

Carnegie Mellon University Children's School October 2020 Family Newsletter

Welcome to the Children's School Family!

The 2020-2021 year at the Children's School has begun incredibly smoothly, with everyone adjusting to our pandemic reality and the weather cooperating so that we can spend large portions of our time outdoors. The educators and children are enjoying getting to know the other members of their classroom pods as they engage in developmentally appropriate activities that have been carefully planned for risk mitigation. The children are enjoying sharing about themselves and their 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 helping each other to stay healthy while we learn together.

Learning Community Connections

Here are some ways you can stay informed about what's happening at the Children's School.

- Our main source of communication is our **family newsletter and monthly calendar**. General information for all families is included with this newsletter, which is sent via email as well as posted on our website.
- Each teaching team also hosts a **class web site** with a daily blog of classroom activities, photo albums, and other details about their programs. They are also preparing weekly or monthly descriptions of their curriculum themes, activities and projects.
 - Preschool 3's** <https://cmuthreesprogram.webs.com>
 - Preschool 4's** <https://cmugreenroom.weebly.com>
 - PreKindergarten / Kindergarten / Remote PreK & K** <https://cmukindergarten.weebly.com>
- We will also send general school **announcements and reminders via our school e-mail** (cmuchs@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. Be sure to explore it thoroughly and check it frequently so you can stay current, especially with the website calendar!

Fall 2020 Dates

1st Quarter Enrollment: Tuesday, September 8th through Friday, October 30th

October Virtual "Open House" Videos

- Mid-October (Watch the Daily Classroom Blog for details.)

2nd Quarter Enrollment: Monday, November 2nd through Friday, December 18th

Parent / Teacher Zoom Conferences

- Mid-November through Friday, December 4th



CMU & Children's School Community

This fall, we welcomed 53 children and their families to the Children's School community, with 47 children learning in person in the Margaret Morrison Carnegie building and 6 learning remotely. Our in-person groups include Preschool 3's, Preschool 4's, PreKindergarten, and Kindergarten, with 12 children and three educators in each class. We are grateful for the connections that they are making within their "pods" while everyone strives to care for each other's health and well-being!

Tartans, all in. Everywhere.

Carnegie Mellon's emphasis this year is on tackling COVID-19 together, so they are encouraging everyone to review the "Tartan's Responsibility" and commit to being "all in, everywhere" (<https://www.cmu.edu/coronavirus/index.html>). We have been so impressed with our youngest Tartans' mask wearing and hand washing, as well as their flexibility with all the new protocols! Please remember, though, that **masks with exhalation valves or vents are not recommended** by the CDC (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html>).



Thanks to all the families and educators who are working together to make the morning health assessment process work smoothly. We appreciate everyone being on time and well-prepared so that the greeting process goes very quickly. One change you may notice is that our educators got permission from CMU's chief risk officer to shift to using safety glasses with both front and side protection as an

equivalent to a face shield, both of which are worn in addition to the facial covering while greeting, changing diapers or interacting with a sick child.

We are grateful that families have been very diligent about keeping children home when they are ill, even if it is a mild illness, such as a cold. Colds are quite common at this time of year, so children do not need to be tested for COVID-19 unless it is recommended by their pediatrician.

Travel & Visitor Guidance

We have also begun to receive questions about whether quarantine is required after day trips or weekend travel, as well as when hosting visitors from out of state. CMU is strongly discouraging "high risk" travel for all employees, and no Paid Time Off will be approved for such travel. Similarly, 14-day quarantine is recommended whenever a child engages in "high-risk" travel or when a family is hosting guests who have engaged in "high risk" travel. Guidance from late July is included at the link below, but the specifics are continually evolving.

<https://www.cmu.edu/coronavirus/assets/documents/guidance-for-travelers.pdf>

We encourage you to contact Dr. Carver to discuss your particular circumstances so that we can partner in assessing the risks and recommending whether quarantine is advisable.

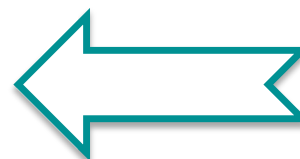


Positive Discipline Pointer: Clear and Consistent Behavior Expectations

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 are taking special care this year with the COVID-19 risk mitigation strategies because of the extra health 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., making cards, decorations, 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. 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 natural fall items, such as colorful leaves, acorns, gourds, etc. This year, because of restrictions related to the pandemic, please do not send any type of card, food or other Halloween items for your child to share with school friends.



Who Can Help? Administrative Structure & Roles

The Children's School administrative team is separated this semester, with Mrs. Rosenblum and Miss Hancock working remotely, Dr. Carver and Miss Drash on site, and Mrs. Myers on leave. This separation requires us to assume slightly different roles than usual, but we communicate frequently to ensure that collectively we meet the needs of our active laboratory school.

Mrs. Rosenblum (rosenblu@andrew.cmu.edu)

Miss Hancock (lh37@andrew.cmu.edu)

Dr. Carver (sc0e@andrew.cmu.edu)

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



Dr. Carver, the *Director*, takes primary leadership for **school programs and staff development**. This summer and fall, she has recruited two new educators, coordinated the pandemic risk mitigation on the CMU side, and managed the school web site. She stays connected with each teaching team to provide support for their classroom and curriculum design, and she helps the Preschool 3's with greeting. 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**, though these aspects of our program have been significantly curtailed this fall. As a **teaching professor in the Psychology Department**, Dr. Carver also teaches the graduate course on Educational Design (remotely with students from California to China), serves as an academic advisor, and participates in other department 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.

