as other children in the family so that you can avoid multiple school changes and placements of siblings in too many different schools.

Use the following **list of characteristics** as a catalyst for considering your own priorities for your child's education. We have left space on the left for you to indicate these priorities and space on the right for your general notes. We have also prepared forms for additional note-taking about individual schools when you talk with their representatives, read their literature, visit their campuses, and talk with parents of other children who attend the school.

Philosophy

_____ •Academic, Social, and Physical Goals (*consider stated priorities as well as implicit priorities, i.e., space, time, and money allocations*)

_____ •Developmentally Appropriate School Practices (e.g., amount of seatwork, homework, testing, etc.)

_____ •Abstract (theory) vs. Concrete (hands-on) Experiences

_____ •Standardization vs. Individualization

_____ •Competition vs. Cooperation

In the categories listed above (as well as others throughout this document), **appropriate BALANCE is the key !!*

_____ •School Policies (*e.g., dress, behavior, etc.*)

_____ •Discipline Strategies

Admissions Criteria

_____ •Age Cutoffs

The Children's School maintains its cutoff of 12/31/23 for K in Fall '23.

For Most Private Schools & Public Schools:

Children must be 5 by 9/1/23 to enter kindergarten in Fall 2023

Children must be 6 by 9/1/23 to enter 1st grade in Fall 2023

Pittsburgh Public Schools has a cutoff of September 30th!

_____ •Readiness Assessment Used

Many of the private schools use individual and/or group screening. Most of those are concerned primarily with social skills and communication, though some basic academic skills are being considered also. When discussing these "visits" with your child, we'd suggest a low-key approach, such as, "We're going to visit a new school today. I'd like

you to listen to the teachers and follow the directions, just like you do in your classroom. You'll have fun at this school too. Maybe you can make some new friends."

_____•Grades Available (K-8, K-12)

Schools that continue through high school have the benefit that you're not forced to make a school change mid-way, but sometimes such change is a positive step. Be sure you consider when and how much the older and younger children interact (e.g., on the bus, in the library, on the playground) and, therefore, influence each other.

Educators (*teachers, aides, administrators, counselors, etc.*)

_____•Leadership / Vision (*consider how comfortable you, the staff, and the students feel with the leaders, their practices, and their goals*)

_____•Who Plays What Roles? (*consider who has a voice and who has responsibility for curriculum, policy, discipline, etc. - administrators, teachers, parents, students?*)

_____•Teacher/Student Ratio (*consider aides and volunteers too*)

_____•Training (*initial and continuing professional development*) & Evaluation

_____•Individual vs. Team Teaching

_____•Interactions with Students (*warmth, volume, tone, engagement, etc.*)

_____•Teaching Methods (*direct instruction, hands-on, coaching, child-initiated, etc.*)

_____•Approach to Handling Individual Differences & Special Needs (*consider both additional help and additional challenge your child might need*)

_____•Connection to Current Research

_____•Communication with Families
(*consider newsletters, conferences, visits, PTO meetings, etc.*)

_____•Other _____

Program (*again, look for BALANCE*)

_____•Required vs. Elective Courses

_____•Mixed Grouping vs. Ability Grouping (Tracked)

_____•Single vs. Multi-Grade Interaction

_____•Separate Subjects vs. Themes across Subjects

_____•Social Skills/Values (*consider both the explicit and implicit messages*)

- _____ •Emphasis on Independence, Cooperation, Creativity, and Critical Thinking
- _____ •Reaction to Student/Parent Input and Concerns
- _____ •Nature of Assessment, Homework, Report Cards, Parent Conferences, etc.
- _____ •Courses Offered / Curriculum (*consider who has access to which*)
- _____ •English, Social Studies, Math, and Science
- _____ •Modern Language & Culture
- _____ •Health/Sports/Movement/Dance
- _____ •Outdoor Time/Recess/Learning through Play
- _____ •Art/Music/Theatre
- _____ •Additional Courses, e.g., Computer, Psychology, Politics, etc.
- _____ •College Admissions Record
- _____ •Other _____

