



Carnegie Mellon University Children's School October 2019 Family Newsletter

Welcome to the Children's School Family!

We have settled into the 2019-2020 year at the Children's School, and we're enjoying getting to know our children, families, undergraduates, and researchers. What a joy it is to discover ways that each unique individual contributes to the life of our school as everyone adjusts to the routines and tries new activities. The children are exploring new materials in our indoor and outdoor environments and then proudly demonstrating the ways that they are growing and learning. We are enjoying sharing about ourselves and our families, as well as discussing ways we are different and ways we are alike. We are also talking about the school as a community where we are all helping each other to learn. Here are some ways you can stay informed and get involved in the Children's School learning community!

Learning Community Connections

Here are tips for staying informed and getting involved in the Children's School learning community!

- Our main source of communication is our **family newsletter and monthly calendar**. General information for all families and the monthly snack menu are included with this newsletter, which is sent via email as well as on paper so you can add it to your family notebook.
- Each teaching team also hosts a web site with a daily blog on classroom activities, photo albums, and other details about their programs, as well as writing a **monthly newsletter** including specific information about the curriculum themes, along with the related activities and projects.
- We will also send general school **announcements and reminders via our school e-mail** (cmuchsch@andrew.cmu.edu), so please check that we have your current email address!
- Our fourth source of communication is the Children's School **website**: www.cmu.edu/dietrich/psychology/cs. Electronic versions of our handbook, newsletters, calendar, etc. are available there. Be sure to explore it thoroughly and check it frequently so you can stay current!

October Dates (Remember to Check the Interactive Web Calendar TOO)

October Open House Events

- Wednesday, October 16th from 4:30-6:30pm AM Three Year Old Classes & Kindergarten
- Wednesday, October 23rd from 4:30-6:30pm AM Four Year Old Classes & PM Preschool

November Dates

Educator / Parent Discussion re: School Choice (child care provided)

- Monday, November 6th from 4:30-6:00pm in the CUC Danforth Conference Rm
- Friday, November 15th from 9:30-11:00am in the CUC Danforth Lounge



Kind Friends on Campus

This fall, we welcomed 88 children and their families to the Children's School community. We have two groups of AM 3's, two groups of AM 4's, a PM Mixed Age Preschool Group, and a Kindergarten Class. We are grateful for the connections that they are making with each other and our whole educational team!



Week for Campus Children



Engage • Network • Advocate

The National Coalition for Campus Children's Centers (N4C) is helping its member centers to organize events during the week of October 7th to 11th to raise awareness of the quality early childhood programs operating on college campuses across the country. This year, we are collaborating with the Mortar Board Senior Honor Society to launch the Kindness Rocks Project at CMU with #kindkidscmu. **"The Kindness Rocks Project**, founded by Megan Murphy, author of *A Pebble for Your Thoughts*, is based on the profound truth that one kind message at the right moment can change someone's day, their outlook, and their whole life. This rock painting project has become an international grassroots movement!" See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ik8-xPYLdxI> for a short video that inspires the project.

During our August professional development time, our educators painted kind messages inspired by last year's Healthy Mind and Body unit onto simple rocks, as a way of bridging to this year's Planet Earth unit. Once the rocks were glazed and we added our hash tag to the bottom, we began placing the encouraging rock messages around the campus near our school. Within an hour, we got our first response from someone who really needed the message she found that day. During Campus Children's Centers Week, the Mortar Board Seniors will help our children begin painting their own rocks to add to the project and to prepare rocks for many CMU students to paint on the upcoming Community Engagement Day, which is designed to "promote an interconnected and inclusive campus environment, in which all members of our community are able to thrive and reach their fullest potential."

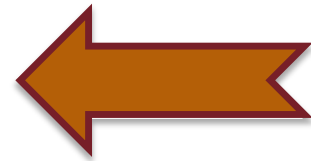


Positive Discipline Pointer: Clear and Consistent Behavior Expectations

At times of transition, children adjust best when adults provide clear expectations and stable routines for safe and smooth interactions. Consistency is key for facilitating productive adaptations to new situations. That's why the Children's School staff spends so much time during September teaching children the expectations and routines of our school days. Taking the time to establish these practices so that they become comfortable and automatic will free both children and adults to responsibly focus on deeper learning and more challenging activities as the year progresses. We take special care in the kitchen or Make Shop and with campus trips because of the extra safety concerns involved. One way that you can help the children both at school and home is by modeling the same behavior expectations with the same words that the children hear at school. We'll all benefit from working across contexts to:

**Be a kind friend.
Follow the routine.
Use your words.
Use walking feet.
Put everything in its place.**

**Listen the first time.
Stay in your own space.
Use inside voices.
Use things appropriately.**



Thanks for working collaboratively with us to make school a safe and positive experience for everyone!

Holidays at the Children's School

At the Children's School, holidays are viewed as educational opportunities that give us the chance to learn about our diverse school community. As part of our emphasis on family identity and respect for diversity, we encourage children to talk about their family traditions, and we share stories related to the meaning of holidays. We plan age-appropriate activities to involve the children in preparing for simple school celebrations and to help them contribute to family events (e.g., basic cooking, making gifts, and so forth). We limit our school celebrations to very brief spans of time (typically one day), attempt to maintain our regular school routine, and, as always, are ready to provide extra attention and comfort as needed. Because the children may prepare their own special snack related to holidays and because many children have dietary restrictions (especially related to nuts, candy and other sweets), **please do not send any food as gifts for children**. In all of these ways, we can create meaningful celebrations with the young children in our educational context.

At the Children's School, the children do not "dress up" for Halloween because children can be scared by costumes, and costumes often cause toileting difficulties. Seasonal activities may involve fall fruits and vegetables, colorful leaves & acorns, etc.



Who Can Help? Administrative Structure & Roles

The Children's School has a team of five professionals to jointly meet the administrative needs of our active laboratory school (left to right: Mrs. Rosenblum, Miss Hancock, Dr. Carver, Mrs. Myers, and Miss Drash). We all strive to know all of the children and to interact with them frequently. We are all available to serve the educators, students, families, and researchers. At the same time, we each focus distinctive talents in different areas, so here are some helpful hints about who to approach for which issues.

Mrs. Rosenblum (rosenblu@andrew.cmu.edu) 412-268-3476

Miss Hancock (lh37@andrew.cmu.edu) 412-268-2198

Dr. Carver (sc0e@andrew.cmu.edu) 412-268-1499

Mrs. Myers (ewmyers@andrew.cmu.edu) 412-268-2199

Miss Drash (adrash@andrew.cmu.edu) 412-268-2199



Dr. Carver, the *Director*, takes primary leadership for **school programs and staff development**. She recruits educators, coordinates professional development and outreach efforts, and manages the school web site, as well as leading the school's **NAEYC accreditation process**. She observes the classroom frequently and provides support for new curriculum development, alternate teaching strategies, ways to meet individual student needs, etc. She prepares the **whole school newsletter** and serves as a **resource for parents** with questions about child development, education, special needs, and family issues. Dr. Carver coordinates all uses of the Children's School as a **psychology laboratory**, including undergraduate courses, graduate student research, and faculty research. As a **teaching professor in the Psychology Department**, Dr. Carver also teaches the graduate course on Educational Design, serves as an academic advisor, and participates in other department and college events. As the **Associate Dean for Educational Affairs in the Dietrich College**, Dr. Carver leads the college-wide curriculum and assessment efforts and serves on university-level committees to coordinate across colleges.

