

Director's Corner: Math & Building

This year, we are intentionally emphasizing **all five concept areas of math** within our preschool and kindergarten curriculum, and we chose our whole school theme of **BUILDING** because it affords many opportunities to foster broad explorations of important mathematical concepts, both in terms of the children's building with a variety of materials and in terms of learning about the buildings in our environment and how they are constructed.



During our Family Math discussion last week, we offered suggestions for emphasizing the mathematics involved in everyday activities like cooking, laundry, recycling, taking a drive or playing games. You can also help engage your children in noticing interesting mathematical features of their own constructions and the buildings surrounding them. In these ways, you will strengthen the foundations for their understanding of both mathematics and building.

Let me suggest that you start with your own home and neighborhood. Our architecture consultant for the unit, Kelly Lyons, suggests having a sketchbook or clipboard available so that children can record their observations. You could also use a digital camera and then discuss the photographs you take.

1) Number & Operations (Arithmetic)

- Includes counting, comparing & ordering, recognizing number & subitizing (visually perceiving the quantity), composing and decomposing numbers, adding & subtracting, and multiplying & dividing
- *Count doors, windows, rooms, floors, etc. and then consider how many more there would be if you included your neighbor's apartment or added another floor to your house.*

2) Patterns, Functions & Algebra

- Includes identifying patterns and describing change
- *Notice the pattern on a railing (post, space, spindle, space, post, etc.) or the pattern of alternating brick orientation, as well as whether any patterns change as the building gets taller.*

3) Geometry & Spatial Sense

- Includes recognizing & forming shapes (individually and in combination), describing locations, directions, and coordinates, transforming & creating symmetry, visualizing & reasoning spatially
- *Observe the overall shape of the building in which you live, as well as the component shapes of windows, roof, etc.; then consider the symmetries and the surroundings beside, in front of, behind ...*

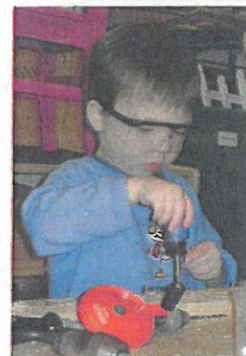
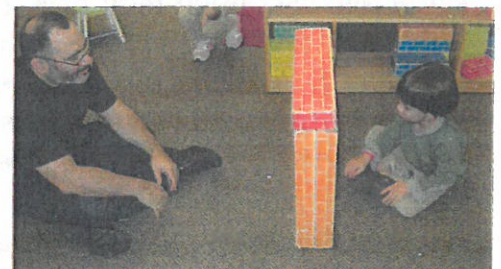
4) Measurement

- Includes both comparing attributes using units and specific techniques & tools
- *Consider relative sizes (taller, wider, etc.), weights, textures and strength of materials, etc.*

5) Data Analysis & Probability (Statistics)

- Includes classifying & organizing data using varied representations, then using the information to make predictions & decisions
- *Classify buildings in the neighborhood by type, size, surface material, function and notice patterns like more living spaces than restaurants, more materials appropriate for cold winter, etc.*

Future newsletters will include more ideas for exploring building & buildings as a family. Enjoy!!



Building Basics

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

See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_tallest_buildings_in_Pittsburgh for other interesting facts about Pittsburgh's tallest buildings.



A Veteran's Day Visitor from the Army

Todd Schultz (father of kindergartner Ashley and preschooler Hunter) talked with the kindergarten friends on Veteran's Day about his experience in the Army. He said, "I really had a great time visiting with the Kindergarten class on Veteran's Day! I am currently active duty Army, attending graduate school at CMU. Once I graduate in May, my family and I will leave Pittsburgh for West Point, NY, where I will teach Economics. I was so happy to get the opportunity to speak to the Kindergarten class. What a lively bunch they are! I was surprised to see how much they knew about a helicopter and how it worked. In addition to the helicopter, I was unsure of what else to talk about. Ashley gave me the clue to bring other props that her friends would enjoy seeing or using. It was fun to see the excitement when it came time to try the gear, such as the poncho, the goggles, and, of course, the glow sticks. All the friends were eager to share their stories about the toys they had at their houses, and it turned into a lively discussion to say the least. Lastly, I thank the kindergarten team for hosting me and the children for the thank you notes. They will be a keepsake for years to come."

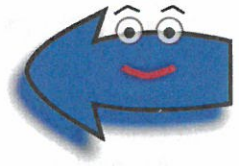


Building Basics

"At one time used to transport prisoners from the Allegheny County Courthouse to the Jail, the Bridge of Sighs mimics the original in Venice, Italy. The distinctive Bridge of Sighs is just one of many architectural highlights of the building which Henry Hobson Richardson considers his best work, the Allegheny County Courthouse & Jail in downtown Pittsburgh. The Bridge of Sighs is one of 720 bridges within Pittsburgh city limits, and one of more than 1,700 bridges criss-crossing Allegheny County. Pittsburgh has more bridges than any city in the world except for Venice, Italy." In preparation for our Building Unit, take a family tour of Pittsburgh bridges, noticing their materials, the shapes & patterns in their structures, etc. (Excerpt quoted from http://pittsburgh.about.com/od/pictures/ig/architecture/bridge_of_sighs.htm.)



Stay Safe in Your Winter Wonderland!



