

Carnegie Mellon University Children's School

February 2020 Family Newsletter

Our Home, Planet Earth

We invite you to join us during the month of February as we explore our home, **Planet Earth**. In preparation, our preschoolers have been investigating rainforest habitats and our kindergartners are studying coral reef habitats to learn about the lives of the plants and animals in each environment, as well as the impact of human activity and the importance of sustaining earth's precious habitats.

At our Educator / Parent Discussion on Friday, January 31st from 9:30 to 11:00 AM, we will discuss ways we will learn about our own habitat on Planet Earth by first exploring the rocks on which we all live, to learning about the rock cycle, to peering inside the earth to study caves, to considering the history of the earth with evidence from fossils, petroglyphs, etc., to the ways we use rocks in our culture and art. We will celebrate our learning with a Family Festival on Thursday, March 5th from 4:30 to 6:30 PM.



We hope you will plan to join us in delving deeper to learn about our planet home!



February Dates

- January 31st – Re-enrollment Packets Sent to Current 4's Families
- January 31st – 9:30-11:00 AM – Educator / Parent Discussion re: PLANET EARTH
- Monday & Tuesday, February 3rd (Preschool) & 4th (Kindergarten) - School Photos
- Thursday, February 6th – Forms & Deposits DUE for 2020-2021 Preschool
- Monday, February 17th - Presidents' Day Holiday (NO SCHOOL)
- Friday, February 28th - Forms & Deposits DUE for 2020-2021 Kindergarten
- Thursday, March 5th, 4:30-6:30 PM, PLANET EARTH Family Festival
- Friday, March 6th, Professional Development Day for Educators (NO SCHOOL)



School Picture Days



On February 3rd & 4th, Jessica and Brett Van Dyke of **Van Dyke Photography** will be taking school pictures of our children. They will photograph the preschool children on the 3rd and the kindergarteners on the 4th. Preschool “make up” photos will be done on the 4th as well. We would suggest sending your children in “picture clothes” on the appropriate day, but please feel free to send “school clothes” in your child’s backpack so the teachers can change their outfits after they have been photographed. Parents will be able to view hard copy proofs before placing orders for pictures.

February is Children's Dental Health Month

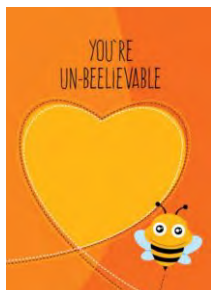
The American Dental Association (ADA) sponsors National Children's Dental Health Month to raise awareness about the importance of oral health. Developing good habits at an early age and scheduling regular dental visits helps children start a lifetime of healthy teeth and gums. The ADA states that the 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 (5.A.16) 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.

Please note that, in compliance with Caring for Our Children 9.2.3.14, we require contact information for your family dentist on your child's re-enrollment information update.



Valentine's Day



February is also the month when some families celebrate Valentine's Day. Because the holiday falls on a school day this year, each class may plan a simple celebration, perhaps preparing a special snack, reading a related story, 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.**

Keeping Healthy During Flu Season

We have all heard advice concerning flu prevention. Below is a description of flu symptoms from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website:

Influenza (also known as the flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by flu viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. The flu is different from a cold. The flu usually comes on suddenly. People who have the flu often feel some or all of these symptoms:

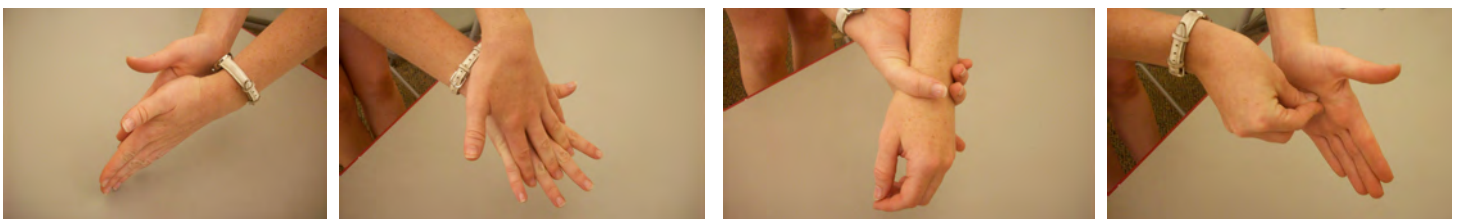
- Fever* or feeling feverish/chills
- Sore throat
- Muscle or body aches
- Fatigue (tiredness)
- Cough
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Headaches
- Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea (more common in children than adults)