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**. This year, she developed the remote observation system described later in this newsletter. She handles the contact tracing for the staff and any delivery or service people who enter and exit via the **security system**. She is also the person to whom **ALL digital forms** are returned because she maintains the school's **databases**. This year, Miss Drash and Dr. Carver are collaborating to conducting safety checks and drills.

Miss Hancock, an *Educational Administrator*, handles **program administration issues**, including managing the school calendar, ordering materials, monitoring the school's primary email account (cmuchs@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.

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, and general family resources. She takes a role with preschool teacher mentoring and consultation for the preschool educators and families.

Administrative Structure & Roles continued ...

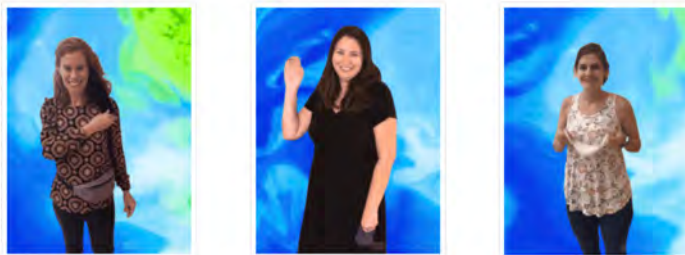
Along with Dr. Carver, both Educational Administrators collaborate to maintain strong relationships with local schools, to broaden our public relations, to manage the school budget, to secure funding for special projects and scholarships, to maintain the school's NAEYC accreditation and PA private academic 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.

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.

Welcoming New Educators

In the context of the pandemic, several of our educators have taken leaves of absence, and our decision to utilize classroom pods precludes the use of day-to-day substitutes. For these reasons, plus the need for additional cleaning and remote lesson preparation, we decided to staff each class of 12 children with three educators even though the ratios required by our accreditation are 1:6 for Preschool 3's, 1:8 for Preschool 4's and 1:11 for Kindergarten.

We are delighted to welcome Cathy Roman and Julie Sweet to our team so that we have a total of 12 educators on site for our 1st Quarter programming. They both interviewed well by Zoom and transitioned seamlessly to our university school culture. Also, Holly Blizman has returned from a leave last year to teach our Remote PreKindergarten / Kindergarten class.



Health & Safety at the Children's School

Health and Safety considerations are high priorities for the educators of the Children's School. Our staff participates annually in several Health and Safety related trainings including Pediatric CPR and First Aid, Bloodborne Pathogens, Medication Administration, Fire Safety and Emergency Preparedness Training. This year, since we are not serving food, we replaced our Food Safety training with COVID-19 Risk Mitigation Training that was aligned with our CMU Return-to-Campus Plan and our Pennsylvania School Re-Opening Plan.

We 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 us with a Fire and Emergency Action Plan. This includes a map with our recommended evacuation routes. Also, during Safety Week, an in-depth Safety Check of our facility is conducted.

Our first evacuation drill was completed on Tuesday, September 29th by all of our classes. After discussing the procedure during circle time, the children listened for the fire alarm and walked outside to the Reflection Garden which is our main egress in case of emergency. Your child may come home and discuss this experience with you. 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.



Register for CMU-ALERT

CMU-Alert is Carnegie Mellon's emergency notification system used to communicate important information during an emergency. The system uses multiple methods of communication to ensure the campus and community is notified during an emergency situation.

By following the instructions below, Children's School families may enroll in an annual subscription to receive CMU-Alert messages:

Text keyword: VISITORS to 67283.

You will receive the following message: "Welcome to CMU-Alert, Carnegie Mellon University's emergency notification system." Visitors will have the option to renew once their subscription has expired after one year.

To opt-out: Text STOP VISITORS to 67283.

Extra Music & Movement Opportunity

In recent years, Lauren Hraber (pronounced like “harbor”) has conducted Music and Movement classes with all of the children at the Children’s School. In the spring, she shifted these theme-related lessons to a video format for families to use at home. You can access the recordings on the Children’s School YouTube Channel

(<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCtb1JaytfLYRwKllqgZHorQ/playlists>).

We are working with Mrs. Hraber to re-start these virtual lessons, while connecting them to the classroom via making instruments and other props to be used with the lessons at home.



2nd Quarter Enrollment

On October 5th, you will receive an email asking about your enrollment preference for November 2nd through December 18th. Currently enrolled families will have preference for 2nd quarter enrollment, but families who deferred or chose the remote option may enroll if space becomes available. Families of Preschool 4’s and Kindergartners who deferred can also join the Remote group.

“Open House” Alternative

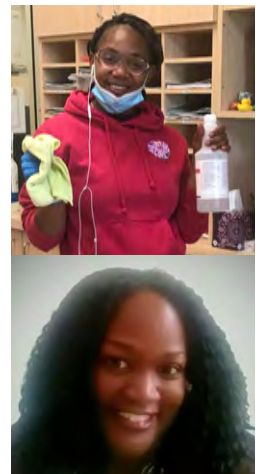
Since we cannot host events at the Children’s School this fall, the educators in each class are preparing an “Open House” video to release privately on October 15th or thereabouts. Watch the daily blog for information on your group’s video release details so you can plan a special family time to view it together.

Parent-Teacher Zoom Conferences

As happened in the spring semester, we will conduct our fall Parent-Teacher conferences via Zoom. We are not planning to take any days off school to prepare or conduct these important conversations because each teaching team has enough coverage and/or time after dismissing the children to conduct them. Watch for an email in early November inviting you to schedule your conference for the week before or the week after Thanksgiving.

