

Carnegie Mellon University Children's School May 2022 Family Newsletter

Retirements Ahead!

At the end of May, we will celebrate retirement with Mrs. Cherin, Mrs. Perovich, and Mrs. Rosenblum. Please join us in wishing these amazing educators all the best for their retirement years.



- Mrs. Cherin returned to the Children's School in 2001 after sending both of her sons to school here for their foundational years. We are grateful for her 21 years of service as a Preschool 4's Teacher and the many ways she connected us with community resources to enrich our children's learning. As with many of our retiring educators, Mrs. Cherin plans to return next year as a part-time substitute.



- Mrs. Perovich joined the Children's School administrative team in 1997 and then transitioned to teaching in the Kindergarten two years later. We appreciate her creative leadership with extended projects, deep thematic units, and Make Shop explorations, especially during the pandemic years, when she flexibly covered classes at all levels as other educators needed extended time off.



- Mrs. Rosenblum began her career at the Children's School as the Older 3's teacher in 2000 and then began transitioning to the Educational Administrator role in 2009, with morning administrative work and an afternoon class. Mrs. Rosenblum has strengthened our school's undergraduate support and parent involvement, and she is our royal highness of humor! We are so pleased that Mrs. Rosenblum will return next year as a consultant / substitute administrator.

May 2022 Dates

Wednesday, May 11th – Preschool 3's Year-End Celebration

11:45am to 12:45pm on the Children's School Playground

Thursday, May 12th - Last Regular Day for ALL PROGRAMS

Preschool 4's Year-End Celebration

1:15 to 2:45pm on the Children's School Playground

Friday, May 13th - Kindergarten Graduation at 10:00am in MMC 103

Followed by continued celebration on the Children's School Playground

Monday, May 16th to Friday, May 27th – Professional Development Days

Monday, June 6th – First Day of "WATER" Camp

All these dates are posted on the FACTS Family Portal and our web calendar <https://www.cmu.edu/dietrich/psychology/cs/>.



Year End Celebrations

Each Children's School class will host a brief year-end celebration in May, with facial coverings required at all times, except while eating. We hope that all our families will join us!

- Preschool 3's Celebration: Monday, May 11th from 11:45am -12:45pm on the Playground
- Preschool 4's Celebration: Friday, May 12th from 1:15-2:45pm on the Playground
- Kindergarten Graduation: Friday, May 13th at 10:00am in MMC 103 and then the Playground

We look forward to celebrating with you and hope that the connections you make with other families will help you engage your child with peers during the summer months.

Celebrating Administrative Professionals

Wednesday, April 27th was Administrative Professionals Day, a time dedicated to recognizing "the professionals who keep an office running smoothly every day." We are grateful beyond measure to Mrs. Rosenblum, Miss Hancock, Mrs. Perovich, Miss Drash, Dr. Carver, and (not pictured) Mrs. Yetter. What a FANTASTIC team!



Teacher Appreciation Week (May 2nd to 6th)

With the continuing pandemic, the key to our school's success is the educators who collaborate with their team to prepare a warm and welcoming environment, design a developmentally appropriate curriculum, engage directly with our children and families, and in so many other ways



dedicate themselves to the early care and education of our children. We are grateful for the educators' commitment to sharing themselves and their expertise with colleagues and families. Please be sure to tell your child's teachers what a difference they made for your family this year!



Community Service: Packing Snack Packs

Tremendous thanks to everyone who donated items to make snack bags for the JFCS food pantry. The children talked in class about helping others in need and collaborated to fill the bags. Thanks to all your generous donations, we were able to assemble 150 snack bags! We also have several extra juice boxes and packs of popcorn to donate. THANK YOU!



May Book Drive: New & Used Books Welcome

Have you got children's books to spare? Now through the end of school, we will be collecting new and gently used books for JFCS Refugee and Immigrant Services Bridge Builders program. Bridge Builders is a remote, after-school mentoring program for resettled refugee youth ages 5-15. They provide age-appropriate support in social-emotional learning, English language and literacy immersion, and cross-cultural exchange.