** It's important to note that not everyone with flu will have a fever.*

Cold and flu season has arrived! With this in mind, we encourage everyone to continue to follow the Children's School Family Handbook Guidelines for exclusion due to illness. If your child does not feel well enough to comfortably participate in usual program activities, including outdoor play, please keep your child home from school.

In addition, we ask that everyone who comes into the Children's School, including family members, wash their hands using the procedures recommended by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Rub hands together vigorously until a soapy lather appears and continue for at least 10 seconds. Rub areas between fingers, around nail beds, under fingernails, jewelry, and back of hands and continue for 10 additional seconds, for a total lather time of 20 seconds. The children are being taught a more detailed version using the following hand washing song (to the tune of *Row, Row Your Boat*).

Slide, slide, slide your hands. Make a bridge like this. Don't forget both bracelets. Then you have to twist!



Also, here are some tips from University Health Services for preventing the spread of the flu.

- Stay home, especially if you have a fever.
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing by using tissues or the crook of your elbow.
- Avoid touching your mouth and face after touching public surfaces like doorknobs and keyboards.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Do not share keyboards or other mobile devices; wipe them with a cleaning agent before use.

Thank you for your continued attention to the health and wellness of our Children's School Family!

Family Committee News

Teacher Appreciation from Kindergarten Families

A warm thank you to the Kindergarten families who treated us to delicious, beautiful and Earth Friendly lunch from *Bistro Alise*. A special thanks to Marty Malone (Maggie, K) for receiving the food and spending the time to warm the wonderful Beyond Beef Enchiladas!

If you have questions about Teacher Appreciation or would like to join a Committee, please contact Beth Myers at ewmyers@andrew.cmu.edu.

Family Social Organization Fun

Hatch Event

Nine students gathered at Hatch Art Studio on January 10th to create coral reef art. No surprise, their creations were beautiful! While waiting for the work to dry, the children and their adults enjoyed reading together, playing with blocks, and building sandcastles!



Jewish Family and Community Services (JFCS) Squirrel Hill Food Pantry

Nine students and their families gathered on January 24th at the JFCS Squirrel Hill Food Pantry to decorate and pack snack bags and school supplies for local children in need. They packed the donations from The Children's School so quickly that there was even time to bag potatoes and stock shelves. It was a rewarding experience for all involved! Many thanks to those who participated at the Food Pantry and those who donated!



Please Join Us for Upcoming FSO Events

Kickball Event, Cohon University Center (CMU), Saturday, February 1st

Join us for a fun filled morning of kickball / gentle dodgeball, coffee for adults, and morning snacks on **Saturday, February 1st from 9-11am in the Wiegand Gym!** We will be playing in the Cohon University Center Gym, which faces the football field. We are suggesting a \$3 donation for snacks that will be provided during the event. Kickball equipment will be provided by The Children's School. Just bring your child and come ready to play!! RSVP to Jennifer Freedberg (jennifer.freedberg@gmail.com or 724.396.8212).



Swimming Event, Cohon University Center (CMU), Saturday, February 15th

Join us for a family swimming event at the University Center pool on Saturday, February 15th from 11am to noon. Outside is chilly, but let's enjoy a splash together.

- Adults are required to join the event with their children.
- 2 lifeguards will be there during the event.
- Bring swim wear and floating items for little swimmers.
- \$4or\$5/family donation is appreciated for covering the cost of the lifeguards.
- Please RSVP to Maki Shirado at eidaidam@gmail.com.