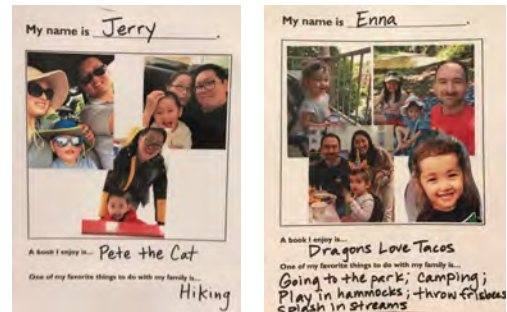
Custodial Workers Recognition Day

Tuesday, October 2nd is National Custodial Workers Recognition Day - an annual celebration to pay tribute to and thank those who clean and maintain buildings. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of these workers everywhere in our community. Our school is cleaned and sanitized by Jameia LaMore during the day and Olympia Saunders at night. Both work for Aramark, the custodial services company contracted by CMU. Olympia was raised on the North Side and loves to do crossword puzzles. Jameia is an Alderdice alum who lives in Millvale and loves to dance, sing, paint, and make jewelry. Thanks to both of these front-line workers who are helping us stay healthy this fall.



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. They will be highlighted on the classroom web sites for family viewing!



This quarter, we have 51 families with 53 children in Children's School programs, including 15 only children. Eight of these families are new to the school. Among our families, we have several in which the parent is a Children's School alum, and one of our students is the great-grandson of our founding director, Dr. Ann Baldwin Taylor.

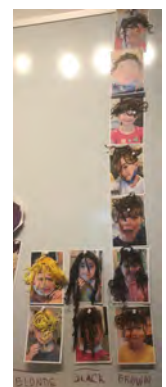
Fifteen of our families have a parent who is a current graduate student, staff member, or faculty member at Carnegie Mellon. Thirteen of our mothers and one father identified themselves as stay-at-home parents. The other parents listed a wide variety of professions, including Analyst, Artist, Attorney, Banker, Brick Layer, Business Owner, Car Dealership Owner, Chief Security Officer, Data Scientist, Designer, Editor, Energy Trader, Engineer, French Teacher, Investor, Mail Carrier, Mathematician, Musician, Nurse, Occupational Therapist, PhD Student, Physician, Producer, Product Manager, Professor, Program Manager, Public Health Educator, Public Relations, Researcher, Special Education Teacher, Teacher, Tech Support Specialist, and Yoga Instructor.



Nearly 34% of our children are dual language learners (18). This year, we have families speaking at least 10 languages besides English: Cantonese, Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Spanish, Telegu, Turkish.



As one way of helping families get to know each other across pods, we will introduce one or more each month in our newsletter's Family Spotlight column. 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 Carrington, Lagemann, Lam, Lama, Laurent, O'Leary, and Sabol families have introduced themselves in the last two years.



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 program and has earned over \$1,000 since 2015.



New since 2019: BOX TOPS HAVE GONE DIGITAL!!

All you need is your phone. Download the 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.

Snack Time Ideas



This year, due to the Pandemic, snack time at the Children's School has taken on a new look with children bringing snack from home. Wondering what to send? Here are some popular ideas from our past school Snack Menus:

- Applesauce
- Bread – Flat bread, mini bagels, pita bread, & raisin bread
Add some apple butter, sun butter, or jelly.
- Cereal
- Cheese sticks, cubes, or slices
- Cottage Cheese
- Crackers – Animal crackers, club crackers, Goldfish, graham crackers, Ritz, rice cakes
- Pretzels
- Tortilla chips with salsa or guacamole
- Veggies & dip (broccoli, carrots, cucumbers, peppers with dressing, hummus, guacamole...)
- Whole fruit (e.g., apple, banana, clementine, pear, pineapple, orange)
- Yogurt cup (or squeeze style or shake)
Add granola or dried fruit.



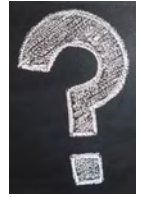
Friendly Reminder: We are a **NUT FREE** facility. Please do not bring or send any food containing peanuts or tree nuts to the school.

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.



Big Questions for Young Minds



This past spring, as part of our professional development, the Children's School staff read and discussed the book, *Big Questions for Young Minds: Extending Children's Thinking* by Janis Strasser and Lisa Mufson Bresson (NAEYC, 2017). The text addresses how to encourage children's engagement in higher-level, complex and creative thinking by asking questions that do not have rote or simple yes / no answers. These questions should not have obvious answers and should be ones that a child can answer in their own way. We discussed how educators can use this kind of question in the classroom, but we would also like to encourage our parents to support their children's critical thinking by asking higher-level, open-ended questions at home. For example, instead of asking "What did you do in school today?", a parent can ask "What was the best thing about your day at school?" (Or "What was the best thing about your remote lesson? What was the best thing about your day?") "What was the hardest part of your day?" "What was the funniest part of your day?" "What was the kindest thing that someone did today?" To encourage and prolong the conversation, answer these questions for yourself. We would love to hear how your conversations grow!

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.

Whole School Theme: Ocean

This year, we chose **Ocean** for our Whole School Unit to intentionally focus our learning community on the important role oceans play in our lives and how we can help protect them, even when we do not live near them. If you are interested in helping to design the unit or have ideas to share, please contact Dr. Carver (sc0e@andrew.cmu.edu) or your child's teaching team.



