Carnegie Mellon University Children's School February 2023 Family Newsletter

Invitation to Explore Performing Arts

We invite you to join us from now until spring break as we explore the performing arts, with a primary focus on music, dance, and drama. All human cultures extend their storytelling through the performing arts with the goal of impacting their audiences. For young children, there are many ways to learn skills in all developmental domains while expressing themselves through informal storytelling performances, as well as while appreciating the performances of both peers and experts. With the help of Children's School family members and CMU campus partners, the educators on each team are planning for engaging their groups in music, dance, and drama for the next four weeks.

Using simple, repetitive stories, the Preschool 3's Classes will focus on a different one each week so children can learn the pattern and join in the retelling in a variety of ways. The Preschool 4's will start with a week of making music, then one dedicated to dance and another devoted to drama, and finally culminate with a week emphasizing the other elements of performance, like set design, costumes, staging, etc. The Kindergartners will start with the basics of music, dance, and drama performed by others, then move toward creating their own music, dance, and drama, and finally build towards staging their own production. In all cases, our emphasis will be on the process or storytelling and our audiences will be peers, and perhaps other classes, in regular classroom settings. We aim to support the children on enjoying the music, dance, and drama explorations without the pressure of large audiences. Watch for videos so you can enjoy the performances too!



We will celebrate our learning with a Family Performing Arts Adventure in the early evening on Thursday, March 2nd from 4:30 to 6:30pm. Additional details will be forthcoming. Be ready to take photos to record your family memories of the evening as you explore telling stories through music, dance, and drama!

February 2023 Dates

Friday, February 3rd – Educator / Parent Performing Arts Exploration 9:30 to 11:30am in the Cohon University Center Danforth Lounge Monday, February 20th - Presidents' Day Holiday (NO SCHOOL) Tuesday, February 21st – Enrollment Deadline for 2023-24 School Year



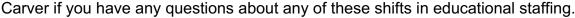
LOOKING AHEAD: Thursday, March 2nd, 4:30 to 6:30pm IN-PERSON Family Performing Arts Adventure

All these dates are posted on our web calendar @ https://www.cmu.edu/dietrich/psychology/cs/

Welcome Leah Clemens

Since Ms. Loren Rau has joined the Preschool 4's Team, we have hired a new Educational Support teacher. Leah Clemens is a PreK to Grade 4 certified teacher with a second certification in PreK to Grade 8 special education. She earned her BS in Applied Developmental Psychology at the University of Pittsburgh and then her M.Ed. in Instruction and Learning. During her education, she had practicum experiences at CMU's Cyert Center and Pitt's Falk Laboratory School. Since 2018, she has served as a special education teacher at the Environmental Charter School. She has also coached an after school basketball club and Girls on the Run, as well as doing summer camp counseling in several venues.

Mrs. Clemens will join us on February 15th, starting with several days of general orientation and then spending one week orienting to each class. At some point in April, she will shift to Preschool 3's coverage for Ms. O'Neill's maternity leave. Please contact Dr.







June 2023 Summer Camp

The Children's School June Camp will take place June 5th to June 30th. Camp hours are 9AM-1PM Monday-Friday. Watch for more information about June Camp registration in the March 2023 newsletter. Note that families can register for 1, 2, 3, or 4 weeks of camp, with each week \$325.

Enrollment Update

Enrollment is currently open for the 2023-2024 school year and can be accessed via your FACTS Family Portal. All families have until February 21st to complete their enrollment documents. If you are not planning to re-enroll at The Children's School next year, please take the time to login to the Enrollment Section and click "will not enroll". If you have any additional questions about enrollment for next year, please reach out to Kim Yetter at kyetter@andrew.cmu.edu.

Optional Friday Mornings for Preschool 3's

We are currently serving 9 children in our optional Friday morning program for the Preschool 3's classes. Hours are 8:30-11:30am, with the same routines, educators, and themes as the Monday through Thursday classes. These optional Fridays are billed monthly, and you can register for as few or as many months as you wish. Additional details have been sent to all eligible families, and there is still time to register if you are interested. Use this link to register: https://forms.gle/wXas1AxM42UDgf4U6.