Miss Hancock, an *Educational Administrator*, handles **program administration issues**, including managing the school calendar, ordering materials, conducting safety drills, monitoring the school's primary email account (cmuchsch@andrew.cmu.edu), handling student allergies and medications, and working with our health and safety consultants. She also coordinates requests for **Carnegie Mellon services**, particularly those regarding facilities and security. She takes a lead role with teacher mentoring and consultation for the kindergarten educators and families, as well as in recruiting businesses to contribute scholarship funds through the Pennsylvania EITC and OSTC programs. In 2018, she took the lead on our 50th Anniversary celebration planning!

Mrs. Rosenblum, a part-time *Educational Administrator*, concentrates her administrative efforts on **family support**, beginning with recruiting and initial admission, but also including tuition payments, scholarship assistance, re-enrollment, general family resources, and special events. She also coordinates **undergraduate support staff**, mentors high school interns, and arranges classroom coverage and duty rotations. She takes a role with preschool teacher mentoring and consultation for the preschool educators and families.

Administrative Structure & Roles continued ...

Along with Dr. Carver, both Educational Administrators collaborate to maintain strong relationships with local schools, to broaden our public relations, to manage the school budget, to secure funding for special projects and scholarships, to maintain the school's NAEYC accreditation and PA private academic school licensing, to represent the school in the local, national, and international education community, and to continually seek ways to improve all of the services we offer.

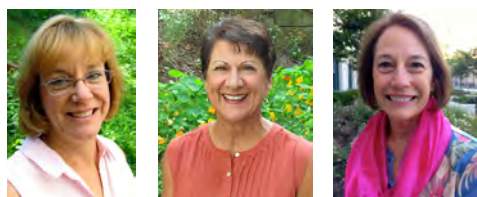
Mrs. Beth Myers, a part-time *Educational Support* professional, is handling our ASQ Screening process, orienting new children to the research participation process, and supporting educators by connecting with our professional development organizations, etc. She also coordinates family involvement and committees, and she helps with tours for prospective families. Last year, Mrs. Myers completed a training program at the Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND) Center at the University of Pittsburgh. Part of her role at the Children's School involves coordinating services for children who need therapeutic intervention.

As the *Administrative Coordinator*, Miss Drash manages the office operations and equipment, answers the primary **school phone** number, keeps student records, takes messages for teachers, and monitors all **observation and research activities**. She handles visitor entry and exit via the **security system** and is the person to whom **ALL forms** are returned. She maintains all of the school's **databases**. She also keeps our reception area and parent bulletin board stocked with family resources, particularly for school choices and community services.

Most importantly, we're all here to help provide an excellent early childhood program for your children. If you have a question or concern and are not sure which administrator to approach, feel free to ask your child's teacher or to call the school office. We'll be happy to direct your call. You may also contact us through email for quick questions or comments you may have.

Educational Support & Substitutes

In addition to the administrative team, there is another part-time professional at the Children's School with the title "Educational Support". Mrs. Leslie Johnson, an experienced early childhood educator, is taking the lead on our whole school theme planning, managing our Library, supporting the Kindness Rocks project, and coordinating other whole-school efforts. She is available to substitute throughout the school when last minute needs arise, so she has spent time in September getting to know all of the children and the routines in each classroom.



Mrs. Cheri Mack serves as a substitute teacher every Thursday so that our educators can have extra planning time. Two of our retired teachers, Mrs. Violet McGillen and Mrs. Charline Tomer, also serve as substitutes for classroom educators when absences are planned in advance. We appreciate the many ways that their efforts support our programming!

Music & Movement Classes

Welcome back, Lauren Hraber! Mrs. Hraber conducts Music and Movement classes with all of the children at the Children's School. Our first classes for the fall were held on September 26th and will continue approximately every other week for the rest of the school year.

Lauren Hraber is an experienced preschool and elementary music teacher with a MED in Special Education from the University of Pittsburgh and a BFA in Piano Performance from Carnegie Mellon University. She spent 10 years teaching General Elementary Music in Baldwin-Whitehall, Woodland Hills, and Canton City Schools. Lauren founded Piano Tots for preschoolers and has spent the last 10 years teaching Piano Tots classes. Presently, Lauren serves as the music teacher at several preschools in the Pittsburgh area. Lauren's family includes husband Zach and 2 children - Maddy & Jax, a Children's School alum.



So Many School Choices

How do families make the best choice of an elementary school for each of their children and decide when to make the transition? Please join us for a review of school choice principles and a discussion of strategies for exploring school options.



Wednesday, November 6, 2019 from 4:30-6:00pm – Danforth Conference Room, Cohon University Center

- Child Care will be provided for children of all ages in the Red Room.

Friday, November 15, 2019 from 9:30-11:00am - Danforth Lounge, Cohon University Center

- Preschool 4's and Kindergarten children will be in school.
- Child Care will be provided for children 3 and under in the Red Room.

NOTE: The Pittsburgh Public School birthday cutoff is September 30, 2020. In other words, a child who turns 5 by September 30th is eligible for kindergarten (or 6 by September 30th for 1st grade).

Safety at the Children's School

Health and Safety considerations are high priorities for our educators. We participate annually in trainings including Pediatric CPR and First Aid, Bloodborne Pathogens, Medication Administration, Food Safety, Fire Safety and Emergency Preparedness Training. In addition, we work with a Health Consultant, Playground Consultant, and the University Dietician who come to the Children's School to evaluate our space and observe our practices to help improve our procedures. This year we tasted a wide range of cow's milk alternatives and used a digital simulator to practice extinguishing fires. For Kindergarten age children, the Pittsburgh Public School District provides a school nurse who comes monthly to monitor immunizations and health records and to conduct basic screenings such as height and weight, vision, and hearing.



We also collaborate with the University Environmental Health and Safety Department as well as the University Police to create a safety plan for emergency situations. One week each month is designated as **Safety Week** at the Children's School. During this week, children and staff practice safety procedures, such as evacuations or lock down drills. A different drill is practiced each month at varied times of day. During our drills, each staff member carries a walkie-talkie as well as an emergency bag that contains first aid supplies, class lists, and emergency phone numbers. The University has provided a Fire and Emergency Action Plan that includes a map with recommended evacuation routes. Also, during Safety Week, an in-depth Safety Check of our facility is conducted.

We held our first evacuation drill on Friday, September 13th with the 4's and Kindergarten classes. After discussing the procedure during circle time, the children listened for the fire alarm and walked through our main emergency egress to the Reflection Garden, with all children accounted for in 1 minute 53 seconds. The 3's classes practiced their first evacuation drill during circle time on September 17th now that the teachers feel that the children are acclimated to their surroundings. This drill was done without the fire alarm to teach the children the procedure. In October, we will have all of the children participate in the drill together.

With both evacuation and lockdown drills, we use very simple explanations of why we need to practice, basically saying that we need to be able to leave the building quickly if there is something inside, like a fire, that might harm us or that we need a place inside to be safe away from the windows if there is something outside that might harm us, like a very bad storm. We have found that reading the book Fire Drill by Paul DuBois Jacobs is very helpful in explaining the concept of emergency situations to young children. If you have any questions about our Health and Safety Guidelines, please refer to your Family Handbook or contact the Main Office.

Family Committee News

Thank you to everyone who has volunteered for a school committee. It's never too late to join a committee by emailing Mrs. Myers at ewmyers@andrew.cmu.edu. Also, please contact Mrs. Myers if you rediscover or find a new talent you want to bring to school; we love to have family members share!



The FSO Committee Co-Chairs Sarah Hummel (James, Blue Room) and Ayça Akin (Ada, Green Room) will host a meeting on October 4th, following morning greeting, in the Blue Room, to start thinking about this year's events.

Our Teacher Appreciation Committee is looking forward to organizing Teacher Appreciation events, including signing up to bring in food, drinks and/or snacks for our Educators & Staff at designated times. Families will have the opportunity to show their appreciation in these months: Kindergarten: October & February, 4s: November & March and 3s: December & April. If you signed up for this group, keep an eye out for an email of welcome!