For children, winter is not the end of outdoor fun. When properly prepared, children can enjoy safe and fun outdoor activities. "The inviting snow draws children to ice-covered lakes and ski slopes each winter, regardless of the frigid temperatures and the risks," says Heather Paul, Ph.D., executive director of the National SAFE KIDS Campaign. "Parents should watch their children closely, limit their outdoor playtime and make sure that they are dressed appropriately for the weather." Here are few other winter tips to keep in mind:

- Parents and caregivers should inspect equipment and the environment for possible hazards before children engage in winter activities such as sledding, ice skating and skiing.
- Be aware that the increased use of hot tubs and whirlpools, as well as the danger of hidden bodies of water or weak ice, makes winter drowning a risk.
- If a child complains of numbness or pain in the fingers, toes, nose, cheeks or ears while playing in the snow, or if the skin is blistered, hard to the touch or glossy, be alerted to the possibility of frostbite. Tell the child to wiggle the affected body part(s) to increase blood supply to that area. Warm the frozen part(s) against the body. Immerse frozen part(s) in warm, not hot, water. Frozen tissue is fragile and can be damaged easily. Avoid warming with high heat from radiators, fireplaces or stoves, and avoid rubbing or breaking blisters.
- Slippery driveways and sidewalks can be particularly hazardous in the winter. Keep them well shoveled, and apply materials such as rock salt or sand to improve traction.
- Make sure children wear appropriate boots and brightly colored (not white) clothing while walking and playing in snowy conditions. Use reflective stickers on clothing for maximum protection, especially at dawn and dusk.

Building Basics

The Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation works "throughout the Pittsburgh region to identify and save historically significant places; revitalize historic neighborhoods, towns, and urban areas; preserve historic farms and historic designed landscapes; and educate people about the Pittsburgh region's rich architectural heritage."



Visit the web site at www.phlf.org and click on Downtown Dragons for a tour of interesting downtown buildings that might be worth a family visit. The songs page has an adaptation of "Rock Around the Clock" with lyrics entitled "**Walk Around the Block**" by Marlan Thomas and P.S. 1. Use the verses to help you highlight relevant features of the buildings you visit.

*Chorus: We're gonna walk around the block today.
We're gonna walk, walk, walk in a curious way.
We're gonna walk, gonna walk around the block today.*

Verse 1: We're gonna look at the windows. Look at the doors. Notice all the gargoyles, and even the floors.

Verse 2: What is it made of? What is it for? What is its age? Is it one to restore?

Verse 3: Who were the architects? What did they use? Were they serious or did they just amuse?

Verse 4: We're gonna look at the colors. Look at the shapes. Notice decorations, as well as landscapes.

Verse 5: Won't you come along with us, join with us too. Architecture might just be the thing for you.

A Winter Reminder

On days when snow or ice may affect driving conditions, please listen to the radio or the television. If the Children's School should close due to the weather, we announce our school closing on both WTAE and KDKA. WTAE will also announce school closings on their web page: www.thepittsburghchannel.com/index.html.

Because Children's School staff and families live in diverse areas in and around the city, we cannot factor travel conditions from every location into our decision about whether to delay or close school. Between 5:30 and 6:00 AM, we listen to the news, determine what other schools in the city are doing, and make our best judgment on whether to have a delay or close school that day. Depending on the road conditions, we may decide to choose one of three options:

1. **One Hour Delay**

During a one-hour delay, we will greet the Kindergarten at 9:30 AM and the Morning Preschool Classes at 9:30 AM. Dismissal will be at the normal times and the Extended and Afternoon Programs will be on normal schedule.

2. **Two Hour Delay/No Morning Preschool**

During a two-hour delay, we will greet the Kindergarten Class at 10:30 AM and dismiss at the normal time. The Morning Preschool and Extended Morning Programs will be canceled and the Afternoon Programs will be on normal schedules.

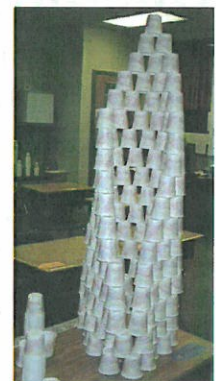
3. **School Closure**

Option #1 enables us to conduct the morning preschool classes, while giving our staff and families time for the road conditions to improve. In all cases when school is in session, we encourage parents to use their best judgment about whether the roads in your area are safe to bring your child to school.

Indoor Building Adventures

Make the most of your "Snow Day" opportunities by having ideas and supplies ready for indoor activities. Here are a few ways you can support the learning children will be doing during our upcoming **Whole School Unit on BUILDING**.

- **Make Blocks** – Save empty paperboard containers from cereal, oatmeal, etc., paper towel tubes, and other clean packaging to make your own blocks. They can be used as is or covered with wrapping paper, decorated with paint and stickers – whatever appeals to your child. Add masking tape so creations last longer!
- **Practice Aligning & Stacking** – Experiment with whatever blocks you have or use inexpensive materials that can be purchased in large quantities, such as disposable cups.
- **Play a Pattern Game** – Take turns creating a simple block structure and having your partner copy the design. Or, create a pattern (triangle, square, circle, triangle ...) and challenge your partner to extend it.
- **Experiment with Measuring** – Use a ruler, a yardstick, or – even more exciting for a child – an age-appropriate tape measure to measure the height, width, and depth of the structures you build. Keep a clipboard handy to record measurements. For all of these activities, take a photo so structures can be compared or rebuilt on subsequent days.