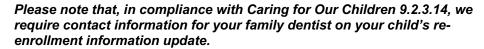


This new opportunity is a pilot for a program change to our Preschool 3's classes for the 2023-2024 school year. *Starting in the fall of 2023*, our Preschool 3's program hours will be Monday-Thursdays 8:30am-1:00pm and Fridays 8:30-11:30am. After careful consideration, we will no longer be offering a 2:30 dismissal option for children in the Preschool 3's classes but will extend the 3's programming to include Friday mornings.

February is Children's Dental Health Month

The American Dental Association (ADA) sponsors National Children's Dental Health Month to raise awareness about the importance of oral health. Developing good habits at an early age and scheduling regular dental visits helps children start a lifetime of healthy teeth and gums. The ADA states that the most important concepts for preschool children to know are (1) our teeth are important, (2) we need to take good care of them, and (3) the dentist is a friendly doctor who helps you take good care of your teeth. Teeth are meant to last a lifetime. A balanced diet, limited snacks, brushing and flossing each day, and a regular check-up are the keys to healthy teeth and gums.

For programs where children are older than one year and receive two or more meals, NAEYC (5A.23) promotes good dental hygiene by requiring the staff to provide an opportunity for tooth brushing and gum cleaning to remove food and plaque. At the Children's School, since our children are not here for two or more meals, we talk about brushing our teeth and good dental hygiene. We also encourage children to rinse their mouths with water after eating. However, just as you encourage hand washing when your children come home from school, you should also encourage them to brush their teeth.







Valentine's Day

February is also the month when some families celebrate Valentine's Day. Each class may plan a simple celebration, read a related story, play games about friendship, etc. Please watch the daily emails for specific information from your child's teachers. As always, children will have access to card making materials in the writing centers for use if they are interested in sending greetings to family and friends.

Please do not send candy or any other food items for distribution to your child's classmates.

EITC and OSTC Funding Updates

As you know, the Children's School participates in the state's Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) program as well as the Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit (OSTC) program. We recently received funding from UPMC Diversified Services, an affiliate of UPMC Health Plan. Through EITC, eligible Pennsylvania businesses can earn tax credits while providing financial assistance for children to attend preschool as well as grades K-12. Through OSTC, eligible Pennsylvania businesses can earn tax credits for contributing funds to provide tuition assistance in the form of scholarships to eligible students K-12th grade residing within the boundaries of a low-achieving school to attend another public school outside of their district or nonpublic school. In 2021-22, The Children's School's EITC and OSTC Programs funded 59 students, pre-Kindergarten – 12th grade, in 18 different schools throughout Allegheny, Fayette and Westmoreland counties.

If you would like more information or can help us to build a list of prospective businesses, please contact Linda Hancock at lhancock at lhanc

Community Service Updates

The Children's School is conducting a personal item drive from February 1-17 to support the JFCS Squirrel Hill Food Pantry. Each student will receive an empty bag with a flier attached describing items that can be donated. The bag can be returned to school during greeting or dismissal any day during the two-week window. At this time, the focus will be on personal items listed below. The list is not exhaustive, and any other shelf stable personal items can be included. Please contact Natalie Marshall (Max's mom) with any questions- bcnat1984@gmail.com.

Personal Items:

- Toothpaste
- Laundry Soap
- Toilet Paper
- Hand & Body Soap
- Shampoo
- Paper Towels
- Dish Soap
- Shaving Cream
- Baby Wipes

Color-A-Smile

In January, all the classes participated in creating cards for the Color-A-Smile service project. This non-profit organization delivers colorful greetings to senior citizens, troops overseas, and anyone in need of a smile! You can learn more about this great organization here: https://colorasmile.org/









If you are interested in joining the Community Service Committee, please contact Kim Yetter at kyetter@andrew.cmu.edu.

Day of Giving THANK YOU!!



As part of the 2022 Day of Giving on November 29th, the Children's School received \$1,660 from 22 donors. Your generosity overwhelms us!! Thank you for donating to help sustain the Children's School now and for future generations of friends.

Speech, Hearing, & Vision Screening Results

In January, we conducted screenings in speech, hearing, and vision. Thirty-one children were screened for speech and hearing. Of those, sixteen were recommended for follow up examinations for hearing and nine were recommended for a follow up speech evaluation. Many of the children who did not meet the criteria for the hearing screening may have had inner ear fluid, so a recheck at a later time would be recommended. For the vision screening, 30 children were screened, and one child was recommended for a follow up. If you have questions about how to proceed regarding your child's screenings, please contact to your child's teacher for guidance.