The Book Fair Committee will meet in late October to start planning for the December 7th event at the Waterfront Barnes & Noble Bookstore.

Family Social Organization

Hello families and welcome to the Children's School Family Social Organization! We are excited for a new year with new ideas for fun and educational events. Thanks to everyone who participated in our first event, which was playing t-ball on the Children's School lawn next to the playground on the morning of September 29th.

We hope you will join us on October 4th after greeting (9 am) to plan more events for the year. You are welcome to bring your little ones, and they can play in the Blue Room during our meeting. Bring your creativity and fresh ideas. Looking forward to seeing you there!

Sarah Hummel (shummel1010@gmail.com)

Please Label Your Child's Clothing

Please help us keep your child's personal items together with them. We suggest that you use **permanent marker** on clothing labels, as well as lunch bags, food containers and water bottles. It is not unusual for personal items to get shuffled during the day as we support children's independence. Clear labeling by first name (or initials & last name) means our staff can reconnect misplaced items with their owners.



Family Spotlight: Snapshot of Our Community

During September, the friends in all of our classes get to know each other by sharing information about themselves and their families, which prompts us to discuss similarities and differences so that we can better appreciate the diversity among us. The "All About Me" projects in the preschool and kindergarten give children and families an opportunity to get to know each other better. You'll get to see all of these at the Open House events!



This fall, we have 81 families with 88 children at the Children's School, including 23 only children. Thirty-three of these families are new to the school, including families who recently moved to Pittsburgh from Australia, Germany, Connecticut, North Carolina, and Hawaii. Among our families, we have three in which the parent is a Children's School alum!

Fifteen of our families have a parent who is a graduate student or faculty member at Carnegie Mellon. Twenty-seven of our mothers and one father identified themselves as stay-at-home parents. The other parents listed a wide variety of professions, including Anesthesiologist, Archivist, Artist, Attorney, Audiologist, Audio Technician, Banker, Brick Layer, Business Owner, Chef, Chief Security Officer, Chiropractor, Computer or Software Engineer, Customer Service Rep., Designer, Entrepreneur, Event Manager, Financial Consultant, Food Service, Journalist, Mathematician, Mechanical Engineer, Musician, Nurse, Ophthalmologist, PhD Student, Physician, Podiatrist, Product Manager, Psychologist, Real Estate Developer, Researcher, Restaurant Owner, Scientist, Security Architect, Social Worker, Sports Psychologist, Surgeon, Teacher, Tech Support, Therapist, Tooling Tech, US Soldier, Veterinarian, Writer / Translator (French).



Nearly 32% of our children are dual language learners (28). This year, we have families speaking at least 16 languages besides English: Arabic, Cantonese, Chinese, Farsi, French, German, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Nepali, Russian, Spanish, Tamil, Telugu, Turkish, and Urdu.

We also talk about the school as a community where we are all helping each other to learn. We aim to build community by engaging families in school events, such as this month's Open Houses, through our Family Social Organization (FSO), and through introductions in our newsletters. Each month hereafter, the Family Spotlight column will introduce one of the Children's School families in more depth. Please contact Mrs. Rosenblum if you would like to be a featured family. You can see prior family profiles on the Children's School web site under "For Families". The Krishna/Gopal, Lagemann, Lama, Laurent, and Yetter families introduced themselves last year.

Custodial Workers Recognition Day

Tuesday, October 2nd is National Custodial Workers Recognition Day - an annual celebration to pay tribute to and thank those who clean and maintain buildings. Our school is maintained by the incredible Olympia Saunders. Olympia works for Aramark, the custodial services company contracted by Carnegie Mellon University. Olympia's workday begins after 11pm, which is why families do not meet her. Our staff rarely sees Olympia, but we communicate as "pen pals" when we leave each other notes about cleaning needs. Olympia has been employed by CMU's custodial



services company since September 2011. She loves to do crossword puzzles and collects dolphins, her favorite animal. She was raised on the North Side, and her favorite childhood memory is going to Disneyland when she turned 10. It was her first time getting on a plane. Olympia would like to thank the whole staff for making her feel so loved. She also appreciates the kind gifts and letters that she receives from the staff and the children. Thank YOU, Olympia, for all of your hard work!! In honor of Olympia, we will provide snacks for the Aramark custodial team who work in the Margaret Morrison Building on October 2nd.

Box Tops for Education

For over 20 years, Box Tops for Education has given families an easy way to earn cash for their school, with products they already buy. The Children's School participates in the Box Tops for Education program and has earned over \$1,000 since 2015.



New for 2019: BOX TOPS HAVE GONE DIGITAL!!

No more clipping. No more sending Box Tops to school. All you need is your phone. Download the ALL-NEW Box Tops app, shop as you normally would, then simply scan your store receipts to find participating products. The app will automatically credit your school's Box Tops earnings online. Please see the enclosed flyer for more details.

Giant Eagle Apples for the Students

Shop. Scan. Support Our School. Apples for the Students started again on September 2nd. This program is a great way for our school to earn funds for our school's overall educational needs. Is your Giant Eagle Advantage Card[®] registered? Now's the time to check. All you need is our school code **0151** to verify a card or register a new card.

1. Visit www.gianteagle.com/AFTS.
2. Enter your Giant Eagle Advantage Card[®] number (which appears under the bar code).
3. Enter the school code.
4. Done! Please encourage your extended family and friends to register too.



School Spirit Sale

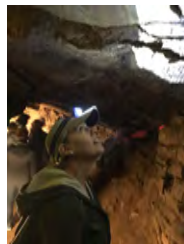
We have a variety of clothing and other items with the Children's School logo for sale. Please see Miss Drash, Mrs. Myers, or Mrs. Rosenblum if you are interested in purchasing any items. We take cash or checks.

• Toddler Tees:	\$10.00	• Hoodies, Adult & Child:	\$20.00
• Water Bottles:	\$5.00	• Sweatshirts:	\$14.00
• Onesies:	\$12.00		

Whole School Theme: Planet Earth

This year, we chose **Planet Earth** for our Whole School Unit to intentionally focus our learning community on our home in the universe. With respect to life science, we will discuss the features of a habitable planet in terms of its temperature, water, atmosphere, energy and nutrients. Our earth science focus will be on geography and geology, starting with the collection and study of rocks. Everyone will focus on environmental studies with an emphasis on human impact, conservation, and sustainability. Physical science principles of gravity and magnetics will likely interest our older children. For every theme, we utilize non-fiction books about the topic, and we also seek tales from diverse cultures to enrich the theme. In this case, we are likely to explore Native American stories and use story stones to create our own. The arts will help us explore a variety of representations of nature, such as sounds of the earth, earth dances, and photography, and we will experience many uses of earth materials as media, such as sculpture with rocks, minerals of different colors as paint, etc. We plan to continue adding natural materials to our indoor loose parts centers and to our playground environment, as well as to explore gravity by experimenting with ramps both indoors and outdoors. Our campus environment and Schenley Park will offer many opportunities to explore natural and constructed uses of various rocks and minerals.

As inspiration for our unit planning during our August professional development time, we took a whole staff field trip to Laurel Caverns for a geology seminar, rock & fossil collection walk, and cave tour with an experienced caver, Lisa Hall. We all emerged from the caverns with a new appreciation for the diversity of our planet's resources and depth of its beauty.



If you are interested in helping to design the unit or have ideas to share, please contact me (sc0e@andrew.cmu.edu) or Mrs. Johnson (lesliej@andrew.cmu.edu).

Perhaps you wondered ...

why we organize our curriculum into thematic units.