Week for Campus Children



The National Coalition for Campus Children's Centers (N4C) is helping its member centers **Celebrate Campus Children** during the week of October 5th to 9th to raise awareness of the quality early childhood programs operating on college campuses across the country. This year, we are not able to host an event on CMU's Community Engagement Day like we did last year with our Kindness Rock project or the prior year when we invited passersby to join us for chalk drawing, bubble blowing, or ice cream tasting. Instead, we are working with our college's media team to post an article about our value to the campus, and we will look for opportunities to share our artwork in creative contactless ways to brighten people's days. We've gotten good feedback on the PreKindergarten's window art gallery!



Professional Development

As a campus laboratory school, professional development is a high priority at the Children's School because it supports our continuous quality improvement and makes us better models of excellence in early childhood education. We dedicate 1.5 to 2 weeks at the beginning of the school year, every Friday afternoon, and 1.5 to 2 weeks at the end of the year as paid professional development time.

The Children's School is a member of two professional organizations, each of which provides on-line resources and publications that help us keep abreast of developments in the fields of education and early childhood and to plan professional development opportunities for the staff.

- IALS: International Association of Laboratory Schools
- NCCCC: National Coalition for Campus Children's Centers

We pay for all staff members to join the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) as individuals, both for general professional growth and for specific updates related to the early childhood program accreditation standards. Finally, in 2016, we initiated a collaborative professional development effort among Pittsburgh's university-based early childhood and elementary schools. The Pittsburgh Alliance of University Schools (PAUS) includes the Children's School and CMU's Cyert Center, Pitt's University Child Development Center and Falk School, and Carlow's Early Learning Center and Campus Laboratory School.

Since the pandemic started, the PAUS administrators have been meeting biweekly via Zoom for mutual support and guidance, and all of the larger organizations have offered virtual seminars, panel discussions, and open conversations so that members could share experiences with remote teaching, support for families during the pandemic, re-opening plans, ways to address racial unrest and promote equity and justice, etc. Also, the web presence and publication focus of all the professional organizations has pivoted to support developmentally appropriate practice in the 2020 context. With this newsletter, we are sharing the October / November 2020 article from NAEYC's *Teaching Young Children*, entitled "Conversations that Matter: Talking with Children About Big World Issues" to help families consider ways to engage with children in these important discussions.

Keeping Parents Informed about Research

The **Research Spotlight** section of the monthly newsletter is one way Children's School families can learn about research in progress. Also, each time your child participates in a study that involves playing a "game" with a researcher, 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 Children's School web site (www.cmu.edu/dietrich/psychology/cs). 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 typically conduct observations throughout the fall. For each assignment, they observe specific differences between preschoolers and kindergartners in motor skills, social interactions, language, etc. This year, no undergraduates can observe in person, so Dean Richard Scheines allocated funds for a combination of iPad and iPod technology for use in remote observations. The photo below shows the way that our Preschool 4's Green Room looks during an activity time observation of fine and gross motor skill.



Research Methods Class Studies:

Students in Professor Anna Fisher's Developmental Research Methods class are using video archives for their projects this semester since undergraduates are not able to interact in person with children at school this fall. Decisions about Spring 2021 class assignments will be made in January, depending on the status of the pandemic at that time.

Research Spotlight

The Pay Attention Games

Emily Keebler, a fifth-year graduate student working with Dr. Anna Fisher, is studying how children learn to manage waiting patiently and to control impulses. Young children grow rapidly in these important self-regulation skills, facilitating their increased cooperation and collaboration in many group settings. In some situations, it is important to delay or stop an impulsive response. In other situations, one must not only stop a response but also produce a less expected one. All of this requires paying attention to situational cues. In Emily's series of **Pay Attention Games**, children participate with their words and bodies in matching, movement, and naming activities. By comparing different age children's sustained attention and inhibition, the researchers will learn how these skills develop.



While conducting research, Emily will be following all of the Children's School risk mitigation strategies, which she learned by joining the staff training sessions discussed earlier. To keep interactions to a minimum, Emily will be the only researcher, and she will work with only one class at a time and only a handful of children each week. As always, children's time in the lab each day is less than 20 minutes. While in the lab, the child and researcher will be separated by distance as much as possible and also by a plexiglass partition.

DAY ONE

Shape Game: Children match geometric shapes using a sanitized computer keyboard. Trials vary in how much attentional control they require due to varying color/shape combinations.

Animal Matching Game: In this game, children search for animal pairs on their screen. There's a twist in the second half of the game to keep the children on their toes.

Puppet Game: The researcher introduces two animal puppets in this game. Then both characters give children commands such as touch your nose, clap your hands.

DAY TWO

Head and Toes Game: Children get up and moving as they follow the researcher's directions in this whole-body listening game. Children often find this one to be quite silly!

Wolf and Pig Game (Session 1): Children help to keep fictional pigs safe from wolves in this digital game! Their participation helps us to learn about how attention is deployed over time.

DAY THREE

Statue Game: In this game, children get to "freeze like a statue." We'll ask that they stand still and close their eyes while we play this whole-body game.

Wolf and Pig Game (Session 2): Children will play another round of the Wolf and Pig Game. Changes to the task characteristics, relative to Session 1, will help us to learn even more about children's sustained attention.

DAY FOUR

Sorting Game: Children sort by color to create apple baskets, flower bouquets, and more in this digital task. The children stay alert to task directions, such as what to do when a worm appears!

Colorful Foods Game: Children play with unexpected images in this naming game. Care for an orange kiwi, anyone?

Picture Matching Game: In this digital activity of close looking, children identify line drawings that match target images.