All genres and age categories of children's books are appreciated; they ask that donations avoid books with an emphasis on violence or war. Books that empower immigrant/refugee characters are especially welcome, as are books that feature thriving BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) characters. Books can be sent to school with your child starting on Monday, May 2nd. If you have any questions, please contact Kim Yetter at kyetter@andrew.cmu.edu. Thanks for your support!



Enjoy Pittsburgh's Children's Theater Festival



The Pittsburgh Children's Theater Festival is running with in person performances on May 14th and 15th in the cultural district (https://trustarts.org/pct_home/events/series/childrens-theater-series). Now in its 36th year, this EQT Children's Theater Festival fosters imagination through high-quality professional theater performances from around the world. This year's featured arts groups and performers hail from France, South Korea, Switzerland, and the United States.

PA Private Academic School License

Because of the pandemic, the PA Private Academic School license renewal review process at the state level has been delayed. We submitted our annual report early, but our renewal is still pending.



Opportunity for Input via our Family Survey



During the rest of 2022, we will be preparing documentation for our accreditation renewal through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). To gather perspectives from Children's School families on our work during this school year, we are conducting a **Family Survey** to gather your input. The survey will launch at the end of the first full week of May and remain open for through May 15th. Your honest feedback will help us reflect on the work that we have done this year so that we can best prepare for what we hope will be a "near normal" year ahead.

Adopt the Garden

During July and August, our garden will continue to grow but needs some friends to help with watering and weeding. CMU COVID19 protocols will apply for anyone coming to campus. If your family would be interested in adopting our garden for a week in July or August, please contact Miss Hancock at lh37@andrew.cmu.edu.



Classroom Year in Pictures

Families are always welcome to download the photos and videos from the classroom web sites for their own personal use. As we approach the end of the school year, Children's School educators are collecting classroom photos into a **Year in Pictures** slide show as a gift for families. For your convenience, they will also collect all the year's photos into a Google folder that families can download all at once. Watch your classroom blog during the last week of school for directions and the Google folder link for the photos and **Year in Pictures** slide show.



Please remember that during the enrollment process, all parents & guardians signed an agreement that you will not post photographs of other people's children or of adults besides yourselves on the web or in social media venues. You can find more detail on our social media recommendations in your Family Handbook. Review the slideshow and year's photos with your child so that together you can affirm how much they have grown this year!

Pandemic Safety for Camp



Since the risk of COVID-19 transmission is greatly reduced outdoors and case counts are again moving in a positive direction, we will not require children or adults to wear facial coverings while outdoors during the June "Water" Camp. We will continue to require quality, well-fitting masks inside, except while children and adults are eating. If families prefer for their children to continue wearing facial coverings while outside, then please let the educators know so they can support the child in doing so. As always, if COVID-19 conditions change, we may need to revise these policies.

End of Year Gift Giving

As the school year comes to an end, please consider donating to the Children's School. Your generosity impacts children's lives. Gifts to the Children's School can be designated to support our general fund, our professional development fund, or our scholarship fund. Please visit <https://www.cmu.edu/dietrich/psychology/cs/giving/index.html> or contact Miss Hancock at 412-268-2198 for more information.



EITC and OSTC Funding Updates

As you know, 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. We are pleased to have received funding from FCC Asset Management, Inc. in April 2022.

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.

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

Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month

May is Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month. This month, we recognize and celebrate the rich culture and contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) in the US. Young children can enjoy celebrating this special month in many ways.