Studying topics in depth builds children's knowledge base, starting with what they already know and creating a network of concepts that are richly connected in ways that help children apply their knowledge to new contexts. We combine verbal and visual representations and provide a variety of activities to help them acquire, strengthen, and refine concepts via experimentation, stories, dramatic play, art, games, technology activities, etc. Children converse and reason in more sophisticated ways about content they understand, so themes provide a foundation for other cognitive challenges.

Across the school year, we include a variety of topics that span literature, social studies, science (life, physical, and earth & space), and the arts. In every unit, we include activities that strengthen children's skills in all of our developmental domains: self-esteem & independence, interaction & cooperation, communication, discovery & exploration, physical capabilities / health & safety, and artistic expression & appreciation.

Undergraduate Spotlight

As a campus laboratory school, the Children's School offers research and observation opportunities to many undergraduate and graduate students from different departments across campus. In addition to these opportunities, we offer undergraduates a chance to work in the classrooms on a regular basis, either as student employees, interns, or volunteers. In the **Undergraduate Spotlight**, we will be featuring our diverse classroom assistants so that parents can learn about the undergraduate and graduate students who work in the classrooms with their children in different capacities. Photos of all our student assistants are posted on the Family Communication bulletin board across from our library, and classroom assistants working with particular groups have been introduced in the classroom blog.

New Interns:

This semester, in addition to our student employees, we have four undergraduate interns taking Mrs. Rosenblum's *Practicum in Child Development* course and supporting the children and teachers for six hours per week in the classroom.



Beatriz Echeverria is assisting the morning 3's.



Teresa Dietrich is in the Green Room with the 4's in the morning.



Miranda Mlincek is working with the Afternoon Mixed Age Preschool Class.



Enza Potter is assisting in the Kindergarten.

Keeping Parents Informed about Research

The **Research Spotlight** section of the monthly newsletter is one way Children's School parents can learn about research in progress. Also, each time your child participates in a study that involves playing a "game" with a researcher (i.e., as opposed to merely being observed), he or she will get a **participation sticker** suggesting that you, "Ask me about the ... game" and a **study description** detailing the task. We also have **recent articles** resulting from Children's School research posted on the school web site (www.cmu.edu/dietrich/psychology/cs) and a notebook of articles in the office. Feel free to contact Dr. Carver to discuss any questions you have about research.

Observations for Psychology Assignments:

Students from Dr. David Rakison's Child Development class conduct periodic observations throughout the fall. For each assignment, they observe specific differences between preschoolers and kindergartners in motor skills, social interactions, language, etc.

Research Methods Class Studies:

Students in Professor Anna Fisher's Developmental Research Methods class will start with a lab entitled **The Picture Names Game** to investigate children's use of prospective memory, or memory for future actions. This ability is important for developing independence and planning, and it plays a role in academic success (e.g., remembering to do one's homework), social relationships (e.g., remembering to wish a happy birthday to a friend), and personal safety (e.g., remembering to put on a bike helmet or car seat belt). Some researchers consider prospective memory to be one of the executive function processes (along with working memory and inhibitory control).

In the research task, children are introduced to a stuffed animal named Morris the Mole. They are told that Morris has poor daytime vision and needs their help to know what objects are depicted on picture cards. Children are asked to help Morris by naming the pictures. However, children are also told that Morris is afraid of other animals, and if a card in the game has a picture of an animal on it, the child should not name it but place in a box instead. After being introduced to the Picture Names Game, there is a



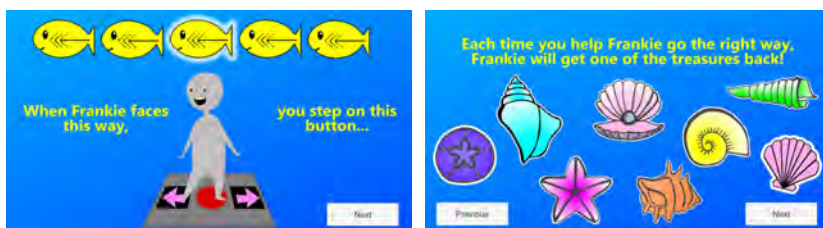
brief 3-minute delay during which children play an I Spy Game with the researcher. Half of the children play the I Spy Game quietly; whereas, the other half talk with the researcher while playing the game. Based on prior literature, the class hypothesizes that talking with a researcher during the delay period will interfere with children's ability to update the goal of the Picture Names Game (i.e., to name objects on picture cards unless there is a picture of an animal). This project can contribute to the literature on the development of prospective memory in children by helping evaluate one of the theories on the development of prospective memory.

Later in the semester, the students will work in small groups to conduct a study of their own design, which will be approved both by their instructor and by Dr. Carver. Watch for their research questions in the November newsletter!

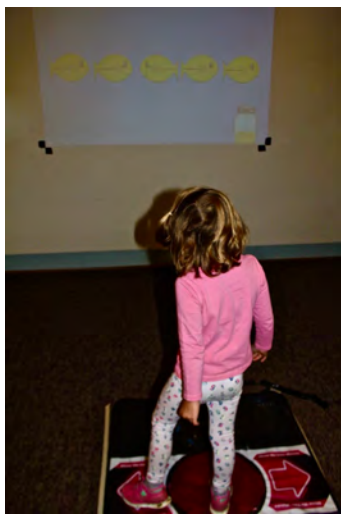
Research Spotlight

Brain Games and The ExerGame

Cassandra Eng, a fourth year graduate student working with Dr. Anna Fisher, is testing the impact of a video game, which was specially designed to stimulate a more active playing experience, on children's **developing inhibitory control**, which is the ability to suppress responses that are not appropriate in a given moment (e.g., answering a teacher's question out of turn, or taking a toy with which another child is playing). In the **ExerGame**, children play a "gamified" version of one inhibitory control task, meaning that specific game features, such as incentives and storyline, were applied to the existing inhibitory control task to encourage children to expend effort on the otherwise monotonous task. The game is projected onto a wall with a connected non-slip game mat. Children respond, and thereby collect ocean treasures, by stepping left or right on the game mat's arrows, corresponding to the direction that the central fish - "Frankie" - is facing.



An added feature of the study is that there are two versions of the ExerGame and children play the same one for two consecutive days. The Exercise version is played standing on the non-slip game mat, while the Sedentary Cognitive Training version is played on a computer like a typical video game. This contrast allows researchers to compare the performance gains of the two groups, and the individual effects of the given version. Furthermore, it allows them to tease apart the effects of physical exercise and cognitive training on inhibitory control over time.



Before and after both ExerGame versions, children participate in **Brain Games** that measure their inhibitory control. The Flanker Task measures children's ability to judge the direction a central fish is facing when the surrounding fish are either facing the same or different directions. The Go-no-Go Task requires children to respond quickly to the appearance of a blue balloon but NOT to respond at all when a pink one appears. The Day-Night Task starts easy with a child saying "Day" in response to a sun picture and "Night" to a moon picture but then requires a switch to the opposite responses (i.e., saying "Night" for the sun).

The goal of this project is to investigate whether the ExerGame experience can enhance inhibitory control skills in preschool-aged children by comparing a child's performance on the Brain Games before and after playing the ExerGame. Children who have permission to participate in studies involving functional Near-Infrared Spectroscopy (fNIRS) completed the Brain Games while wearing the fNIRS cap, then half of them participated in the ExerGame two days in a row, and then all of them completed the Brain Games again, thereby allowing researchers to compare the performance gains of the two groups to determine the impact of the ExerGame play.

Enclosed with this newsletter is a poster with very interesting results from a similar study last year.

Research Spotlight, continued ...