Black History Month

In February, we celebrate Black History Month, a time to recognize and honor the struggles and accomplishments of Black Americans. While we recognize the importance of infusing Black history into our learning throughout the entire year and not just in February, we also feel this month is a good opportunity to pay special tribute to the many Black Americans who have made important contributions to our country.



At the Children's School, we will be recognizing Black History Month by sharing books with the children by and about Black Americans and by reflecting on the many contributions Black Americans have made to culture and society. Additionally, as part of our Whole School Performing Arts Unit, we will be learning about famous Black American singers, musicians, and performers.

If you are looking for more ways to educate yourself and your children, the resources below offer a great starting point for celebrating Black History with your family.

https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/teaching-your-child-about-black-history-month

In this PBS Kids article, author Cheryl Willis Hudson talks about how to get your children interested and excited about African American history in February and all year long. Easy to implement tips are offered as well as a link to a list of Coretta Scott King Award winning picture books. The Coretta Scott King Book Awards are given annually to outstanding African American authors and illustrators of books for children and young adults that demonstrate an appreciation of African American culture and universal human values.

https://centerracialjustice.org/resources/black-history-month-resource-guide-for-educators-and-families/
This Black History Month resource guide was created by the Center for Racial Justice in Education.
Here you can find a tremendous number of resources about the importance of Black History in education. Towards the end of the page, there are several resources specifically designed to help parents engage with their families during Black History Month.

https://pittsburghpa.gov/events/black-history "In February, the City of Pittsburgh will celebrate Black History Month by showcasing the life and works of American playwright, August Wilson." Several special events around town are planned in February to honor August Wilson's life and legacy.

https://www.carnegielibrary.org/blackhistorymonth2023/

Explore all the great things happening at The Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh to celebrate Black History!

https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/black-history-month

Did you know that every year since 1976, every US President has designated February as Black History Month and endorsed a specific theme on which to focus? This year's theme is "Black Resistance". History.com offers details on this theme and on the origins of Black History month. They also offer a link to 11 documentaries about Black History in America that range in length from 45 minutes to an hour and half. These documentaries can all be viewed by signing up for a free trial to History.com.

Black History Month, continued ...

https://www.netflixbookmarks.com/
Netflix Bookmarks – Celebrating Black Voices
In this series, watch live-action portrayals of children's books. There are 12 five-minute episodes.
The books are read by Black celebrities, written by Black authors, and celebrate Black culture.
Watch now on Netflix or visit https://www.netflixbookmarks.com/ for additional resources and book recommendations (categorized into age groups 0-4, 4-8, and 8-12).

https://blackhistorvintwominutes.com/

This is collection of over 60 two-minute videos about Black History in America. There are videos for all ages and education levels. The website describes this collection as "...fast, accurate U.S. history available in free video podcast recordings describing major historical events and introducing less well-known experiences involving Black Americans." Not all videos are appropriate for all young children, so parental discretion is advised.

CS Parent Discussion Group

On January 26th, the Parent Discussion Group met and had an in-depth discussion on the themes of motherhood in Rachel Yoder's novel "Nightb****". We also shared insights regarding at-home parenting as opposed to working outside of the home.

For the rest of our meetings this spring, we will be reading chapters from Jessica Grose's non-fiction work, "Screaming on the Inside: The Unsustainability of American Motherhood". The New York Times essayist's book "is equal parts memoir, journalism, cultural criticism and manifesto..." Here is a link to a review by Elliot Haspel, which begins, "As a man, a husband and a father, it turns out reading a book about motherhood could hardly be more valuable".

"Screaming on the Inside: How Modern Motherhood Explains the Child Care Crisis" https://earlylearningnation.com/2022/12/book-review-screaming-on-the-inside-how-modern-motherhood-explains-the-child-care-crisis/

Our next meeting will be on February 23rd from 9:30 am until 11:30 am, and we will be discussing the introduction and first chapter of Grose's book. Please do not hesitate to contact Maggie Rosenblum at rosenblu@andrew.cmu.edu with any questions.

Performing Arts: Educator-Parent Discussion

Please plan to join us on Friday, February 3rd from 9:30 to 11:30am in the Cohon University Center's Danforth Lounge to launch our Whole School unit on **PERFORMING ARTS**. We will discuss opportunities for exploring Performing Arts as a family, as well as ways families can enhance our whole school unit. We will explore ways to foster young children's artistic expression through storytelling using music, drama, and dance. We will also discuss strategies for involving children in professional performing arts experiences to enhance their appreciation for others' performances. You'll have opportunities to consider the value



of freely exploring music, dance, and drama in the early years (i.e., with more emphasis on the process than the performance). We will consider the developmental benefits for all domains, as well as the mental health benefits for everyone!