Here are a few ideas:

- **Locate the Asian and Pacific Island nations on a globe.** Don't have a globe at home? No problem. You can use [Google Earth](https://www.google.com/earth/) to virtually visit and explore any location on the planet. Keep in mind that the term Asian Pacific encompasses a wide range of cultures and places. How many of the locations below can you find together?
 - The continent of Asia** – Asia is home to [48 different countries](#), including China, Japan, Korea, the Philippines, India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan and many others.
 - The Pacific Islands** – The Pacific Islands are grouped into three regions: Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia. Melanesia includes New Guinea, New Caledonia, Vanuatu, Fiji, and the Solomon Islands. Micronesia includes Marianas, Guam, Wake Island, Palau, Marshall Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, and the Federated States of Micronesia. Polynesia includes New Zealand, Hawaiian Islands, Rotuma, Midway Islands, Samoa, American Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, Cook Islands, French Polynesia, and Easter Island.
- **Virtually explore the world of Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage:**
 - <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/aapiheritage/places.htm>
This site makes it easy to take your family on a virtual tour of National Parks and historic sites that pay tribute to the heritage and leadership of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.
 - <https://asianpacificheritage.gov/>- At this joint website from The Library of Congress, National Archives, National Endowment for the Humanities, National Gallery of Art, National Park Service, Smithsonian Institution, and United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, visitors can find a wide range of AAPI virtual events to discover and explore!
- **Read a children's book featuring AAPI characters or written by AAPI authors.** The websites below all offer great book ideas that are appropriate for various age levels:
 - <https://www.slj.com/story/20-books-young-readers-celebrate-asian-pacific-american-heritage-month-year-round>
 - <https://www.readingrockets.org/booklists/celebrating-asian-pacific-american-history-and-culture>
 - <https://socialjusticebooks.org/booklists/asian-americans/>
- **Learn about local Asian Pacific American Heritage at the Pittsburgh History Center:**
 - <https://www.heinzhistorycenter.org/blog/western-pennsylvania-history/asian-american-heritage-at-the-heinz-history-center>
- **Explore the wide world of Asian and Pacific Island music and instruments.** Here are just a few examples to get you started:
 - The qeej is a traditional Hmong instrument made from bamboo. Explore it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=diQYWpA5HY>
 - Taiko Drums are a group of Japanese percussion instruments. You can learn more about them here: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taiko> And, you can see them in action here: <https://youtu.be/BZDbUAE9vzo>
 - Watch this performance of traditional Korean music: <https://youtu.be/leHBVYDVrrE>
- **Get Cooking. Invite your child to join you in the kitchen as you try your hand at some Asian and Pacific Islander recipes.** This website offers 30 different recipes to try: <https://www.eatingwell.com/gallery/7901536/recipes-for-aapi-month/>

Family Spotlight: Scientific Nomads

Hello, Children's School Families! We are Michele Insanally and Badr Albanna, Ayla's parents. Ayla is in the Green Room with Ms. O'Neill, and this is her first year at the Children's School.

When Michele and I accepted neuroscience faculty positions at Pitt in 2019, we didn't know much about Pittsburgh. We had been living in New York City – Michele's hometown and the city where Badr was born – for the past 5 years, but we were looking forward to putting roots down in a beautiful new place with strong communities and more than a little civic pride. Ayla didn't know too much of the world beyond her life in our Brooklyn neighborhood, but we hoped she would take to her new home.



Both of our families are familiar with putting down new roots with new children in tow. Michele and her parents immigrated to New York City from Guyana when she was only a few years old, and Badr's parents arrived from Lebanon just a few months before he was born. Growing up in a new place as both strangers and natives had been a formative experience for both of us as children, and we hoped it would be for Ayla as well.

When March 2020 came around, we were excitedly looking for schools and a new place to live in Pittsburgh -- just as the world shut down. The three of us found our whole lives squeezed into our studio apartment; it became Ayla's new preschool, Michele's lab away from the lab, and Badr's virtual classroom. We decided it might be time to move a bit earlier than expected. It was a bit surreal to find ourselves driving along the interstate with our world packed in the trunk. The typical uncertainty about our own future was buried under the existential uncertainty we all felt then. On the road, we didn't see another car for miles at a time and wondered how Ayla would grow in our new home.