The Order Positions Game

Dr. Jessica Cantlon and Nour al-Zaghloul are investigating **how children visualize and compare sequences of different lengths**. This game takes place over several sessions and has three phases: the *learning phase*, the *understanding phase*, and the *comparison phase*. In this game, researchers teach children part of a sequence of pictures and then ask them to recreate that same sequence. After repeating the process with a new sequence of pictures, researchers have them compare the two sequences to see how they represent them.

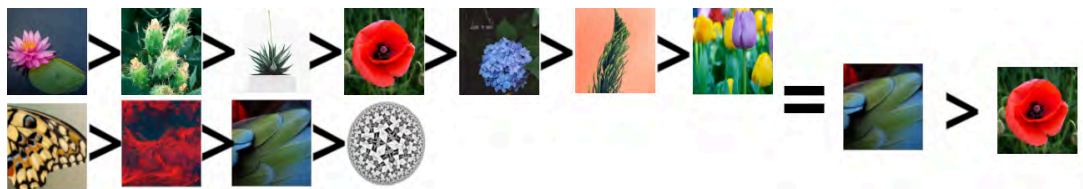
In the *learning phase*, children are shown two pictures at a time and teach them which picture is earlier in the sequence than the other. In the game, a robot friend tells them which picture she likes better. Children are only shown adjacent pictures in the sequence, such as 1 & 2 together and 2 & 3 together, but never 1 & 3 together.

In the *understanding phase*, we check that children understand that the sequence is in a specific order overall (e.g., 1>2>3) and not just the pairwise comparisons (e.g., 1>2 & 2>3 but not that 1>3). Whereas in the *learning phase* children only saw pictures adjacent in the sequence order; in the *understanding phase*, they see non-adjacent pictures only (e.g., 1 & 3 together) and are asked to guess which one the robot will like better. This task shows whether children infer the actual list order from the *learning phase*.

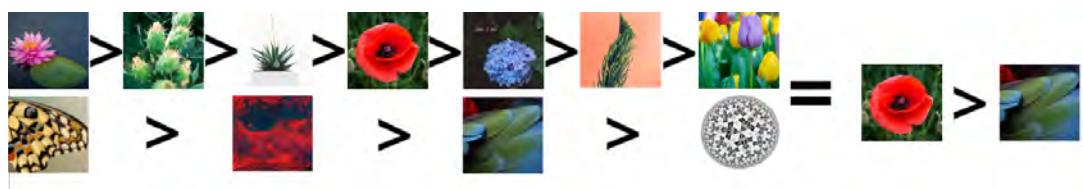


The *learning* and *understanding phases* are then repeated for a second sequence of pictures, before children progress to the *comparison phase*. In the *comparison phase*, researchers quickly practice the two sequences to make sure the children still remember what was learned. Then, they take a picture from each sequences and ask them to guess which one the robot likes better. This comparison shows us how they visualize the sequences in their mind. Because one sequence has fewer pictures in it than the other, it is hard to directly compare them. How they answer will show whether they use absolute positioning (e.g., the third picture of one sequence comes before the fourth picture of the other sequence no matter what) or relative positioning (where the position of the picture relative to the size of the list makes a difference) for the pictures in the sequence. Visualizations of both types of positioning are included here, as well as an example of a picture comparison that changes depending upon which type of positioning is being used.

Absolute Positions:



Relative Positions:



Director's Corner: Play as a Priority

"Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for children, play is serious learning. Play is really the work of childhood."

Fred Rogers

Young children's play has many benefits for all aspects of development. At the Children's School, educators support children's play as a significant means to engage them in effective learning in all six of our goal domains.



Self-Esteem & Independence: Play contexts invite children to express their own ideas and understanding while they explore and master new materials. Children thrive when they have a choice of meaningful activities and open-ended options for using a variety of materials. Such choices invite children to take initiative in their own learning and foster intrinsic motivation – the desire to work on a task primarily because it is satisfying.

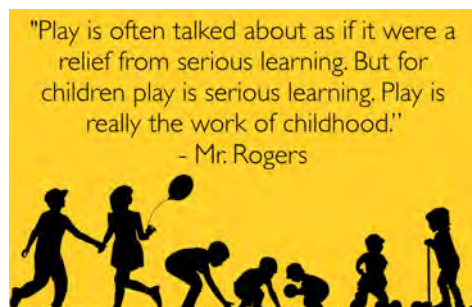
Interaction & Cooperation: Children play in diverse ways. They engage in "solitary play" apart from others or in "parallel play" near another child who is using the same materials but engrossed in his own activity. Interaction begins with "associative play", which involves some conversation, sharing of materials, and similar actions but no coordination of goals. True "cooperative play" emerges as children begin to develop shared goals, such as a coordinated scenario in the dramatic play area, a joint building endeavor in the block area, or a team game on the playground. The more children play together, the better they understand other children's points of view, demonstrate empathy and caring, and develop conflict resolution skills.

Communication: As children interact during play, they learn to use language in new ways to describe their play, negotiate sharing, plan joint goals, etc. Their vocabulary increases as they learn words for new objects and actions in our changing theme-related centers (e.g., the architect's studio or construction site in our upcoming Preschool Building Unit).

Discovery & Exploration: Children's indoor and outdoor play provides 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.

Physical Capabilities / Health & Safety: During play, children's whole bodies are engaged in learning, which builds both small and large motor skills naturally. Children learn what is safe and risky as they stretch their physical prowess and build coordination and stamina.

Artistic Expression & Appreciation: Dramatic play, art and writing center explorations, and other music and movement opportunities offer children a variety of media for expressing their ideas and learning to appreciate other ideas. These experiences build skills in each of the other domains as well, thus expanding children's learning via play.



Parents can support play in many of the same ways that we do at school, by providing space, opportunities, and materials, as well as arranging "play dates" with peers and visiting public play areas where children can interact with groups of different age children. Space where children can play without fear of damaging furniture or injuring themselves, time to choose and become engaged in their own play activities, and simple, interesting materials are key ingredients. Feel free to come observe play at the Children's School and to share your ideas with us.

October

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
Preschool Theme: Building Kindergarten Theme: Elements of Art		1	2	3	4	5
6	7 N4C Week for Campus Children October Safety Week	8	9	10 Music w/ Mrs. Hraber	11	12
13	14	15	16 4:30-6:30PM AM 3's & Kindergarten Open House	17	18	19
20	21	22	23 4:30-6:30PM 4's & PM Preschool Open House	24 Music w/ Mrs. Hraber	25 CMU Community Engagement Day	26 CMU Homecoming
27	28	29	30	31		



Children's School

CMUChSch@andrew.cmu.edu

www.cmu.edu/dietrich/psychology/cs

412-268-2199

2019



The Children's School Snack Menu

*Subject to change based on birthdays & special events
Gluten and dairy free options available*

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	1 Kix Cereal Milk/Water	2 Diced Pineapple & Cottage Cheese Milk/Water	3 Goldfish Milk/Water	4 Mini Bagels & Jelly Milk/Water
7 Tortilla Chips & Salsa Milk/Water	8 Oranges & Club Crackers Milk/Water	9 Yogurt & Granola Milk/Water	10 Cucumbers & Sun Chips Milk/Water	11 Teddy Grahams Milk/Water
14 Raisin Bread & Butter Milk/Water	15 Apples & Cheese Sticks Milk/Water	16 Rice Cakes & Sun Butter Milk/Water	17 Broccoli & Pretzels Milk/Water	18 Carrots w/Ranch Dip & Ritz Crackers Milk/Water
21 Rice Krispies Cereal Milk/Water	22 Bananas & Sunbutter Milk/Water	23 Flatbread & Apple Butter Milk/Water	24 Tortilla Chips & Guacamole Milk/Water	25 Clementines & Cheese Sticks Milk/Water
28 Mini Bagels & Cream Cheese Milk/Water	29 Pears & Graham Crackers Milk/Water	30 Animal Crackers Milk/Water	31 Goldfish Milk/Water	

October 2019

Enhancing Executive Function in Preschool Children: Generalizability and Long-term Effects of Cognitive-Motor Training



Kalpa Anjur, Dominic Calkosz (Computer Science), Elizabeth Fulton, Suanna Moron (Computational Neuroscience), Emery Noll (Biological Sciences), Carter Williams (Logic and Computation), Kristy Zhang (Business Administration and HCI), Nicole Ang (Statistics and Machine Learning), Bridget Tan (Electrical Computer Engineering)

Introduction

Executive function (EF) is a set of psychological processes that enables goal-directed behavior (Diamond, 2013). EF longitudinally predicts academic achievement, learning-related classroom behaviors, and occupational success (Tangney et al., 2018). Three core components of EF are working memory, cognitive flexibility, and inhibitory control. This study focuses on inhibitory control: the ability to override strong, but inappropriate behavioral tendencies (Blair & Diamond, 2008).