Director's Corner: Lifeworthy Learning



As we return to work and school after the pandemic lockdowns, I have heard some colleagues bemoan the use of the phrase “the new normal” and suggest, instead, “the new important”. This shift to a more essential orientation is similar to the way David Perkins, a professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, frames the future of learning in terms of six “beyonds”, or ways in which educators are “reimagining education with much less ‘niche learning’” and much more “lifeworthy learning”. He encourages us to aim beyond local to more global perspectives, beyond learning mere content to developing 21st century skills, beyond understanding topics to using knowledge as tools for thinking and action, beyond prescribed studies to more personalized curricula, beyond discrete disciplines to more interdisciplinary investigation, and beyond traditional disciplines to more extended visions of their possibilities. (See <https://mpmengaged.wordpress.com/tag/future-of-learning/>.) All of these ways of stretching beyond the current reality are even more poignant when viewed through a year 2020 lens.

In both 2004 and 2013, our educators explored *The Art of Possibility: Transforming Professional and Personal Life*, a 2000 book of practices by Rosamund Stone Zander and Benjamin Zander. A major point of the book is that the story we tell ourselves, or our frames of thinking, both define and confine us so that we do most of our thinking inside the box. Once we admit to ourselves that the way we narrate the story is all an invention, then we can enlarge the box so that we can consider a whole set of new possibilities that were always present but never before apparent to us. To “Admit It’s All Invented” is about examining underlying assumptions. When facing challenges, the Zanders suggest asking, “What assumption am I making, that I’m not aware I’m making, that gives me what I see?” and then, “What might I now invent, that I haven’t yet invented, that would give me other choices?” Using this perspective on problem solving in preparation for re-opening school, we have made strides in using videos to orient children to school, staggering our schedules to limit interaction during greeting, and expanding our use of the reflection garden for more open-air time. Interestingly, each of these changes – though forced by the pandemic – actually improved challenges that we had faced previously but may have thought impossible to address.

Each time we revisit the “Art of Possibility” practices, we wonder why they are neglected in education when they are so necessary for a future of lifeworthy learning. This pondering reveals a hidden assumption and prompts us to seek opportunities for helping our children open themselves to thinking in terms of possibilities. At the Children’s School, we have collected a variety of children’s books to help launch discussions with the children. In my Director’s Corner articles this year, I plan to introduce you to the twelve “Art of Possibility” practices and suggest ways that families can support the use of these practices to transform their thinking and their lives. The first practice, “Admit It’s All Invented”, is about learning to question the story “everybody knows” and narrate a more positive story “that brightens our life and the lives of people around us (p. 12).” I suggest that you start with a story time reading of *Amazing Grace* by Mary Hoffman. Let yourselves be inspired by Grace’s courage to challenge the limitations of race and gender so that you consider new ways for each of your family members to contribute creatively and constructively at home, at school, and in the community, even when our interactions are limited or virtual. We look forward to working in partnership with you to encourage each of our unique children to thrive!



October

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
				1	2 National Custodial Appreciation Day	3
4 3's Theme: Building 4's Theme: Community Helpers PreK/K Theme: Elements of Art	5 N4C Week for Campus Children	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15 Virtual Open House 2 nd Quarter Enrollment Decision Due	16 Virtual Open House	17
18	19 October Safety Week	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30 End of First Quarter	31



Children's School

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2020



Conversations that Matter

Talking with Children About Big World Issues

Julie Olsen Edwards and Louise Derman-Sparks

The current COVID-19 pandemic has produced a broad sense of unease and fear which transmits the message that the world is not safe (however much adults try to shield young children). Many children in quarantine with their families are experiencing exceptional amounts of screen time—and having to make sense of images, ideas, and terminology that can foster fear and prejudice. Included in these messages are racist ideas falsely attributing the cause of the coronavirus to people of Chinese descent and, by extension, to people of other Asian and Pacific ethnicities. However, as challenging as this period is, it also offers opportunities to engage young children in rich, meaningful conversations.

In addition, beginning in the month of May and beyond, even very young children heard about, saw on television, or saw in person the wide-spread demonstrations focusing on the need to end racism in police systems and other societal institutions. Children need help making sense of what they are seeing and hearing. These conversations also offer us important teachable moments to engage young children in

discussion about their identities, human diversity, fairness and unfairness, and the right of people to stand up for their beliefs.

Children rely on their trusted adults to help them make sense of the confusing messages the world sends them about what and who are safe and okay. Children need direct, truthful responses shaped to meet their developmental level of understanding. But all too often, when children express their confusion, pre-prejudice, or fears, adults try to reassure them without addressing the specific anxiety and issue. For example, when someone sneezes, a child looks worried and asks, “Are we going to die?” The adult offers an unsatisfactory, generic reply: “Everything is okay. There’s nothing to worry about.”

Similarly, when a child makes a comment that reflects biased ideas about human diversity, many adults do not directly address the underlying issue. For example, while taking a walk around the block and passing people wearing

masks, a 4-year-old White child points to a White person and asks her mother, “Is that a nurse?” Her mother replies, “No, that is one of our neighbors wearing a mask to help her and us stay well.” A little later, they pass a masked person with dark skin. The child points and states, “That’s a robber.” This time her mother stays quiet, not knowing what to say. Later, she calls her child’s teacher to ask him what she might have said.