We had no idea then how fortunate we would be! Even under socially distant circumstances, Pittsburgh welcomed our family with open arms. Ayla absolutely loves her life in Pittsburgh, and so much of that is due to her life at the Children's School. She has really come into her own here, and the entire community of teachers, staff, and families have made Pittsburgh feel like her home.



Artist in Residence Supports Preschool 3's

Over the past few months, the Preschool 3's have interacted with our Artist in Residence, Isla Hansen. The first workshop was a lesson on object performance (see the March 2022 newsletter). Isla brought in facial features that she created out of felt, and the children placed these features on found objects. The children then had conversations between the objects, "bringing the objects to life." Over the next few workshops, Isla helped the children create scarf marionettes. First, they painted scarves with paint sticks, then Isla showed the friends how to turn the scarves into marionettes, and finally the children manipulated the marionettes to make them dance to music! The Preschool 3's had a blast creating and exploring puppets with Isla.



Campus Helpers: CMU Police Department

Many thanks to the Carnegie Mellon University Police Department for their safety support throughout the year with everything from basic traffic control to emergency response. They went above and beyond the call of duty to enrich our Preschool 3's children's unit on TRANSPORTATION by bringing their police vehicles to our parking lot for the children to experience firsthand. The intense interest and smiling eyes say it all!



Undergraduate Spotlight: Seniors

Farewell and best wishes to the four Children's School graduates this spring.

• **Susanna Hur:** Hello! I am a Learning and Developmental Psychology major and a Music minor in my last semester at CMU. Last semester, I worked directly with the music teacher, Mrs. Hraber. I saw how she planned her music lessons and how she implemented them with the children. I loved seeing the children get so excited each time they saw me and Mrs. Hraber because they knew it was a music



day. I love music, so it was encouraging for me to share what I love with the children. This semester, I am working with the Kindergartners. What I love about this semester is that I get to know each child and work with them one on one. The Children's School has given me so much experience teaching children with intentionality and a skillset to move forward in my career path in education. After I graduate from CMU, I am attending Harvard Graduate School of Education for their Human Development and Education Master's program. I aspire to become a teacher who supports children with disabilities.

• **Julie Lee:** Working at The Children's School has been an honor because of the educators who are dedicated to the children's learning. During the Fall, I took Dr. Carver's Practicum in Child Development course, where I got to intern in the Kindergarten classroom. This semester, I am a student employee helping with the 4's classroom. I have learned that it truly does take a community, with time and resources, to raise a child. When we work together, we are investing in their lifelong learning journey. These intergenerational mentorships and connections allow us to imagine better futures, which is what the Children's School has shown me. After undergraduate school, I would love to be involved in art education, where I could facilitate the exchange of ideas that help form a community. I am excited for what the future holds and am thankful for my time at the Children's School!



• **Enza Potter:** Looking back on my years of undergraduate education at CMU, I can confidently say that I have made some of my best memories at the Carnegie Mellon University Children's School. I have been privileged enough to assist with all age groups in a variety of roles (teaching assistant, researcher, office helper, toy sanitizer, etc.). One of the amazing things that I've learned here has been the ability to watch our students grow in confidence and into more complete people. I have been lucky enough to observe two classes of children progress from the Preschool 3's into the Kindergarten, and the amount of growth I have seen is truly incredible. It inspires me to continue in this career despite the issues COVID introduced to the environment. I am looking forward to continuing my time at the Children's School in the 2022 Summer as I assist in Summer Camp activities. In the coming years, I am hoping to gain more practical applications of my developmental psychology degree by working in schooling environments as well as being able to pursue hobbies outside of academics, like painting, playing the ukulele, and pursuing my ongoing quest to pet every dog in Pittsburgh.