Mad Science (Etna), Friday, February 28th

The FSO committee will host a Mad Science event on **Friday, February 28th from 1-3pm (100 Hafner Ave, Etna, PA 15223)**. Two experiments will be conducted: Life in the Sea and All About Animals. Up to 20 students can participate. Please RSVP to Natalie Marshall at bcnat1984@gmail.com if you plan to participate. Siblings are welcome to participate if between the ages of 3-6 years old. Cost will vary depending on how many children attend (range \$12.50-\$25 maximum per child). Cash, card, and check are all accepted on the day of the event. Checks should be made payable to Mad Science of Pittsburgh. An adult with each family must stay for the duration of the program. Please join us if you're able!

Looking Way Ahead ... Science Center, Friday, March 13th

Let's enjoy our spring break with a day of fun at the Carnegie Science Center! The FSO is organizing a trip to the **Science Center on Friday, March 13th at 10am**. In order to get the group rate, we will need at least 15 people ages 3 and older. The group rate is only \$8 per person and includes all four floors of the Science Center, Sports Works and the submarine (weather permitting). Please RSVP to Julie Becker at mascijulie@icloud.com with the number of people attending by Friday February 21st so we'll know whether we will get the group rate or not (which you will pay ahead of time). If we have fewer than 15 people, the price will be \$19.95 for adults and \$11.95 for children, and you will just pay that day on your own. We will meet in the lobby at 10am and then start on the fourth floor in the Little Learner Clubhouse, or feel free to explore on your own. River View Cafe, inside of the science center, offers a variety of lunch options to purchase or you may bring your own lunch to enjoy! We hope to see you there!!!

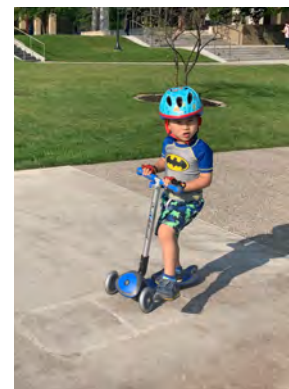
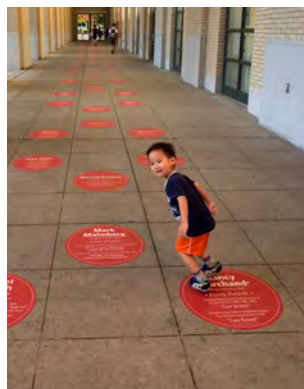
Family Spotlight: The Lams' Lens

From a 4.5 years old's perspective: "Hello! This is Kurtis. I'm 4 and 1/2 years old." I stress the half year. That is why I started as a Blue Room friend. Now I have promoted to Mrs. Bird's Green Room. My parents treasure the attention to detail in the curriculum design. Also, as a child, without my knowing, my mother Shirley watched me from the observation booth a few times. Besides seeing that I am a well-behaved preschooler (in contrast to home), my mother was amazed by the educators, who are extremely patient with children and efficient to work as a team.



Do you know my parents and the activities we like at FSO? My father Kenny is an engineer; their medical devices help people breathe. I saw the old device at the Heinz History Center, from a wonderful visit arranged by the Family Social Organization (FSO). My mother Shirley has many titles after she resigned her finance role from an American diaper and facial cream company. Now, she is a homemaker / stay-at-home mom; she likes these titles in America. She continues to practice her presentation skill, e.g., she made a PowerPoint slide for me when I was three!? But, she removed a lot of educational posters from home after reading the book highlighted by Dr. Carver (The Importance of Being Little). My father is an invisible member in the FSO Book Club because my mother provides highlights from books to him during our family dinner. Although reading is a sanctuary for her, it is more enlightening to discuss with educators and other parents.

Playground talk: Living in a city where the Ferris Wheel was invented, I enjoyed it so much at CMU Spring Carnival. I spend a lot of time on the CMU campus, as you can see from the photos below. Every Friday after school, I go to a picnic at Anderson, aka Dinosaur Playground, with my school friends in good weather. Every Saturday, I learn tennis at Mellon Bubble; there are many CMU friends too. I discovered that my mother talks to my friends' grandparents a lot, she must miss her home in Hong Kong. Moving to a new country for her is like learning a new skill, e.g., how to drive. My father lived in Canada before, so moving to the USA for him was like changing a new running form so that he runs faster and longer now. I like Pittsburgh so much. It is a unique city! Our family can walk to playgrounds, supermarkets, etc. from our home, which our Asian friends can hardly believe.