Family Building Basics



Thanks to all the parents who participated in our Staff / Parent Discussion on Friday, January 28th. We enjoyed experimenting with varied building materials from our classrooms, as well as with everyday materials that could be re-purposed for building. We also discussed the developmental benefits of block building, along with the levels of block play, and then we watched recent video clips from our 3's, 4's, and kindergarten classes to see the development in action! In case you missed the discussion, here are a few of the key points, along with some photos of our experience.

Developmental Benefits of Block Building

- **Self-Esteem & Independence** – developing confidence in mastering diverse materials, taking responsibility for following the rules and cleaning up the space, managing emotions when structures fall, etc.
- **Interaction & Cooperation** – sharing materials, coordinating actions, negotiating cooperative designs, etc.
- **Communication** – learning new vocabulary, discussing plans, writing labels or drawing blueprints, reenacting stories, etc.
- **Discovery & Exploration** – exploring concepts of gravity as they relate to balance and stability, counting and measuring building features, strengthening geometric concepts and spatial skills, discovering multiple solutions to building problems, appreciating the value of learning from “mistakes”, etc.
- **Physical Capabilities / Health & Safety** – strengthening eye-hand coordination, building strength to handle large blocks, managing body movements to avoid bumping structures, following safety procedures with blocks, etc.
- **Artistic Expression & Appreciation** – experimenting with design & decoration while combining shapes, colors, textures, noticing varied features of buildings, replicating structure from designs, imagining new constructions, etc.

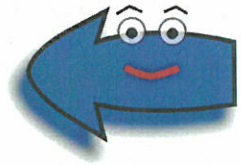


Levels of Block Play: Children typically progress during the early childhood years from carrying and otherwise exploring blocks, to building mostly in rows (either horizontal or vertical), to bridging spaces, to enclosing spaces, to making decorative patterns, to naming structures that they build intentionally (e.g., saying they're making a zoo), to symbolizing known buildings with blocks.

Adult Support For Block Building

- Build **WITH the children** to gently support their developmental progression without directing or frustrating them.
- Take the **child's lead**, follow the child's interest, and provide only the level of support they need.
- Add people, animals, vehicles, etc. to the selection of blocks to **extend the play**.
- Allow children to combine a **variety of blocks**.
- Allow children to continue working on a structure for a **period of days**.
- Encourage children to **disassemble buildings as they assemble them** – one block at a time (i.e., rather than knocking or kicking them down).

Architecture Pointers for Families



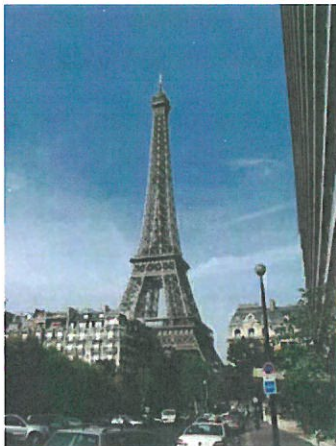
As we begin the Whole School Building Unit, we encourage families to explore the architecture of your own homes and the buildings within our community. We will be exploring the Carnegie Mellon campus buildings during school hours.

ArchKIDecture is an independent architecture education project that encourages children to explore and participate in the built environment. The web site www.archkitecture.org offers a variety of interesting facts, stories, and related images that might be worth exploring on a snowy day.

For example, the site has a whole section for learning about materials used in architecture. In addition to introducing materials as “the substances that are selected by the architects and used by the builders to create the structure”, four key principles of materials are listed:

- **Materials give the building structural soundness.**
- **Materials provide shelter from the elements.**
- **Materials should be pleasing to view.**
- **Materials must be within the budget for the building.**

Children can then click to learn more about steel & glass, brick, straw & thatch, wood, and stone materials used in buildings. You can read to your children about these materials as they relate to stories, such as the Three Little Pigs, to new vocabulary (e.g., mason), and to famous buildings around the world (e.g., the pyramids).



There's also a fun section called “Wild and Wacky Structures” where you can see famous buildings like the Eiffel Tower in Paris, France (1889, Gustave Eiffel). It also includes this amazing Tin Can Building in Lesotho (2002, Michael Hones). “A German man moved to Lesotho in Africa and wanted to do something positive for the people there. He realized that the tin cans were a great resource that was available and not used for anything once people had drunk up the beverage. So, he decided to start by making ‘solar cookers’ using the sun to make heat for cooking out of the cans. Then he started to design buildings out of the cans.” What a great example of RECYCLING!!



3s "Building" Newsletter



The Children's School at Carnegie Mellon University, February 2011

We really enjoyed our building unit this month! We learned about different kinds of buildings, different parts of buildings, and we enjoyed creating our own buildings out of a variety of materials. We also learned what it was like to be an architect!

We started our exploration of buildings by studying different kinds of buildings - including those made by beavers! Mr. Salinetto borrowed some artifacts from the Carnegie Natural History Museum and these included a stuffed beaver and samples of logs that had been gnawed by beavers. Our explorations included trying to make our own beaver lodges out of "mud" and Lincoln Logs. We then read the big book "A World of Homes" by Kari Jenson Gold, "Buildings" by Betsey Chessen and "There's No Place Like Home" by Tom Dunsimir. This led to discussions about how homes are different all over the world.