Undergraduate Spotlight: Continued

• **Madison Williamson:** Although my time at the Children's School has been short, as I only started working in the Green Room this academic year, the experience has allowed me to grow more than I could have imagined and has given me more insight about my plans and goals for after graduation. Working with a classroom full of four-year-olds has been challenging, and I have faced many bumps along the way, but working with full-time teachers to create and implement curriculum and solve problems that may arise in a classroom has pushed me to gain more applicable skills for working with children and learning more about how to support their development. While I do not yet have post-graduation plans, I am hoping to take some time away from my own education and find work in a public-school setting for a few years. I would enjoy continuing to work with children, perhaps with an older age group or with children with special needs, but I feel that this field experience would prepare me for graduate school somewhere along the line. I'm very thankful for my time in the Green Room and for the ability to play like a child again a few times each week!



Senior Design Capstone

Emily Spooner is a senior majoring in Design with a minor in Psychology. For her senior capstone project, she created **Artifacts of Childhood** by making toys based on drawings from the kindergarten class journals. With the kindergartners being at the age where imaginative play begins and they are most creative, she wanted to capture that time in a child's life by bringing their ideas to life as tangible figures, with some being sewn, some 3D printed, and some made of wood. She was able to visit the Children's School to present the drawings and toys to the kindergartners following their unit on inventions to show the children how their creative ideas inspired her toy designs and share the varied processes she used to make the toys.



Research Spotlight

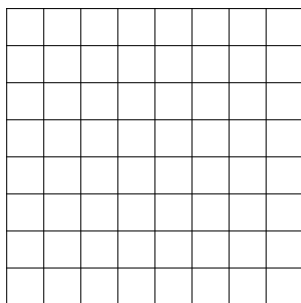
The Story Time Games

Post-doctoral associate Catarina Vales and research associate Christine Wu, both from Dr. Anna Fisher's lab, are examining whether children's understanding of racial categories is malleable when influenced by children's literature. Prior research shows that popular books for young children are more likely to include white characters and anthropomorphized nonhuman characters engaging in typical human behaviors (e.g., a dinosaur's bedtime routine) than they are to include people of color as main characters. In this project, researchers want to tackle this disheartening reality by counteracting these statistics present in children's picture books.



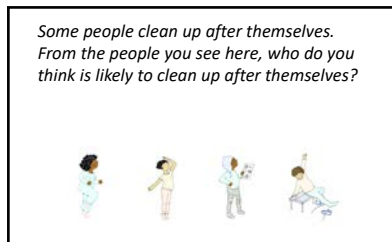
They selected commercially available picture books for children in which the main characters are people of color engaging in typical, everyday activities. Children attend daily story time sessions in small groups over the course of a week. To assess the effect of reading these books on children's understanding of racial categories, the researchers ask children to complete two thinking games

Game #1



Who is more like each other? Put them close together on the board.

Game #2



before and after this week-long story time experience. In the first game, children organize cards depicting dark- and light-skinned people on a game board such that people who are friends / people who are more like each other are placed close together. In the second game, children are asked which people (some dark- and some light-skinned) are more likely to have a certain trait (e.g., being a good friend; not cleaning up after themselves). The results of this study will help us understand if children's experiences with inclusive picture books can be harnessed to decrease racial biases in children.

Last Call for The Dream Machine Game

The Communication and Learning lab at Carnegie Mellon University is still seeking 3 and 4-year-olds to participate in an online language learning study. They'll send families a **\$10 Amazon gift card** for participating. This is a 20-minute Zoom study where children will be asked to help fix the experimenter's "dream machine" by naming pictures that appear on the screen. Here is the link for families to register for a timeslot:

<https://www.schedulista.com/schedule/communicationandlearninglab/4o0qg-6v0lh>

If none of the available times work, or if anyone has any questions or concerns, please contact Megan Waller at callab@andrew.cmu.edu.

We're looking for **3 and 4-year-olds** to participate in our language learning study!