The hurtful power of silence

Silence is a powerful teacher. What you do not say carries messages that are as strong as what you do say. Regardless of your intent, the unwillingness to talk with a child openly and directly about the world sends serious, strong, and potentially hurtful messages. When adults are silent or vague about things that children are seeing and trying to understand, children absorb the emotional message that the subject is not okay to talk about. This leaves children with an undercurrent of anxiety and unease, which are the earliest lessons about bias and fear. Consider:

- › Silence robs children of a vocabulary to ask questions or talk about what is confusing or troubling to them.
- › Silence forces children to figure things out on their own using their limited understanding of the world.
- › Silence teaches fear—the subject is so unsafe the adults will not even talk about it.
- › Silence forces children to rely on sources such as other children (the 6-year-old next door, a 10-year-old cousin) and the media (TV, advertising, videos) for information, including how they should feel and think about what is happening in their world. These are major sources of inaccurate and often stereotyped information.

General guidelines for brave conversations with children

Children depend on adults to help them figure out what things mean. Children’s curiosity, puzzlement, and anxiety provide rich opportunities for adults to respond to their attempts to understand what they observe happening in their world. Our responsibility is to give accurate, developmentally appropriate, matter-of-fact information that helps children develop the conviction that, when the world is unsafe, there are always people who are working to make it safe.

Children’s curiosity, puzzlement, and anxiety provide rich opportunities for adults to respond to their attempts to understand what they observe happening in their world.

They also need information and values that enable them to thrive in a world of diversity and to resist messages of bias and hate.

Here are some basic guidelines to help you hold meaningful conversations with children in the face of difficult events and situations.

- › **Make it safe.** As always, the first thing to do when children are distressed is to be a safe and reassuring presence for all the children.
- › **Find out what children know.** Without judgment, find out what children are feeling and thinking and how they make sense of the situation. Listen carefully and verbally reflect children’s thinking back to them (however inaccurate). Give names to their feelings.
- › **Tell the truth.** Say, “Here’s what I know about what is happening” or “This is what I think about what you saw/said/did.” Clarify misinformation as factually and simply as you can: “Some people call it the ‘China virus,’ but that is not a true statement. This virus is all over the world.” Think about what information children need for processing their feelings as well as for clarifying misinformation.
- › **Check back in with children.** Check back in to find out how the children feel and think about what they have heard from you. Ask children if they have more questions—and proceed depending on what they say. Expect to have several conversations pertaining to this topic over time.
- › **State the justice issues.** Talk about what is hurtful or helpful, what is fair or unfair in the situation. Share your own (or your school’s) values: “In our family, we. . .” or “In our classroom, we. . .”
- › **Give children something to do to make it better.** Let children know there are people working to fix the problems. Ask them for their ideas of what they can do to help. Support children to do something age-appropriate about the situation.



Sometimes the words just do not come. You are uncertain how to simplify complicated issues or worry about saying something wrong. Regardless, do not let this wonderful opportunity slip away. Take a deep breath, repeat what you have heard from the child and then use phrases like the following:

- › “This is really important, and I need to think about how we can talk about it.”
- › “I’m not sure what words to use right now. But I am going to ask Candra to help me, and we will all talk about this tomorrow.”
- › “You know, when I was your age no one helped me think about this, so I’m not sure what words to use. But I’ll think about this and we will talk later.”

And then—follow up! Bring up the issue and begin a new dialogue that may continue for brief periods over several days. See “Key ideas to share with children” on page 8 for important points to communicate during these conversations.

What is wonderful is that every time you engage in brave conversations like these, you, the children, and the other adults in the children’s lives all get better at listening and talking together about hard topics. And children learn to trust that their special adults are truly there to help them maneuver a complicated world.

This article is adapted from the blog, “Conversations that Matter: Talking with Children About Big World Issues,” ([NAEYC.org/conversations-that-matter](https://naeyc.org/conversations-that-matter)) and Chapter 4 of the NAEYC book *Anti-Bias Education for Young Children and Ourselves*, 2nd edition, by Louise Derman-Sparks and Julie Olsen Edwards, with Catherine M. Goins. Order your copy in print or e-book at [NAEYC.org/books/anti-bias](https://naeyc.org/books/anti-bias).

Julie Olsen Edwards, coauthor of *Anti-Bias Education for Young Children and Ourselves*, was on the faculty of Cabrillo College’s early childhood education department for 45 years. A lifetime activist for children and families, she continues to write, teach, and consult on issues of equity, diversity, and anti-bias.

Louise Derman-Sparks, MA, has worked with children and adults in early childhood education for more than 50 years and is a faculty emerita of Pacific Oaks College. She is coauthor of several books, including *Leading Anti-Bias Early Childhood Programs: A Guide for Change*, *Anti-Bias Education for Young Children and Ourselves*, and *Teaching/Learning Anti-Racism: A Developmental Approach*.

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This article supports the following NAEYC Early Learning Programs standards and topics

Standard 1: Relationships
1D: Creating a Predictable, Consistent, and Harmonious Classroom

Some Key Ideas to Share with Children

About COVID-19

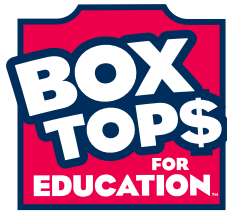
The coronavirus pandemic has taken center stage in all of our daily lives. Children are surrounded by continual news in the media, discussions among family members, and behaviors such as sheltering at home, wearing masks, and social distancing. Children may also be experiencing the serious illness of family members, and, sadly, the death of loved ones. Here are guiding examples of talking points you can use in your own conversations with children:

- › “There is a bad illness happening near us. It makes some people very sick. People can get sick from tiny germs called viruses, which are too small to see. The viruses float in the air when sick people cough or breathe on other people.”
- › “It’s the grown ups’ job to keep you well. That’s why some schools and stores are closed for a while so that there aren’t a lot of people in the same place. It is also why we wear masks when we go outside and do not get too close to other people. And it is why we wash our hands a lot to keep any germs from getting inside of us.”
- › “Everyone can help. You can too! You help keep yourself and other people from getting the virus germ when you wash your hands several times each day. You help when you wear a mask when we are with people who do not live with us. You help keep everyone well when you do not stand too close to people who do not live with us.”
- › “We all feel very sad that *Bubbe* (Yiddish name for grandmother) is very sick in the hospital and we cannot see her. We can tell stories about her, write about our feelings, draw a picture of her, and keep wishing (or praying) that she will get better.”
- › [If loved ones die]: “Bubbe couldn’t get better from being sick with COVID-19. She died, which means that we will not see her any more or be able to hug her or play with her. Grandma will still always be in our heart. Crying is okay to help us with how sad we feel.” (For some families, talking about being in heaven may be appropriate as well.)

About Anti-racism Demonstrations

There are many issues involved in the demonstrations protesting racism: a Black man was killed by a police officer; people marched in the streets saying that it was wrong; some people damaged property and stole; some protesters were arrested or attacked. Always ask the child what *they* know about the protests so you can center your response on the specific part of the protests that the child is focused upon. Here are guiding examples of talking points you can use in your own conversations with children:

- › “A man named George Floyd was killed by a police officer. Many people are very angry that this happened. George Floyd was African American (or Black). That’s what people are talking about when they say ‘Black Lives Matter.’”
- › “A lot of people also are angry that many other Black men and women have been killed by police officers when they shouldn’t have been. They also are angry that Black people are not always treated fairly when they go to a doctor, when they are in school, or when they need a place to live. So many, many people are making signs and marching in the streets so that everyone will know that they want the world to be fair.”
- › “All people are the same and all people are different, and everyone needs to be treated fairly. You cannot tell what a person is like by the way they look. Some people think one way, some another—in our home or school, here is what we think.”
- › “A few people who are angry are not using their words. Instead, they did dangerous things like stealing from stores and starting fires.”
- › “Scary things happen in the world, but there are always people working to make it safe and fair. There are things you can do to help.”



Dear Families,

During this challenging time, our teachers and students need more help than ever. No matter what school looks like, Box Tops for Education is a fast and easy way for you to help out from home.

The Box Tops program has been around for over 20 years, and it really works. In fact, Box Tops for Education has helped give almost a billion dollars to schools since 1996. In 2019, the program evolved to become digital so that you can earn for your school with just the touch of a button.

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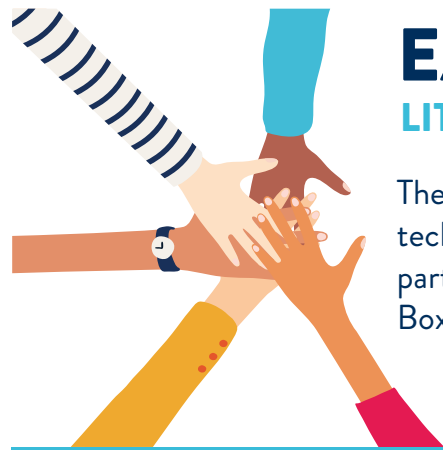
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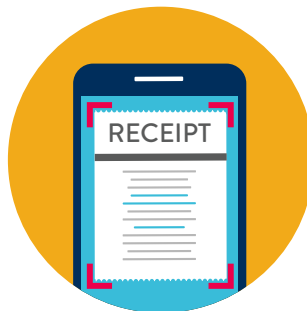


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BEVERAGES

- Nestlé® Pure Life® Fruity Water Apple 6.75 oz 8-Pack
- Nestlé® Pure Life® Fruity Water Watermelon 6.75 oz 8-Pack
- Nestlé® Pure Life® Fruity Water Tropical Twist 6.75 oz 8-Pack
- Nestlé® Pure Life® Water .5-Liter 24, 28, 32, 35-Packs
- Nestlé® Pure Life® Water 8 oz. 6, 12, 24 & 56-Packs
- Nestlé® Pure Life® Water 11.15 oz 6-Pack

HOUSEHOLD CLEANING

- Lysol® Disinfectant Spray
- Lysol® Disinfecting Wipes
- Lysol® Toilet Bowl Cleaner

MEALS & SIDES

- Annie's® Mac & Cheese
- Annie's® One Pot Pasta
- Annie's® Soup
- Hamburger Helper™
- Chicken Helper™
- Tuna Helper™
- Old El Paso™ Beans
- Old El Paso™ Taco Mix
- Old El Paso™ Tortillas
- Old El Paso™ Shells

SNACKS

- Annie's® Bunny Cookies
- Annie's® Bunny Grahams
- Annie's® Cheddar Bunnies
- Annie's® Cheddar Squares
- Annie's® Cookies
- Annie's® Crackers
- Annie's® Fruit Snacks
- Annie's® Granola Bars
- Annie's® Popcorn
- Annie's® Snack Bars
- Annie's® Snack Mix
- Bugles™
- Cascadian Farm™ Granola
- Cascadian Farm™ Granola Bars
- Cascadian Farm™ Protein Bars
- Cereal Treat Bars
- Chex™ Mix
- Fiber One™ Bars
- Fiber One™ Brownies
- Fiber One™ Cheesecake Bars
- Fiber One™ Cookies
- Food Should Taste Good™ Chips
- Fruit by the Foot™
- Fruit Roll-Ups™
- Garden of Eatin'™
- General Mills™ Fruit Snacks
- Gushers™
- LARABAR™ Kid
- Mott's® Fruit Snacks
- Nature Valley™ Bars
- Nature Valley™ Biscuits
- Nature Valley™ Bites
- Nature Valley™ Granola Cups
- Nature Valley™ Layer Bars
- Nature Valley™ Snack Mix
- Nature Valley™ Squares
- Nature Valley™ Wafer Bars