Diversity (*educators and students*)

- _____ •Gender
- _____ •Race & Culture
- _____ •Other _____
- _____ •Economics
- _____ •Religion

Resources

(consider people, space, and equipment, consider access policies, and consider funding for the future)

- _____ •School Atmosphere (*welcoming, orderly, clean, inspiring, etc.*)
- _____ •Class Size
- _____ •Classroom Size / Atmosphere (*organized, student work displayed, etc.*)
- _____ •Supplies (*texts, subscriptions, science, art, drama, etc.*)
- _____ •Library
- _____ •Technology (*television, computers, video & audio recorders, digital cameras, etc.*)
- _____ •Tutoring / Gifted or Special Education Support

- _____•Referral for Special Services
- _____•Cafeteria, Meal Quality
- _____•Gym, Auditorium
- _____•Playground, Playing Fields
- _____•Extra-Curricular Activities, Clubs, etc.
- _____•Performances, Presentations, Concerts, Field Trips, etc.
- _____•Family Activities & Events
- _____•Community Activities, Innovative Projects
- _____•Neighborhood Resources (*community facilities that are within walking distance*)
- _____•Safety, Security, Nurse On-Site
- _____•Financial Aid
- _____•Other _____

Family Impact

- _____•Tuition & Fees
- _____•Schedule (*greeting, dismissal, extended day, holidays, in-service, etc.*)
- _____•Before & After School Care
- _____•Transportation (*if bus, what ages of students are together?*)
- _____•Distance from home to school to friends' homes (*consider play dates, birthday parties, etc.*)
- _____•Parent Involvement in the School (*consider encouragement, expectations, and requirements*)
- _____•Other _____

If you are planning to volunteer in the public or charter school classrooms, you may want to apply for both the Criminal Background History and Child Abuse History clearances the summer before your child begins school.

School:

Philosophy:

Admissions Criteria:

Staff:

Program:

Diversity:

Resources:

Family Impact:

Philosophy

- Academic, Social, and Physical Goals
- Developmentally Appropriate Practice
- Abstract vs. Concrete Experiences
- Standardization vs. Individualization
- Competition vs. Cooperation
- School Policies & Discipline Strategies

Admissions Criteria

- Age Cutoff
- Readiness Assessment Used
- Grades Available (K-8, K-12)

Educators (*teachers, aides, administrators, counselors, etc.*)

- Leadership / Vision
- Who Plays What Roles?
- Individual vs. Team Teaching
- Interactions with Students
- Handling Individual Diffs & Special Needs
- Teacher/Student Ratio
- Connection to Current Research
- Training/Professional Development
- Teaching Methods
- Communication with Families

Program

- Required vs. Elective Courses
- Separate Subjects vs. Themes across Subjects
- Nature of Assessment, Homework
- Courses Offered / Curriculum
- Social Skills/Values
- Emphasis on Independence, Cooperation, Creativity, and Critical Thinking
- Reaction to Student/Parent Input and Concerns
- College Admissions Record
- Mixed Grouping vs. Ability Grouping
- Single vs. Multi-Grade Classes
- Outdoor Time/Recess/Play
- Art/Music/Theatre

Diversity (*educators and students*)

- Gender
- Economics
- Race & Culture
- Religion

Resources

- School Atmosphere
- Class Size
- Classroom Size / Atmosphere
- Supplies
- Library
- Cafeteria, Meal Quality
- Tutoring / Gifted or Special Education Support
- Referral for Special Services
- Extra-Curricular Activities, Clubs, etc.
- Performances, Concerts, Field Trips, etc.
- Innovative Projects
- Gym, Auditorium
- Technology
- Playground, Playing Fields
- Neighborhood Resources
- Safety, Security, Health Care
- Family & Community Activities
- Community Activities
- Family Activities & Events
- Financial Aid

Family Impact

- Tuition & Fees,
- Distance from home to school
- Schedule
- Before & After School Care
- Transportation
- Parent Involvement in the School