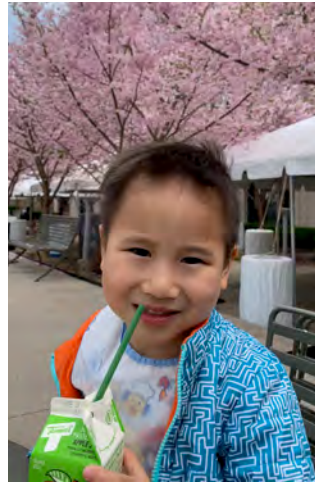


My footprints at CMU: I strolled, hopped, cycled, and scooted!

Family Spotlight, continued ...

Washington DC was our family's first road trip to see the cherry blossoms, and then we discovered we have a cherry blossom corridor outside Children's School.

I learned Jenga from CMU college students. CMU college students also taught me how gravity impacts speed. There will be more interesting discoveries that I can share with you next time.



Vision Screening / Speech & Hearing Results

The results of our January Hearing, Speech, and Language screenings demonstrate the importance of checking for potential problems. Forty-two children were screened for speech and hearing issues, with eight flagged for follow up examinations. Additionally, 1 child out of 51 screened was advised to seek further vision evaluation.

Lost and Found

We have accumulated quite a collection of unclaimed and unlabeled coats, sweaters, hats, gloves, etc. If your child is missing anything, please look in our lost and found area in the hallway or send a note to your child's teacher with a description and we will see if we have it!



International Practicum Experience

Ga Yeon Hwang, Hye Jeong Kim, Han Sol Lee, and So Yun Park are early childhood education students from Duksung Women's University in Seoul, South Korea. Together with 8 of their peers, they are spending two weeks in Pittsburgh for a teaching practicum and a host family experience. Dr. Carver greeted the full group of students on Friday, January 24th, and together with Miss Dzina and Mrs. Yetter did the practicum orientation and a tour of classrooms and labs at the Children's School on Saturday before Mrs. Bird toured the Cathedral of Learning "Nationality Rooms" with them in the afternoon. The orientation included administrators from all the partner schools leading a discussion of cultural differences between the United States and South Korea that affect school practices and home life. On Sunday afternoon, the group toured the University Child Development Center and then shared tea with their host families before beginning their home stay experience. Thanks again to Janice and Randy Bryant (Grandparents of Ezra, AM 4's) for hosting Hye Jeong and Han Sol and to Estelle and Steven Cherin for offering hospitality to Ga Yeon and So Yun.



Ga Yeon Hwang will be interning with AM Older 3's in the Blue Room and then transition to the PM Preschool for the afternoon. **Hye Jeong Kim** will join the AM Young 3's in the Red Room and then visit the Kindergarten in the afternoon. **Han Sol Lee** will serve as the intern in the AM 4's and continue with the PM Preschool for the afternoon. **So Yun Park** will be interning in the Kindergarten for the whole day. Please join us in welcoming these future educators to our learning community.



Undergraduate Spotlight

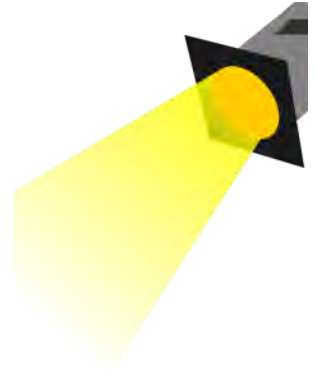
Mia Ritter: I'm a freshman at Carnegie Mellon studying Materials Science and Biomedical Engineering. I'm involved in the Society of Women Engineers and the Japanese Student Association. I also love lectures and spreading cool ideas, so being an assistant chair for lectures on the Activities Board has helped me with this passion. I lived in Tokyo before college, so moving to Pittsburgh was a big change for me. However, the people here have been so warm, and I'm really glad I decided to attend college in Pittsburgh!