CEREAL & BREAKFAST

*Bagged cereals do not participate

- Ancient Grains Cheerios™
- Annie's® Cereal
- Annie's® Toaster Pastries
- Apple Cinnamon Cheerios™
- Apple Cinnamon Toast Crunch™
- Banana Nut Cheerios™
- Basic 4™ Cereal
- Big G Cereal Breakfast Pack (8 Pouches)
- 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™
- Sugar Cookie Toast Crunch™
- Toasted Coconut Cheerios™
- Total™ Cereal
- Trix™ Cereal
- Vanilla Chex™
- Very Berry Cheerios™
- Wheat Chex™
- Wheaties™

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- Boise® POLARIS® Premium Paper
- Boise® X-9® Paper
- Paper Mate® Arrowhead® Erasers
- Paper Mate® Clearpoint® Mechanical Pencils
- Paper Mate® Colored Pencils
- Paper Mate® Comfortmate Ultra™
- Paper Mate® Correction Pens
- Paper Mate® DryLine® Products
- Paper Mate® Eagle® Pens
- Paper Mate® Eraser Mate®
- Paper Mate® Expressions® Erasers
- Paper Mate® Flair® Felt Tip Pens
- Paper Mate® Flexgrip® Elite
- Paper Mate® Flexgrip® Ultra
- Paper Mate® Gel Pens
- Paper Mate® Flexgrip® RT
- Paper Mate® Handwriting
- Paper Mate® Holiday
- Paper Mate® Infinite Lead
- Paper Mate® Inkjoy® Ballpoint Pens
- Paper Mate® Inkjoy® Gel Pens
- Paper Mate® Inkjoy® Stylus 2-in-1
- Paper Mate® Lead Refills
- Paper Mate® Liquid Flair®
- Paper Mate® Liquid Paper® Fast Dry
- Paper Mate® Markers
- Paper Mate® Mirado® Woodcase Pencils
- Paper Mate® Pens
- Paper Mate® Pink Pearl® & White Pearl® Erasers
- Paper Mate® Profile®
- Paper Mate® Profile® Elite
- Paper Mate® Quick Flip™
- Paper Mate® Sharpwriter® Mechanical Pencils
- Paper Mate® Speeder ease
- Paper Mate® Write Bros. Pens
- Paper Mate® Write Bros. Mechanical Pencils

CLIP-ONLY PRODUCTS

A few brands have opted not to participate in the digital program; however, you can still find Box Tops clips on these products during the packaging transition. Be sure to send them to your school before they expire.

- Annie's® Condiments
- Betty Crocker™ Suddenly Salad
- Betty Crocker™ Suddenly Potatoes
- Bisquick™
- Cascadian Farm™ Frozen Fruit
- Cascadian Farm™ Frozen Vegetables
- Select Finish® Products
- Select Hefty® Products
- Select Kleenex® Products
- Larabar™
- Old El Paso™ Seasonings
- Old El Paso™ Sauces
- Pillsbury™ Frozen Biscuits
- Select Reynolds® Products
- Select Scott® Products
- Totino's™ Single Serve Pizza
- Select Ziploc® Products

BAKING

- Annie's® Biscuits
- Annie's® Cinnamon Rolls
- Annie's® Cookies
- Annie's® Crescents
- Annie's® Dry Baking Mix
- Annie's® Dry Brownie Mix
- Annie's® Dry Cake Mix
- Annie's® Dry Cookie Mix
- Betty Crocker™ Cookie Mix
- Immaculate® Biscuits
- Immaculate® Cinnamon Rolls
- Immaculate® Cookies
- Immaculate® Crescents
- Immaculate® Pie Crust
- Pillsbury™ Birthday Cake Bars 6ct
- Pillsbury™ Chocolate Fudge Brownies 6ct
- Pillsbury™ Grands!™ Refrigerated Biscuits
- Pillsbury™ Refrigerated Biscuits
- Pillsbury™ Refrigerated Breadsticks
- Pillsbury™ Refrigerated Brownies
- Pillsbury™ Refrigerated Cinnamon Rolls
- Pillsbury™ Refrigerated Cookie Dough
- Pillsbury™ Refrigerated Crescents
- Pillsbury™ Refrigerated French Bread
- Pillsbury™ Refrigerated Pie Crust
- Pillsbury™ Refrigerated Pizza
- Pillsbury™ Refrigerated Shape Cookies

FROZEN

- Annie's® Bagel Pizzas
- Annie's® Pizza Bagels
- Annie's® Pizza Poppers
- Cinnamon Toast Crunch™ Bites
- Pillsbury™ Mini Cinnis
- Pillsbury™ Pancakes
- Pillsbury™ Toaster Scambles
- Pillsbury™ Toaster Strudel
- Totino's™ Party Pizza (4-pack only)
- Totino's™ Pizza Rolls

REFRIGERATED & DAIRY

- Mountain High™ Yoghurt
- Yoplait® Go-GURT® Yogurt
- Yoplait® Go-Gurt® Dunkers
- Yoplait® Kid
- Yoplait® Multipack