Buildings are made of many different kinds of materials and we examined straw, bricks, stones, clay, and pieces of wood and discussed which materials would make the strongest houses. We also discussed how buildings need very strong foundations. We experimented with putting craft sticks in piles of sand, piles of wet sand, and in hardened cement and we found that the best foundations are made of the strongest substances.

We also spent a lot of time learning about parts of buildings. Most of us could identify doors, windows, stairs, roofs, and chimneys, but we added to our knowledge by learning about eaves, gutters and rain spouts, shingles, and shutters.

We already knew that construction vehicles and construction workers built buildings and houses, but we learned that architects design plans that the construction workers use when making buildings. Some Carnegie Mellon University architecture students donated plans, sites maps and models, and we were able to study these plans to identify what the symbols on the plans

represented. We also read "A Day in the Life of an Architect" by Mary Bowman-Kruhm and some of us toured the architecture students' studios in the Fine Arts Building on campus. We also examined photographs of different structures on campus and went on walks to see if we could identify the buildings (we did very well!).

We ended our discussions about buildings by talking about gravity, compression, and tension. We talked about how gravity pulls everything down towards the earth and how structures have to push against gravity in order to be stable. We talked about how columns push up against the roofs that rest upon them and how this is called compression. We can press our hands together to create compression. When we pull our hands apart we create tension. Tension can be seen in the posts that hold up suspension bridges, just like when two people pick someone up by their hands and feet!

We learned the signs for home, house, and school this month.

Special thanks to Benjamin Kogan's mom for reading to us at circle time, and to Hunter Schultz' parents for coming to celebrate his half birthday with us!

We enjoyed seeing everyone at the Building Bonanza!

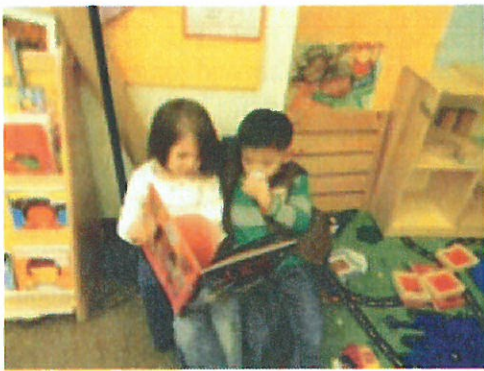
Sincerely,

Mrs. Rosenblum, Mrs. Tomer, Mrs. Flynn

and Mr. Salinetto

Other Texts We Read

We enjoyed other books relating to Building and Architecture such as "Architecture Colors", "Architecture Shapes", "Architecture Counts" and "Architecture Animals" all by Michael J. Crosbie and Steve Rosenthal, "People" by Peter Spier, "Where We Live" by Prestel, "Up Goes the Skyscraper" by Gail Gibbons, and "Architecture ZigZag" by Michel J. Crosbie. We also looked at "Houses" by Gallimard Jeunesse, "First Shapes in Buildings" by Penny Ann Lane, and "This is the House that Jack Built" by Simms Taback.



Reading building books in the afternoon



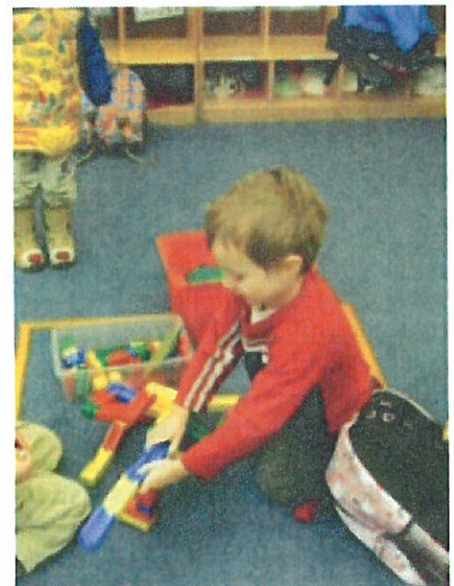
Building with Imagination Playground blocks



Building with cardboard blocks



Tracing shapes onto tracing paper



Building a marble run



Discovery Area

In the Discovery Area, we were very busy painting black and white house shapes with metallic colors, putting together sequined window frames to affix to our houses and gluing our own pictures inside the windows so that we were looking out of our own homes.

We also glued geometric shapes onto buildings at the easel, worked on painting and decorating large leaf bags so that we could wear them and BECOME buildings, colored and cut architecture plans, and helped to create a large collage model of a fantastical town!

We also built with small bricks and colored wooden blocks in the sand table and worked with plastic tubing and water mills at the water table. We arranged patterns with colored translucent laminate shapes at the light table.

Playground & Gym

On the playground, we enjoyed the last of the Winter weather by sculpting snow mountains and snow creatures. We also shoveled, swept, and raked the snow, and we found that you can slide really fast down the slide when it has snow on it.

In gym class, Ms. McMichael continued to teach us soccer skills, and we enjoyed stretching our bodies into different architectural shapes such as arches, bridges, and tunnels.

Red and Blue Rooms

The Red and Blue Rooms provided us with lots of opportunities to build with a variety of objects and materials. For a week, the Imagination Playground was in the Red Room, and we enjoyed constructing large structures with the big, blue foam blocks. We also used small “plank” blocks to make overlay patterns both on the floor and on tables. We explored building with unit blocks on different surfaces such as wooden steps and carpet squares. We put together marble runs, took turns playing with large wooden doll houses, experimented with paper cups and colored tape, and made our own architectural plans with crayons and clip boards.