Family Spotlight: The Adams Family (snap, snap)



Hello Children's School Family! We are Jon, Samantha, Cole, and Ellie, otherwise known as the Adams Family (snap, snap). Cole (7) graduated from the Children's School in 2021. His favorite Children's School memories are the Make Shop, the baby chicks, the egg drop day, and reuniting with his Children's School friends each year at the CMU Spring carnival. Ellie (4) is in the Green Room and loves music class and circle time. It is a joy to watch her flourish, chatting happily about what went on at school each day and all the friends in the Green Room. Outside of school, Ellie loves playing soccer and attending dance class.

Samantha attended Carnegie Mellon University for her undergraduate degree in Psychology and actually worked in one of the research labs that conducts research at the Children's School. She vividly remembers observing the classrooms, walking children back to play research games, and the delightful conversations with the friends and educators! This work not only inspired her to pursue a PhD in Cognition and Learning so that she could continue to work with children but demonstrated how special of a place the Children's School truly is.

Samantha and Jon both grew up in Pittsburgh, and after 8 years living in New York City, were happy to move back to Pittsburgh where they now live in Sewickley. The family's favorite Pittsburgh activities include hanging with their dog, Sally, cheering for the Pens, Steelers, and sometimes even the Pirates, visiting the Children's Museum, and scoping out new playgrounds to try.

Our family is so grateful to be a part of this wonderful Children's School community!







Let It Snow!

When necessary, Children's School administrators call "snow days" based on road conditions in the city. When this happens, we hope that both educators and families will use these days as gifts for extra rest, snuggling, reading, imaginative play, snow fun, and hot chocolate.

Outdoor Ideas for Family Fun

- Shovel Away! Have everyone help clear the snow from walks, cars, etc. If you have extra time and energy, help a neighbor!
- Go sledding, snow tubing, ice skating, skiing, etc.
- · Make snow angels.
- · Have a snowball battle.
- Make a snow family or other snow sculptures.
- Fill spray bottles with food color and water to paint now.

Indoor Ideas for Family Fun

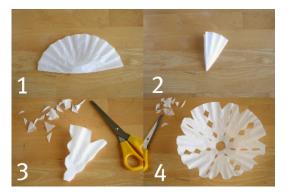
- Enjoy hot cocoa after your outdoor snow fun.
- Fill your bathtub with snow and do snow play with gloves inside. Add some sturdy plastic bowls and cups so you can make snow castles.
- Make snowflakes from coffee filters. Simply fold in half several times and then cut basic shapes on the folds. Unfold the coffee filter to see your design.
- Make pretend snowballs by stuffing & rolling white socks.
 Then arrange buckets or baskets as targets and toss away!

Heather Riggleman

http://herviewfromhome.com/36-snow-day-activities-and-ideas-for-your-kids/



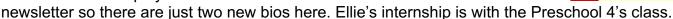


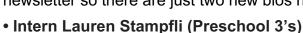


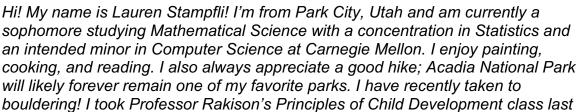


Undergraduate Spotlight

During the spring 2023 semester, three undergraduate interns are taking Dr. Carver's Practicum in Child Development course. They support our children and educators in the classroom six hours per week, while also engaging in a seminar with Dr. Carver every Tuesday. One, Ellie Durr, is also a Children's School student employee whose bio was included in the December 2022







semester and enjoyed the material so much that when the Child Development Practicum was mentioned I

decided that I wanted to be able to apply myself there as well. Even more than that, I have always loved working with and teaching children and am excited to spend the remainder of my sophomore year interning at the Children's School.