Several studies have tried using computer training interventions to improve EF, **but found that performance does not transfer to non-trained inhibitory control tasks** (Enge et al., 2014; Rueda et al., 2005; Thorell et al., 2009). However, intervention studies with adolescents, older adults, and atypical populations provide evidence that Exergames (concurrent cognitive and motor stimulation) improve EF (Best, 2012; Benzing & Schmidt, 2018; Eggenberger, 2016; Hilton et al., 2014; Van Santen et al., 2018). Despite the potential applications of Exergames, little is known about the short- and long-term effects on EF in children below school age.

Research Questions

The primary objective of this study is to investigate whether an **Exergame** (high physical activity + high cognitive engagement), a **Sedentary** game (low physical activity + high cognitive engagement), **Exercise** game (high physical activity + low cognitive engagement) impact EF in preschool aged children.

1. Will Exergame training improve children's performance on a trained EF task and **transfer to a non-trained EF task**?
2. Does Exergame training transiently facilitate EF performance or does it have a more fundamental impact resulting in **longer-term changes**?
3. Does training **generalize to EF-related behaviors** in a real-world context in a classroom setting?

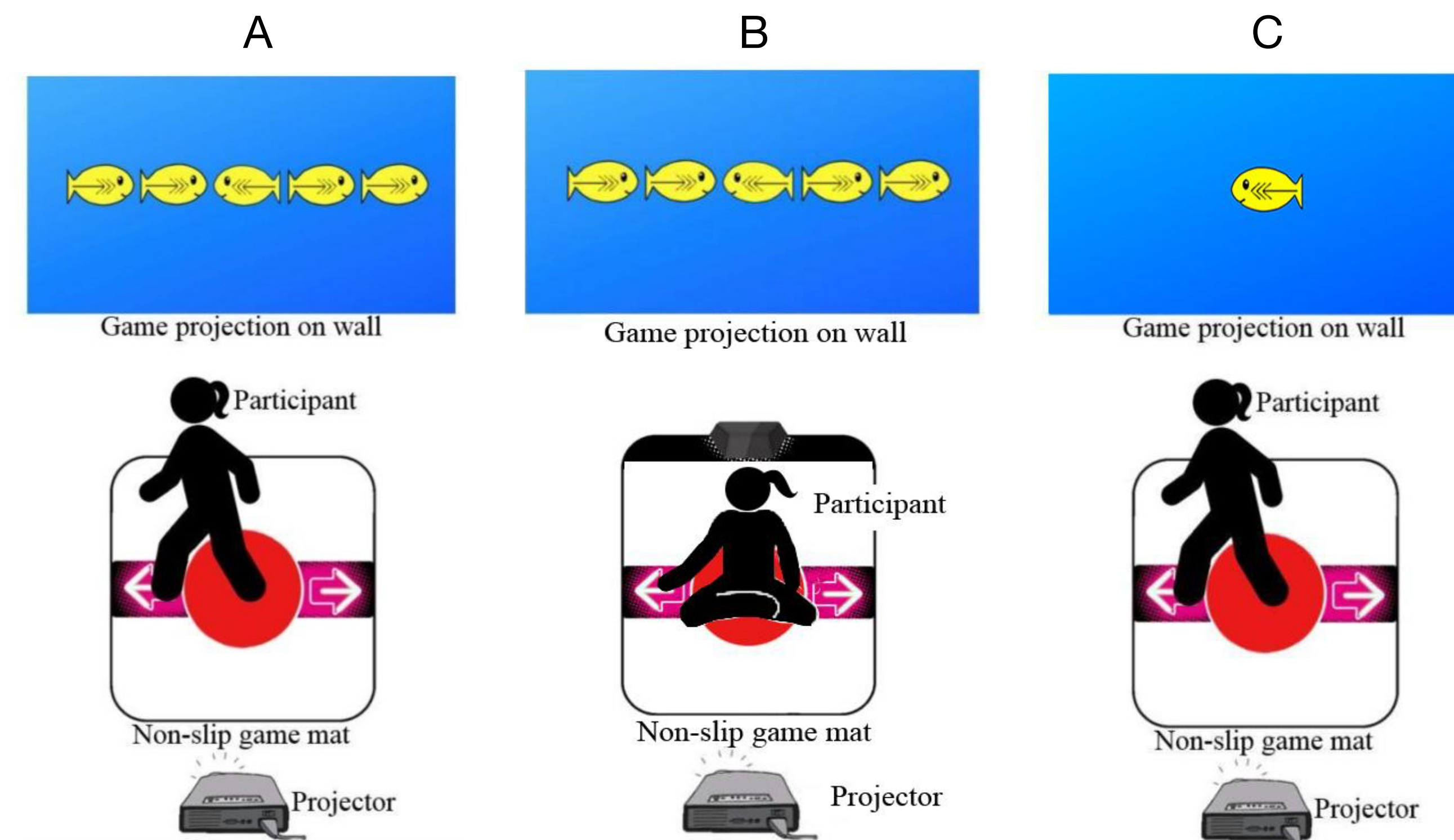
Design

Participants: 61 children (22 boys, 13 girls) ages 4-5 ($M = 5.03$ yrs, $SD = 7$ months), recruited from the Children's School at CMU in Pittsburgh, PA. The school represents economic and racial diversity with children being 54% White, 24% Asian or Pacific Islander, 5% African American, 12% Middle-Eastern, 5% Hispanic, and 28% of children attending with financial aid.

Between-subject design; children randomly assigned to 1 of 4 conditions: Exergame ($n = 20$), **Sedentary** ($n = 10$), **Exercise** ($n = 10$), or **Passive Control** ($n = 21$).

Children trained for two 20-minute consecutive sessions to replicate the training duration of prior Exergame studies. The game is projected onto a wall with a connected non-slip game step mat (144 x 96 x 48 inches).

Procedure



- A) Exergame:** Participants responded by stepping left or right on the game mat depending on the direction that the central target was facing. The target was a picture of a fish (either facing left or right) that was surrounded by 4 other "distractor" fish.
- B) Sedentary:** Exact same game as the Exergame condition, except children were *sitting* and responded by pressing left or right on the game mat's arrows.
- C) Exercise activity:** The target still as a center fish, but it was **not** surrounded by 4 other "distractor" fish. The target fish faced left and right in a continuous pattern to engage children in repetitive exercise without engaging inhibitory control.

Measures

EF assessments were administered before (pretest), after (posttest), and 1 month after (delaytest) the intervention.

Flanker Task (Eriksen & Eriksen, 1974): children are shown an image of five fish and told to press the respective key the middle fish (central target) is facing. The target is surrounded by flankers (two fish on either side) that will either all be facing the same way as the middle fish (congruent), or facing the opposite direction (incongruent).