I always loved working with children. In high school, I started a program for students to teach English to elementary schoolers who were affected by the 2011 Tohoku earthquake. I also babysat a couple of times a week and worked at a summer camp every year. Since so much of my life involved being around children, losing that channel of creativity and fun in my first semester of college made me realize that for me, working with children is a need. I sought opportunities to work with children and soon found the Children's School! I currently work with the Morning 4's. I'm relatively inexperienced in working with younger children, but the friends are so bright and kind that I sometimes forget their age. I'm reminded of how open humans can be when they're purely living in the moment like the friends do. The accepting and nurturing environment at the Children's School makes me feel like I belong at Carnegie Mellon.



Winter Break Interns

When Carnegie Mellon students leave for winter break, we hire students who are pursuing psychology or education degrees at other universities. In late December and early January, Hannah O'Donnell, Destinee Retzer, Haylee Seeberger, and Natalie Travaglia supported our teaching team. Hannah and Destinee have worked here in the past, but Haylee and Natalie joined us for the first time. Hannah (below left) is now a freshman Early Childhood Development major at Slippery Rock University. Destinee (below middle) is a sophomore Nursing major at Waynesburg University. Haylee is a senior in Early Childhood Education at the University of Dayton, and Natalie (below right) is a first-year student at Slippery Rock University studying Early Childhood and Special Education.



Research Spotlight

The Picture Game

Dr. Jessica Cantlon, Nour al-Zaghloul, and Abhishek Dedhe are investigating **how children use simple logical rules to process complex visual patterns**. This game takes place over several sessions and has three main phases: the pre-intervention phase, the intervention phase, and the post-intervention phase. In this game, the researchers teach children to complete a challenging task involving visual patterns called fractals. After that, children learn to complete an easier task ("the bracket task") relying on similar logical rules about repetition, hierarchies, and symmetry but with different visual patterns. Finally, the researchers examine whether the easier bracket task has improved children's understanding of these logical rules by having the child perform the challenging fractal task again.



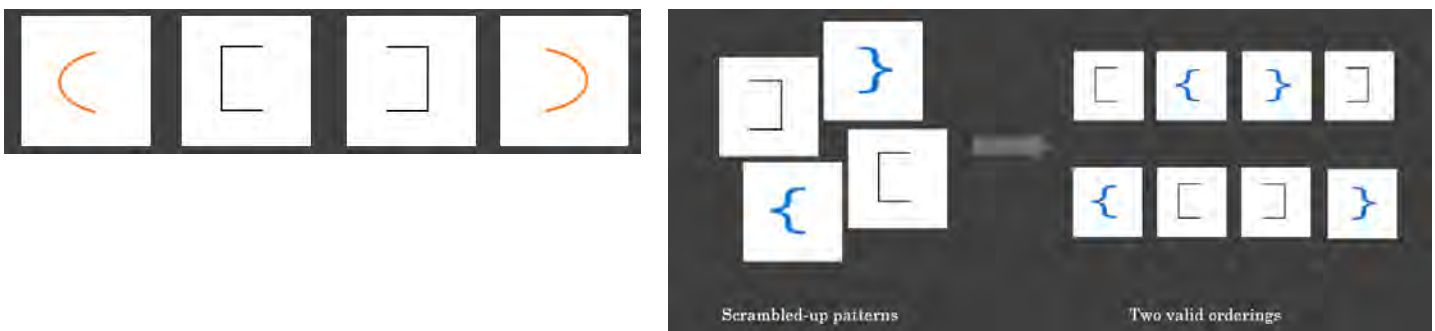
An example of the patterns used for **The Fractal Task**:

Children are told that the three patterns on the left occur in the shown order (first - second - third). They are then shown the two images to the right and asked to select the correct one to follow the pattern. Look carefully! In this case, the one on the right is correct.