Imagination Playground Building

THE BUILDING BONANZA!



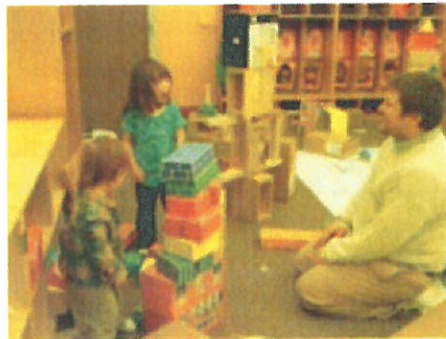
Making buildings in the Red Room



Leaning tower of the Red Room



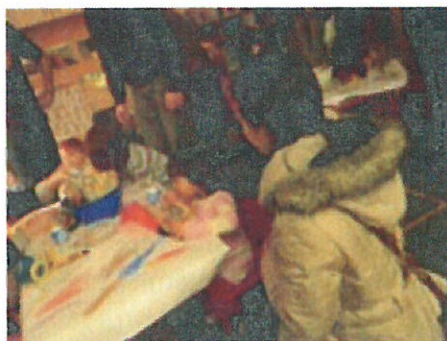
Building with bristle blocks



Cardboard block towers



Delivering mail around the city



The Blue Room Cafe



Table block cities



Wall construction



Imagination playground



Under construction



PNC Park extension

Building

February 7th - March 4th 2011

Dear families,

For the past month, the Green Room Friends have been focusing their attention on building. Before the unit began, Louise Sturgess visited from the Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation to discuss how buildings in Pittsburgh have changed over the years. She brought posters and a giant building puzzle. It was a great way to begin the building unit.



We spent the first days of the building unit exploring the basic concepts of building. Circle discussions and activities centered on balance, tension, gravity and compression. The friends enjoyed walking across the balance beam and playing balancing games like Coco the Rocking Clown. The friends stretched rubber bands on geoboards to make shapes and used full body shape shifters to stretch their bodies and the bands. Working at the woodworking center was a wonderful and popular way for friends to understand the basic concepts of building. The friends even learned to balance and walk on the stilts they made!



After learning about how buildings stay up, the friends began discussing and doing activities about construction. In circle time, the friends heard stories about construction workers, construction vehicles and construction tools. Some of our favorite stories included Building a House by Byron Barton, Construction Zone! Noisy Trucks at Work by Charles Hofer and Good Morning Digger, by Anne Rockwell. The friends' favorite construction activities included making construction hats, making and decorating dump trucks, and constructing buildings with a variety of building materials including the addition of the imagination playground.



Design was also an important topic during this unit. The friends enjoyed hearing stories about architects, the planning that comes before the building, and different types of buildings. Roberto the Insect Architect by Nina Laden, A Day in the Life of an Architect by Mary Bowman-Kruhm and Block City by Robert Louis Stevenson were popular during circle time. The friends painted large paper bags to resemble their houses. The bags had holes cut in the top so the friends could actually wear their house! The friends designed windows and doors to attach to the outside of their house. Michael's Mom talked with the children about what an architect does, and she helped design the block city in the Green Room!



Family Festival

The Building Bonanza was a great way for families to come to the school to see what their child has been doing for the past month. It was wonderful to see parents building with their children in the Imagination Playground. Everyone created interesting things with the architecture blocks, and the huge Pittsburgh walk-on map was a nice place to stack boxes and buildings.



The Letter People

The friends have been busy working in their letter journals! This month, we met Mr. L with lemon lollipops, Mr. D who loves to dance, Mr. G who has gooey gum, Mr. C who wears a colossal cap and Mr. K who loves to kick.



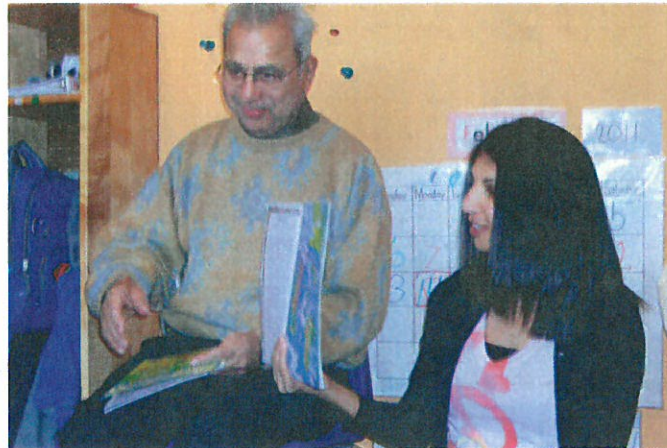
Gym

This month in gym, the friends have been working on their soccer skills. The friends began by sticking tape on the inner edge of their shoes and tapping the ball with the tape. Each week the friends built on this skill and are now dribbling the ball with the inside and the outside of their feet. They are also kicking the ball with their laces.



Birthdays and Special Events

This month Grace celebrated her Birthday and was joined by her family. Kabir's Mother and grandfather visited to share a story first in Gujarati then translated to English.



The morning friends visited the design studio and had the opportunity to see animals made from recyclable materials. Then the friends chose their favorite, and they were able to make a paper replica of the animal with the help of the design students.