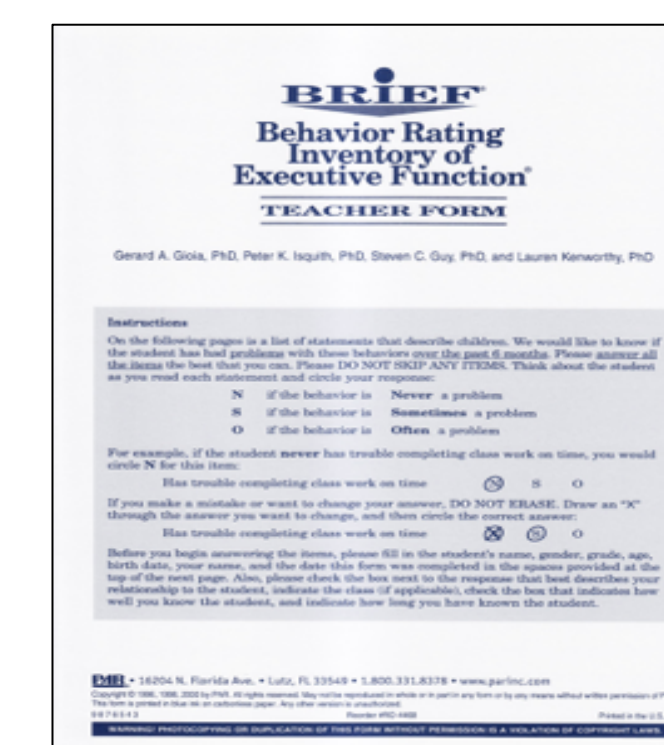
Day-Night Task (Gerstadt, Hong, & Diamond, 1994): children are instructed say "day" when shown a sun card and to say "night" when shown a moon card. The opposites condition then had children say "day" when shown a moon card and say "night" when shown a sun card.

Behavior Rating Inventory of Executive Function (BRIEF) is used as an inventory scale completed by teachers to evaluate everyday behaviors that are associated with EF.. 63 questions 5 subcategories:

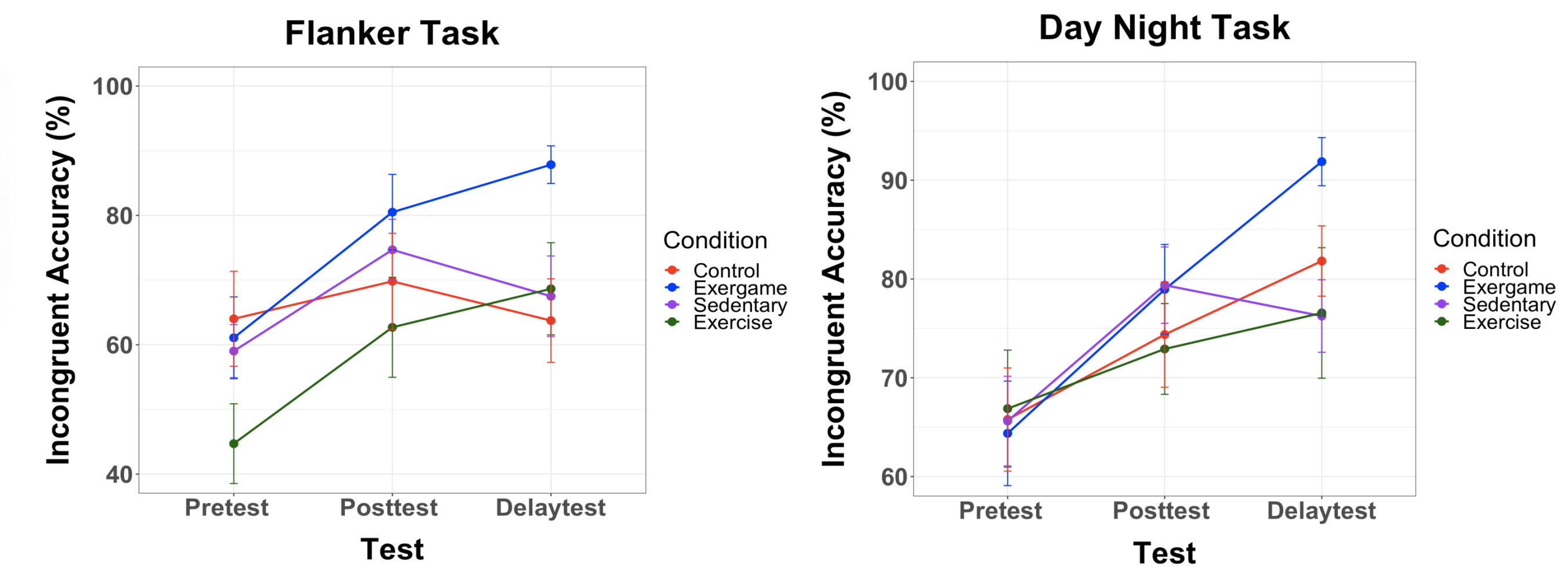
- Emotional Control
- Working Memory
- Inhibition
- Plan/Organize
- Shift

Teachers rated 1-3 to Often(1), Sometimes (2), and Never (3), with higher scores reflecting higher EF.

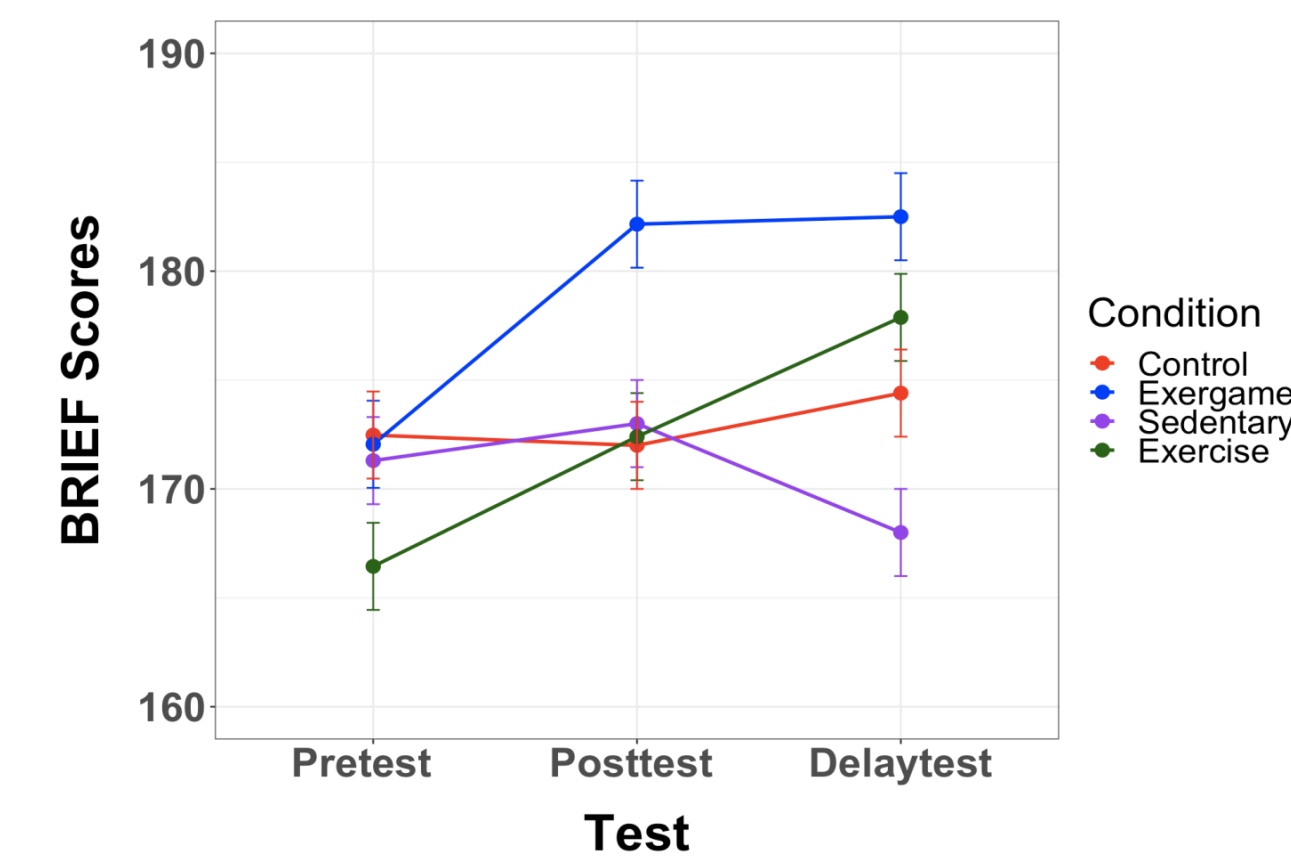
Teachers and researchers who administered the EF tasks were blind to condition assignment.