Have you ever heard a child say "mouses" or "snowmans"? How do children learn to stop making these mistakes?

Children will play a 20-minute Zoom where they name pictures they see (such as dogs and mice) to help an experimenter fix their "dream machine."

We will give families a **\$10 amazon gift card** for participating!

Here is the link to sign up to play!: <https://bit.ly/3hrkFD0>

Any questions can be directed to callab@andrew.cmu.edu

This study is being conducted by the Communication and Learning lab at Carnegie Mellon University

Director's Corner: Leadership & Management



Standard #10 for **Leadership and Management** from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) may be last, but it is certainly not least, particularly as we think about both the Children's School and Carnegie Mellon community striving collaboratively for excellence and innovation.

In accordance with the NAEYC standard, we aim to implement strong personnel, fiscal, and program management policies so that all children, families, and staff have high quality experiences. CMU encourages the same practices and provides many resources for us as part of the campus infrastructure.

- We begin with a mission statement that is distinctive to our laboratory school objectives, together with a diverse leadership team that facilitates our progress in a climate of mutual trust, collaboration, and inclusion.
- Our own administrative team handles the required strategic planning, staffing, and program design for our unique developmentally appropriate model, but we receive significant support for the required technology systems, governance, insurance, human resources, and contracts with expert consults from the broader university community through central campus services.
- The University's finance management professionals guide us in the use of their systems to ensure that we meet all of the criteria for sound fiscal accountability and long-range financial planning, with sufficient resources for excellence in all aspects of our mission, even those that are unique at CMU, such as support for our participation in the PA Educational Improvement Tax Credit program.
- Carnegie Mellon's Contracts Office and Business Innovations Team partnered with our administrative team to ensure that our choice of the FACTS Student Information System met the highest quality standards for privacy and security.
- Assistance from CMU's Environmental Health and Safety team, Security professionals, Emergency Medical Technicians, and Nutritionist provide many of the resources necessary for developing the required policies and procedures related to health, nutrition, and safety, as described in January's article, together with those related to our school facilities.
- Similarly, the majority of our personnel policies, including those related to hiring, orientation, and benefits, are managed via the campus Human Resources Department, with excellent consultation available for the personnel work that I do as the director. My design of our annual professional review process and professional development program also benefits from diverse campus colleagues, such as those in the central Learning and Development department, the Counseling and Psychological Services team, etc.
- Finally, Carnegie Mellon's leaders model an inclusive continuous quality improvement process that inspires our annual school evaluation, which is then reported to the Psychology department chair, staff, and families to encourage broad involvement and accountability in the enhancement process.

As we take the final steps in our Accreditation Renewal Process throughout the rest of 2022 with pandemic conditions continuing, we are ever more aware of the many ways that the university supports our work. Their passion and commitment inspire us to continue providing excellent and innovative services for all our constituents while nimbly adapting to changing regional conditions.

May

| <i>Sun</i> | <i>Mon</i> | <i>Tue</i> | <i>Wed</i> | <i>Thu</i> | <i>Fri</i> | <i>Sat</i> |
|---|--|------------|---|--|--|--|
| 1 3's: Insects 4's: Pond K: The Great Outdoors Asian Pacific American Heritage Month | 2 Teacher Appreciation Week | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 8 | 9 May Safety Week | 10 | 11 11:45AM-12:45PM Preschool 3's Celebration on the Playground | 12 1:15-2:45PM Preschool 4's Celebration on the Playground Music with Mrs. Hraber Last Day for All Programs | 13 10:00AM-12:00PM Kindergarten Graduation in MMC103 Breed Hall Celebration on the playground immediately following graduation | 14 |
| 15 | 16 Educator Professional Development | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 |
| 22 | 23 Educator Professional Development | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 29 | 30 Memorial Day Office Closed | 31 | | | | "WATER" Camp begins Monday, June 6th!! |



Children's School

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www.cmu.edu/dietrich/psychology/cs/index.html

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2022