The librarian visited this month, and the friends enjoyed the interactive story telling.



100th Day!



The hundredth day of school was incredibly exciting. The friends have been counting since the beginning of the year and, when the day finally came the Children's School was in celebration mode. The friends made a colorful chain with 100 links, they hammered 100 nails into a board, they made 100 day party hats and they made a snack bag with 100 little treats inside. The friends enjoyed seeing the 100 cupcakes they helped make with 100 lit candles inside. We sang a happy 100th day song.

Why? And Try!

Why splatter paint?



At the end of each preschool day, the friends walk down the stairs and observe the painted walls and displayed artwork. When they reach the bottom of the stairs, they always notice the large splatter painting that was done by a kindergarten class from years ago. The splatter paint has been the topic of many dismissal conversations. Friends like talking about what they think it is, what colors are used and how the painting was done.

Because of the great interest in the splatter paint, we decided to make our own splatter painting and add it to the hallway. The friends helped mix the paint and they did all of the splattering! The friends loved the technique and the result. The new painting now hangs at the bottom of the stairs near the greeting/dismissal door. The conversations that the friends have now are about how they made the beautiful artwork and what colors they added.

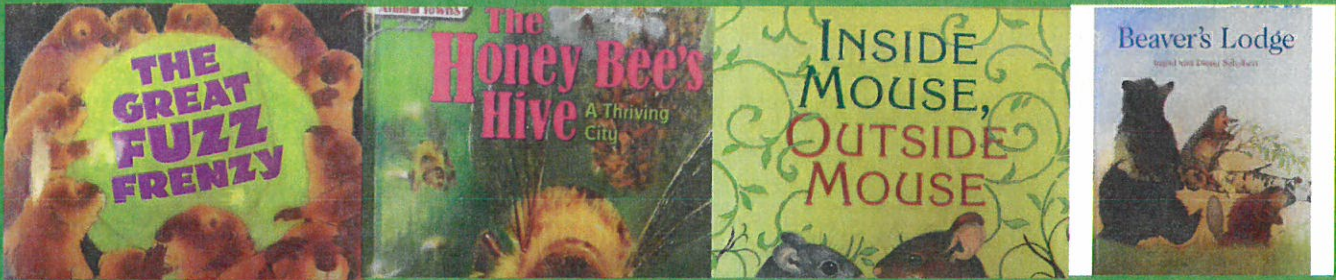
If you haven't seen the splatter painting yet, take a moment to ask your child the role he or she played in making our hallway bright and colorful.

Try to find Shapes!

During the building unit, the Green Room Friends talked a lot about the shapes that can be found on structures. We toured the Carnegie Mellon Campus and searched for shapes that were familiar to us. As the friends stood hand and hand at the rotunda entrance of the Margaret Morrison building, we found several circles in the concrete design floor. We spotted cylindrical columns and beautiful arches. Next time you are out with your child, take some time to notice the architecture around you. Look at a building and ask, "Are the windows circle, rectangle, or square shaped? Is the roof of that building sloped or flat?" This is a great way for you and your child to make connections with our whole school building unit!



Extended Morning "Building" Newsletter



The Children's School at Carnegie Mellon University, March 2011

In our extended program, we have focused on "building" this month. We have enjoyed taking a closer look at the "buildings" that animals make into their homes. This all-school unit has been lots of fun to explore!

Our first book in this unit was a delightful tale entitled, "The Great Fuzz Frenzy" by Janet Stevens. In this story, burrowing prairie dogs discover a tennis ball. They tear apart the fuzz and enjoy wild adventures because of their new discovery. We enjoyed activities such as: tunneling through obstacles, playing in dirt, creating tennis ball faces, and sewing button eyes onto sock puppets. We also enjoyed prairie dog cookies with "fuzz"!

Next on our literary menu, we read a non-fictional book, "The Honey Bee's Hive". This factual book informed us about the lives of honeybees. Did you know that these insects have five eyes? Playing with plastic insects, moving to "The flight of the bumblebee", making wings, and exploring a real honeycomb were some of the week's activities.

"Inside Mouse Outside Mouse" was a simple story comparing the habits of two mice. Prepositions were the focus of this tale. Some of the activities that were offered were: playing with a doll house, observing Mr. Salinetto's mouse attempt a maze, cooking cheesy bread, creating still life drawings, producing maps, and practicing woodworking.

Beavers were the focus of the next text, "Beaver's Lodge". Poor beaver falls and gets hurt. His beloved friends nurse him back to health and take liberty to finish and decorate his new home. These friends are amused at their haphazard mistake: forgetting to make a door. Gracious beaver laughs and decides to put his incisors to good use by gnawing an opening into his new home and all is well between the friends. The activities that followed were painting with our feet, creating a beaver lodge, building with planks, as well as with the imagination playground.

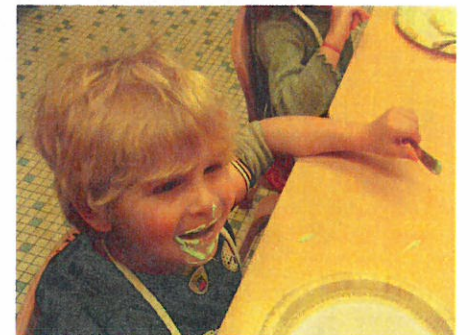
We are looking forward to our next unit: Light and Color!