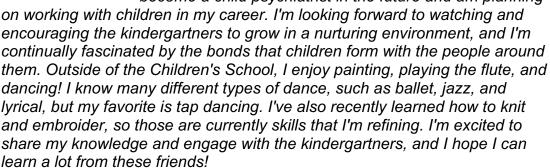




Intern Sunny Bok (Kindergarten)

Hi everyone! My name is Sunny Bok, and I'm a sophomore studying psychology and minoring in creative writing. I've taken Principles of Child Development and am familiar with the activities and community of the Children's School, so I'm happy to say that I'll be working with the kindergartners this semester! I hope to

become a child psychiatrist in the future and am planning









Undergraduate Research

Naturalistic Observations for Principles of Child Development

Dr. Carver's Principles of Child Development class will conduct two sets of observations this semester. The topics are based on the acclaimed documentary series, "Becoming You" (Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tgNhoV3KfVQ). For each assignment, they will observe specific differences between preschoolers and kindergartners in thinking, moving, or talking for the

first round of observations, and then feeling, identity, or making friends for the second round.



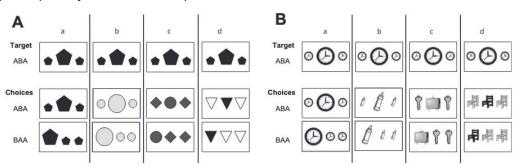


Research Methods Class Studies

Dr. Catarina Vales is teaching the annual Developmental Research Methods class, which will be conducting laboratory research this semester. In mid-February, the student researchers will be collecting data for a class project on how children process individual objects and relations among those objects. Being able to attend to and notice relations among objects is an important cognitive ability. In this project, students will replicate and extend a previous study that examined how the details of objects influence children's ability to attend to individual objects and object relations.

The researchers show cards like the ones below. On each trial, the researcher shows one target card and asks the child which of two options is more like that target card. If children attend to relations among objects, they choose the option that depicts the same "little - big - little" pattern. Set A trials include simple geometric shapes (the perceptually simple condition) and Set B trials include more complex objects (the perceptually rich condition).

Based on prior research, the researchers expect that children will be more likely to select the matching relation (the "little - big - little" pattern) when the objects are simple than when they are perceptually complex.



Attending to relations among objects requires focusing less on the objects and more on how they relate to each other, and perceptually rich objects may make it more difficult for children to abstract the underlying relation.

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 an upcoming newsletter!

Research Spotlight

The Moving Shapes Game

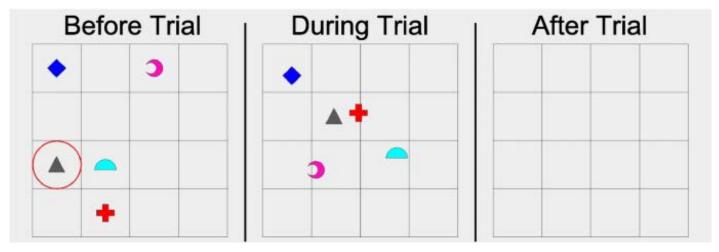
The world around us is complex, so maintaining focused attention can sometimes be challenging, even for adults. Professor Anna Fisher and



Research Associate Amanda Lee are investigating the developmental course of focused attention and examining factors that play a role in this ability at

different points in development. They will use an exciting game played on a computer with an eye tracking instrument that is attached to the computer monitor (see the green arrow).

In the Moving Shapes Game, children see several geometric shapes moving on a grid on the computer screen. Children are asked to watch a particular object while ignoring the rest of the objects. When the objects stop moving and disappear from the screen, children are asked to point to the grid cell inside which the target object disappeared.



In this study, researchers are interested in measuring a specific aspect of attentional development between ages 3 and 6, which is a period of rapid development in children's ability to engage their attention selectively toward chosen goals and tasks. Researchers will measure whether the fraction of time that children spend in an ostensibly "optimally engaged" mode of attending increases with age, while at the same time the fraction of time they spend in a relatively more "distractible" mode of attending decreases with age. In particular, they will measure how children's eye movement behavior, reflecting relative task engagement, is related to their pupil diameter activity, a well-researched proxy measure of activity in a specific brain pathway supporting alertness and attention.

The results of this study can help researchers biologically ground a model of attention and attention development that they previously developed and tested, which will give them greater confidence in applying and further developing the model to predict and understand typical development of attentional function, as well as individual variations in attentional style. This information could potentially inform parents and educators in efforts to structure children's learning experiences more effectively.

Director's Corner: Collaboration

Launching the Whole School Unit on **PERFORMING ARTS** is a perfect time for both educators and families to consider the importance of collaboration in our lives because we broaden the unit design to include more partners, and also because success in all of the performing arts depends on strong collaborations.