An example of the patterns used for **The Bracket Task**:

Children are told that the four patterns on the left occur in the shown order (first - second - third - fourth). They are then shown the four scrambled patterns on the right and asked to touch them in the correct order. In this case, the scrambled patterns allow two equally correct orders.



Researchers begin with the **pre-intervention phase**, where children learn to complete the challenging fractal task. A robot friend Rajah helps them know if they're on the right track or not. Once the researchers are sure that children understand the task, they are shown new sets of fractals and asked to predict the next one in the sequence, but without Rajah telling them whether they are right or wrong.

Researchers then shift to the **intervention phase** involving the easier bracket task. Just like in the fractal task, the robot friend Rajah helps children know if they're on the right track or not. Once they

Research Spotlight, continued ...

understand the task, they are shown more scrambled sets of brackets and asked to select them in the correct order, but without Rajah giving them feedback.

Finally, in the **post-intervention phase**, children perform the challenging fractal task again so the researchers can determine whether the bracket task experience helped them improve on the fractal task boosting their ability to engage in simple logical rules regarding repetition, hierarchies, and symmetry. Since children progress through these phases at their own speed, they might need more than one session to complete them.

During each session of **The Picture Game**, children will also play one or more additional games to determine whether their performance is related to any other cognitive processes, such as working memory, motor skills, and language comprehension. For example, researchers assess working memory because the more children can remember the visual patterns in their heads, the easier the game should be. They also check whether children can utilize simple logical rules based on repetition, hierarchies, and symmetry in domains unrelated to vision, such as language and movement.

- **The Zoo Locations Game:**

In this game, researchers have zoos with different amounts of exhibits with different animals. After seeing the zoo arrangement, researchers give children the blank zoo as well as the animals and then ask them to place each animal where they live. This is a task to check their working memory.

- **The Picture Memory Game:**

In this game, researchers show children a picture of several common objects (like an apple or a kite) and then show them a picture with those objects, plus others mixed in. Children then point to the objects they saw on the prior page. This task also examines working memory, but in a slightly different way.

- **The Number Game:**

In this game, researchers check whether children can recite a list of numbers both in forward and backward order. This game measures verbal working memory, rather than visual working memory.

- **The Language Comprehension Game:**

In this game, researchers show children a picture of several colorful shapes and then ask them to point to specific objects, such as “the second small green circle”. This task allows researcher to examine general language comprehension (i.e., the meaning of “green” or “circle”), as well as how children combine different words to grasp the overall meaning (such as the difference between a “small circle”, a “green circle”, and a “small green circle”).

- **The Tower of Hanoi Game:**

In this game, children are given a toy consisting of movable disks that can be slid onto wooden pegs. Researchers ask children to move the disks from one peg to another according to certain rules (such as “you cannot put a bigger disk above a smaller disk). This task examines whether children can plan their future movements so that they can follow the rules to reach the goal.

Director's Corner: Importance of Choices



Last month, I suggested that we ask ourselves what type of home, school, and community learning will help motivate and mobilize today's young children to become the innovators who will improve life on earth for their own and future generations, particularly with respect to building environmentally sustainable, peaceful, just and inclusive communities. In my remaining articles this semester, I will advocate four specific features of our interactions with young children that are crucial to fostering innovation: **Choice, Time, Support, and Rest.**

Offering children **choices among acceptable alternatives** helps them learn to make independent decisions and accept the consequences of their choices. Practice making simple choices among books in the library corner, materials in the block area, centers in the classroom, etc. promotes a sense of autonomy and control over themselves, rather than dependence on adult direction. At home, choice among cereals for breakfast, play clothes to wear to school, toys for the bathtub, and books to read at bedtime similarly build confidence in decision-making. Adults support the process by controlling and monitoring the options, as well as by narrowing the set to a manageable size (e.g., not offering everything on a restaurant menu or all the clothes in the drawer). At school, we rotate materials in our centers rather than offering them all at once, and we open different areas, such as the Discovery Area or Make Shop, on different days to keep the options fresh.