Results



Teacher Ratings of Executive Function



- The Exergame ($p = .003$), Sedentary ($p = .026$), and Exercise ($p = .042$) conditions showed significant improvements on the trained Flanker task from pre- to posttest, but not the passive Control group ($p = .165$).
- Only the Exergame showed significant improvements on the transfer Day Night task and BRIEF scores from pre- to posttest ($ps < .003$), and the effects immediately after training remained strongly apparent one month later.

Discussion

Limitations

- underpowered. Only $n = 20$ in Sedentary and Exercise conditions
- The Exergame improved performance on a non-trained EF task and teacher ratings of EF, more so than a Sedentary game and Exercise.
- Exergame training before entering formal schooling may enhance EF development in children as young as 4 to 5-years old.
- Additional established EF tasks can be transformed into physically active Exergames to investigate whether the effects are generalizable outside of the Flanker Task.

Future Directions

- Examining hemodynamic changes in prefrontal connectivity from pretest to posttest to delay test using fNIRS
- Running replication experiment with adults (see VR study adjacent to this poster)
- Examining BRIEF subsets
- Examining effects on academic achievement measures: (Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence; WPPSI)
- Examining covariates: Heart rate, Enjoyment (Smilometer), Engagement (positive/negative affect)

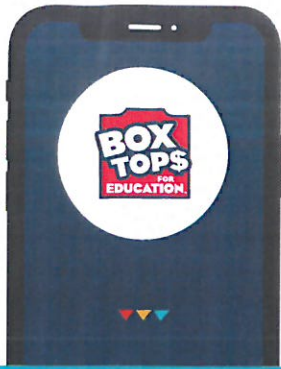


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Professor Sarah Pickett
CMU Children's School Educators





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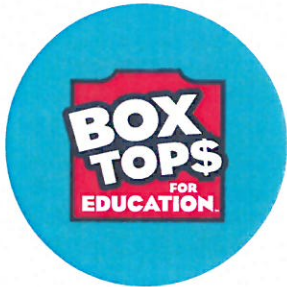
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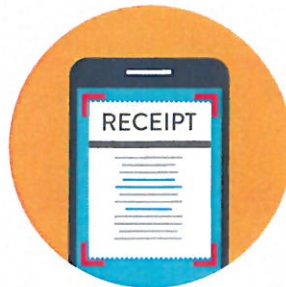


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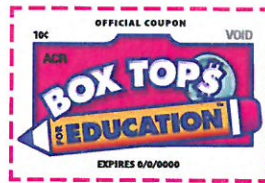
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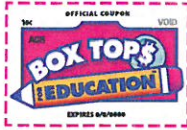
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- Annie's® Fruit Snacks
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- Annie's® Popcorn
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- Nature Valley™ Bars
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- Nature Valley™ Granola Cups
- Nature Valley™ Layer Bars
- Nature Valley™ Snack Mix
- Nature Valley™ Squares
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*Bagged cereals do not participate

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- Annie's® Toaster Pastries
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- Berry Berry Kix™
- Birthday Cake Cookie Crisp™
- Blueberry Cheerios™
- Blueberry Chex™
- Blueberry Toast Crunch™
- Boo Berry™
- Cascadian Farm Cereal™
- Cheerios™
- Cheerios™ Oat Crunch Cinnamon
- Chocolate Cheerios™
- Chocolate Chex™
- Chocolate Lucky Charms™
- Chocolate Peanut Butter Cheerios™
- Chocolate Toast Crunch™
- Cinnamon Chex™
- Cinnamon Toast Crunch™
- Cinnamon Toast Crunch™ Churros
- Cinnamon Toast Crunch™ Shreds
- Cocoa Puffs™ Cereal
- Cookie Crisp™ Cereal
- Corn Chex™ Cereal
- Count Chocula™
- Dippin Dots™ Cereal
- Drumstick™ Cereal
- Fiber One™ Cereal
- Fillows™ Cereal
- Franken Berry™
- French Toast Crunch™
- Frosted Cheerios™
- Frosted Lucky Charms™
- Fruity Cheerios™
- Girl Scouts™ Cereal
- Golden Grahams™
- Honey Kix™
- Honey Nut Cheerios™
- Honey Nut Cheerios™ Crunch
- Honey Nut Chex™
- Kix™ Cereal
- Lucky Charms™
- Maple Cheerios™
- Mermaid Cereal
- Multigrain Cheerios™
- Nature Valley™ Cereal
- Nature Valley™ Granola
- Oatmeal Crisp™ Cereal
- Peach Cheerios™
- Peanut Butter Chex™
- Peanut Butter Chocolate Shreds™ Cereal
- Protein Cheerios™ Oat & Honey
- Pumpkin Spice Cheerios™
- Raisin Nut Bran™
- Reese's Puffs™
- Rice Chex™
- Star Wars™ Cereal
- Strawberry Toast Crunch™
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- Vanilla Chex™
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- Paper Mate® DryLine® Products
- Paper Mate® Eagle® Pens
- Paper Mate® Eraser Mate®
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- Paper Mate® Flair® Felt Tip Pens
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- Paper Mate® Gel Pens
- Paper Mate® Flexgrip® RT
- Paper Mate® Handwriting
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- Paper Mate® Inkjoy® Gel Pens
- Paper Mate® Inkjoy® Stylus 2-in-1
- Paper Mate® Lead Refills
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- Paper Mate® Liquid Paper® Fast Dry
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- Paper Mate® Mirado® Woodcase Pencils
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- Paper Mate® Write Bros. Pens
- Paper Mate® Write Bros. Mechanical Pencils

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HATCH
ART STUDIO

**INFANTS -
TODDLERS -
PRESCHOOL
FALL 2019**

sunday workshops
oct 6 clay play
oct 13 itsy bitsy spider
oct 27 pumpkin process art
nov 17 gratitude trees
nov 24 hatch x jenna
vanden brink

**SESSION 1 ART
EXPLORATION
CLASSES**

Tues Art Play (ages 2.5-5) at 9:30, Mini Makers (18 mo-2.5) at 11:00, Art Play at 1:00

Wed Mini Makers at 9:30, Art Play at 11:00, Art Explorers ((drop off 3.5-6 yrs) at 1:00

Thur Mini Makers at 9:30, Art Play at 11:00, Art Play at 3:30

Fri
Play + Create (8-18 months)
Family Class (18 months-5 yrs) at 10:30

Sat Family Class (ages 18 months-5 years)
at 9:45

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