In When You Wonder, You're Learning (2021), Behr and Rydzewski cite research that even 18-month-olds are eager to help when their help is genuinely needed, even if they are otherwise occupied, and that humans are programmed to be collectively smart, such that group decisions are often better than the average of the individual ones. Fred Rogers stressed that what really matters is helping others shine too, even if it means that we slow our pace or change course. In a famous episode about work, Mister Rogers showed his audience what is behind the scenes of the studio when an episode is being filmed so that everyone could see the many talents and close collaboration needed.

One particularly radical aspect of Mister Rogers' message across episodes was that "the more a team reflects the world's diversity, the richer and more original and more enduring its output tends to be ..." (p. 118). In both his choice of colleagues and guests, he treated differences as unique assets, with deep respect for every individual's dignity, worth, and contributions. He always sought to build bridges instead of walls by finding ways to cooperate, compromise, and collaborate.

At the Children's School, our *Interaction & Cooperation* learning objectives include promoting children's social skills for effective adjustment to school, group participation, classroom citizenship, and peer interactions. As young children develop from age 3 to 5, they are increasingly able to synchronize their conversation and action with others, which facilitates moving from parallel or associative play to true cooperative play and collaboration on projects. These progressively coordinated interactions present opportunities to understand fairness, consider others' perspectives, respect the group process, and learn to negotiate, compromise, and resolve conflicts.

To support children's effective interaction and cooperation, educators model collaboration in their classrooms, as well as throughout the school with administrators, researchers, undergraduates, etc.

They also address challenging issues directly when they arise in the classroom, such as when some of the Preschool 4's recently started making signs that no girls were allowed in certain play spaces. The educators used an intentional sequence of calm and honest discussions with related activities to help shift the narrative to "All Are Welcome". At all times of year, we purposefully choose age-appropriate books that show "every kind of person excelling in every kind of role" (p. 124).



We aim to build an environment of psychological safety with deep trust and mutual respect so that everyone feels safe to be themselves, seek clarification, voice dissent, and ask for help. The examples of such learning communities in Behr and Rydzewski's chapter include Pittsburgh organizations, such as the Global Minds Initiative at Taylor Allderdice High School, striving to choose inclusivity as they seek to repair the world by building positive, diverse communities. The Performing Arts unit offers both models and opportunities to practice collaboration, with everyone contributing their diverse talents to enhance both process and performance. We look forward to your engagement with us as we continue to partner in our children's educational journey.

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Sun	Mon	Тие	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Black History Month			1	2	9:30AM Educator/ Parent Discussion re: PERFORMING ARTS	4
5 Whole School Theme: PERFORMING ARTS	6	7	8	9 Music w/ Mrs. Hraber	10	11
12	13 February Safety Week —	14	15	16	17	18
19	20 NO SCHOOL Presidents' Day	21 2023-24 Re-Enrollment Deadline	22	23 Music w/ Mrs. Hraber 9:30 Children's School Discussion Group in CUC Danforth Lounge	24	25
26	27	28				



Children's School

CMUChSch@andrew.cmu.edu www.cmu.edu/dietrich/psychology/cs/index.html

412-268-2199

2023

Are you about to have a baby?

Join The Cullaby Project

Founded by Carnegie Hall, The Lullaby Project pairs new parents with professional musicians to write, sing, and record personal lullabies for your babies. Here in Pittsburgh, we have a team of musicians from Carnegie Mellon ready to help you bond with your baby through song.



HOW IT WORKS

Over the course of three sessions, you'll meet with our artists and other parents to craft your personal lullaby, in large and small groups.

WHAT YOU NEED

All you need is yourself! No musical experience is necessary, and our team will help bring musical life to your hopes and dreams for your child.

LOCATION AND DATES

Session dates are below. All sessions and concerts run on **Saturdays from 10am-12:30pm** at the **Awareness Wellness Center in Shadyside**.

CYCLE ONE CYCLE TWO

Songwriting Sessions: Songwriting Sessions: Feb 4th, 11th March 25th, April 1st Celebration Concert: Celebration Concert: Feb 18th April 8th



All sessions are

Scan the QR to sign up!



Please contact Claire Gunsbury at lullabypgh@gmail.com with any questions or concerns.

Visit our website at <u>lullabypah.com</u> for more information.