Another way to offer children choices is to provide **open-ended materials** that can be arranged and combined in multiple ways. Our writing, art, block, and loose parts centers all afford children opportunities to use their own ideas for what to draw, make, build, arrange, etc. Here, too, the educators vary the materials to encourage new approaches and constructions. Our Make Shop goes even further by engaging children in design thinking and creative problem solving with wood, clay, light & color, ramps, etc. Because children tend to be more committed to an activity that they have chosen themselves, they often persist longer and respond better to failures, which enables them to confidently iterate on their designs and solutions to improve them.

There are, of course, **situations in which we cannot offer children choices**, such as when there are immediate safety concerns (e.g., running into traffic) or long-term health risks (e.g., tooth decay from not brushing teeth). In other cases, there is simply not time for an extra story before leaving the house to get to school or for children to do something themselves before getting onto the plane that is boarding. The key in these situations is for adults to offer children a secondary choice after the primary one was made by the adult. For example, the adult might offer two acceptable choices of toothpaste or a choice of brushing teeth before or after taking a bath. Similarly, an adult might say, "We have to leave now, but would you rather take the book to school to share with your class or put it on the dinner table, so we remember to read it when we come home?" When children have lots of experience with choices that they CAN make themselves, they are more accepting of the "**no choice**" decisions adults must sometimes make for them.

One final tip: Be intentional to **distinguish children's choice opportunities from adult decisions**. For example, saying "It's time to clean up, OK?" actually implies a choice, when none is intended. On the other hand, saying "It's time to clean up. Would you like to put the blocks in the bin or put the puzzles on the shelf?" makes two acceptable choices clear. As children develop, adults can gradually expand the choice opportunities, range of open-ended materials, and complexity of design challenges so that children progressively stretch their innovative minds.

February

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
Whole School Theme: PLANET EARTH Practicum Students from Duksung Women's University					Jan. 31 9:30AM Educator/Parent Discussion re: Planet Earth	1 9AM FSO Kickball Game @CUC Wiegand Gym
2	3 School Photos	4 School Photos	5	6 2020-21 Preschool Enrollment Forms Due	7	8 PAUS Conference for Educators
9	10 February Safety Week	11	12	13 Music w/ Mrs. Habrer	14	15
16	17 NO SCHOOL Presidents' Day	18	19	20 Dr. Carver @ AAC&U Conference in Jacksonville, FL	21	22
23	24	25	26	27 Music w/ Mrs. Habrer	28 2020-21 Kdg. Enrollment Forms Due 1:00 FSO Event: Mad Science	29



Children's School

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

412-268-2199

2020



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
3	4	5	6	7
Wheat Bread & Butter	Apples & String Cheese	Pretzels & Guacamole	Oranges & Club Crackers	Goldfish Crackers
Milk/Water	Milk/Water	Milk/Water	Milk/Water	Milk/Water
10	11	12	13	14
Yogurt & Granola	Clementines & Club Crackers	Raisin Bread & Apple Butter	100 Day Snack	Snap Peas w/ Ranch Dip & Sun Chips
Milk/Water	Milk/Water	Milk/Water	Milk/Water	Milk/Water
17	18	19	20	21
No School President's Day	Bananas & Vanilla Wafers	Tortilla Chips & Salsa	Broccoli w/ Ranch Dip & Saltines	Pita Bread w/ Jelly
	Milk/Water	Milk/Water	Milk/Water	Milk/Water
24	25	26	27	28
Kix Cereal	Applesauce & Graham Crackers	Mini Bagels & Cream Cheese	Rice Cakes & Sunbutter	Carrot Sticks & Hummus
Milk/Water	Milk/Water	Milk/Water	Milk/Water	Milk/Water

February 2020

PICTURE DAY

VanDyke Photography will be at your child's school on February 3rd & 4th to take individual & class portraits. No money is due up front. We will send home a proof for you to view before ordering.

While any color clothing will work for the photos, we recommend not wearing neon colors because they reflect on the child's face.

Any questions can be directed to VanDyke Photography at: (412)445-7683 or vandykephotography@verizon.net.