Mrs. Bird, Mrs. Flynn, Miss Furman, Mrs. Opferman,

Ms. McMichael, and Mr. Salinetto



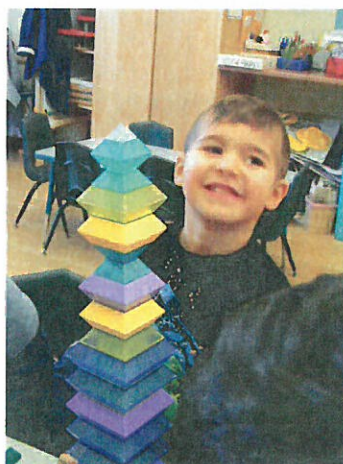
Thanks to a couple of buttons and a little thread, this puppet can see!



The great fuzz frenzy has left its mark!



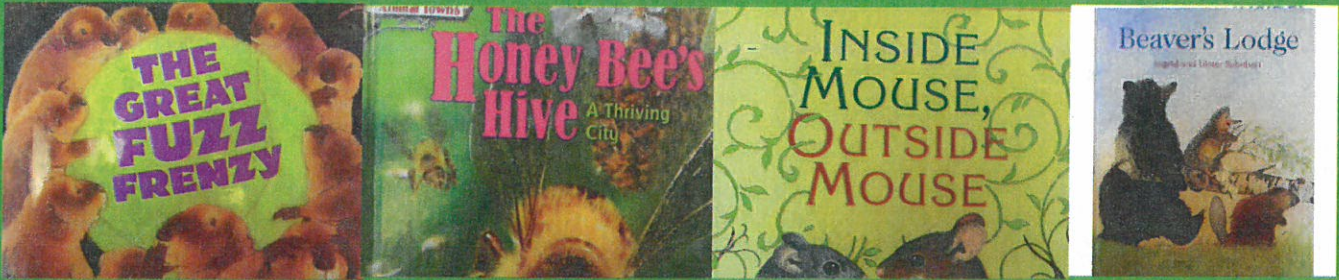
It always comes together in the end.



We have been building in so many ways. From blocks to wood, to animal homes, it has been a month of making creations and learning about all of the world's natural buildings!



Extended Afternoon “Building” Newsletter



The Children's School at Carnegie Mellon University, March 2011

In our extended program, we have focused on “building” this month. We have enjoyed taking a closer look at the “buildings” that animals make into their homes. This all-school unit has been lots of fun to explore!

Our first book in this unit was a delightful tale entitled, “The Great Fuzz Frenzy” by Janet Stevens. In this story, burrowing prairie dogs discover a tennis ball. They tear apart the fuzz and enjoy wild adventures because of their new discovery. We enjoyed activities such as: tunneling through obstacles, playing in dirt, and playing with prairie dog puppets. We also enjoyed prairie dog cookies with “fuzz”!

Next, on our literary menu, we read a non-fictional book, “The Honey Bee's Hive”. This factual book informed us about the lives of honeybees. Did you know that these insects have five eyes? Creating a honeycomb with cereal, exploring a real honeycomb, sampling honey, and cooking biscuits were some of the week's activities.

“Inside Mouse Outside Mouse” was a simple story comparing the habits of two mice. Prepositions were focused on in this tale. Some of the activities that were offered were: playing with a doll house, cooking cheesy bread, and producing a map and using it to find items in the kitchen.

Beavers were the focus of the next text, “Beaver's Lodge”. Poor beaver falls and gets hurt. His beloved friends nurse him back to health and take liberty to finish and decorate his new home. These friends are amused at their haphazard mistake: forgetting to make a door. Gracious beaver laughs and decides to put his incisors to good use by gnawing an opening into his new home and all is well between the friends. The activities that followed were painting with our feet, watching a YouTube video about beavers, and building with the imagination playground.

We are looking forward to our next unit: Light and Color!

Miss Furman and Ms. McMichael



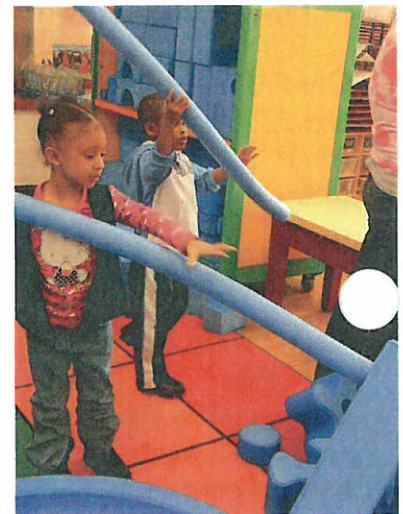
Hard at work!



Painting with... our toes!!



A special treat with Mrs.You...



We have been building in so many ways. From blocks to wood, to animal homes, it has been a month of making creations and learning about all of the world's natural buildings!



Carnegie Mellon University Children's School March 2011 Family Newsletter



Building Bonanza Basics

We hope to see all Children's School Families on Thursday evening, March 3rd from 4:30 – 6:30 pm for our Building Bonanza. You'll be able to experience our new (and very blue) Imagination Playground building materials and try the large "Architecture Blocks" that a team of CMU students designed 20 years ago to promote collaborative construction. You can work on a smaller scale to build tabletop towers out of diverse blocks, create paper structures & sculptures, or construct houses of cards, cups, and Kapla blocks. Try your skill at a variety of building and balance games or stretch your imagination with traditional Legos. We'll also be using a variety of blocks to



reconstruct Pittsburgh on a HUGE map of the city provided by the Pittsburgh History and Landmark Foundation. Be prepared to remove your shoes in that area, and consider bringing a camera to capture your family's creative constructions!

NOTE: There will not be an Extended Afternoon Program on the Building Bonanza day so that the staff can prepare the school for the event. If your child is enrolled in the Extended Afternoon Program, we will dismiss your child at the end of the regular school day. Thank you!

Enroll for Summer "Creepy Crawly" Camp

Enclosed with this newsletter is a brochure about the Children's School Summer Camp, which is a mixed-age, four-week program that runs weekdays from 9am to 1pm with as much outdoor time as weather permits. This year, Mrs. Flynn, Miss Furman, Miss Mangan, Ms. McMichael, Mrs. Solomon, and Mrs. Tomer will engage the children in a study of "Creepy Crawlies" to learn about natural processes by which insects, spiders, worms, and other "bugs" enrich our lives. We anticipate investigating the bugs we find on Carnegie Mellon's campus and in Schenley Park, as well as some that we will import for observation in special containers. We will read a variety of fiction and non-fiction books to enhance the thematic study, as well as offer related art, cooking, sensory, and manipulative activities. In addition, children attending camp enjoy water time with access to wading pools, water slides on our climbing structure, and sprinklers in the playhouse.

Important March Dates

Thursday, March 3rd, 4:30-6:30 pm, FAMILY BUILDING BONANZA

(NOTE: There will be no Extended Afternoon Program on that day!)

Friday, March 4th Professional Development Day for Staff (NO SCHOOL for Children)

SPRING BREAK: Monday, March 7th through Friday, March 11th

Sunday, March 13th Daylight Savings Time Begins so SPRING FORWARD 1 Hour

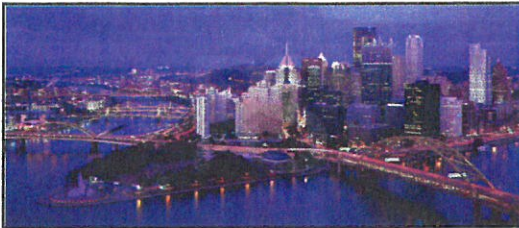
Friday, March 25th Conference Preparation Day for Staff (NO SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN)

Welcome to the Family Building Bonanza!

March 3, 2011

Be sure to visit each area
to take part in all of the activities.

Times for Imagination Playground are listed on your ticket. All other
areas are experienced at your leisure.



Red Room

Giant Pittsburgh Map – Take off your shoes
and help build a city!

Blue Room

The Café – Enjoy a snack while drawing on architectural site plans.

Green Room

Imagination Playground Experience
(Check your ticket for times.)
Architectural Block Building



Puzzle Room

Paper Structures & Sculptures



Discovery Area

Table Top Towers

Office

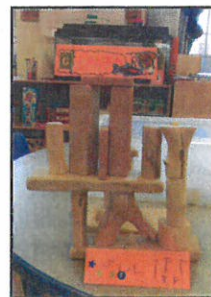
Quiet Space for Sharing Stories

Green Room Annex

Creative Constructions with Cups, Cards & Kapla Blocks

Kindergarten

Imagination Playground Experience
(Check your ticket for times.*)
Building & Balance Games
Lego Creations



** Weather permitting, this Imagination Playground experience will be outdoors on the tennis courts.*

THE CHILDREN'S SCHOOL FAMILY FESTIVAL – MARCH 3RD, 2011

Imagination Playground

The Imagination Playground encourages unstructured, child-directed free play. Play is the primary means through which young children develop. Through play, children broaden their experiences, increase their levels of imagination, expand their linguistic abilities, exercise their physical and mental strength and improve their dexterity.

In order to ensure that children are safe and secure while playing with the Imagination Playground, please observe the following rules:

- 1. PLEASE BUILD WITH YOUR CHILD.**
- 2. NO SWORD OR OTHER WEAPONRY PLAY.**
- 3. NO THROWING. BLOCKS ARE FOR BUILDING. BALLS ARE FOR ROLLING.**
- 4. NO STANDING ON OR JUMPING OFF STACKED BLOCKS. KEEP YOUR FEET ON THE FLOOR OR FIRST LEVEL OF BLOCKS.**
- 5. NO MOUTHING OR BITING.**
- 6. NO ROPES OR STRINGS.**
- 7. PLEASE FACILITATE EXITING THE AREA WHEN YOUR FAMILY'S ALLOTTED TIME IS COMPLETED.**

Family Building Bonanza

Thanks to all of the children, staff, families, and friends whose enthusiastic participation made this year's Building Bonanza a towering success! On Thursday, March 3rd, our children were able to share their excitement about construction while creatively designing structures with our small Kapla blocks and large "Architecture Blocks". We had fun using boxes to build Pittsburgh on a HUGE map of the city provided by the Pittsburgh History and Landmark Foundation. Families played a variety of building and balance games, as well as using Legos, paper, and other materials for a range of building projects. Everyone had opportunities to experiment with our new Imagination Playground; and we had double the fun because we also borrowed the set available for loan by the Pittsburgh Association for the Education of Young Children (PAEYC) through the generosity of PNC's Grow Up Great Campaign.



Building Big & Bold

