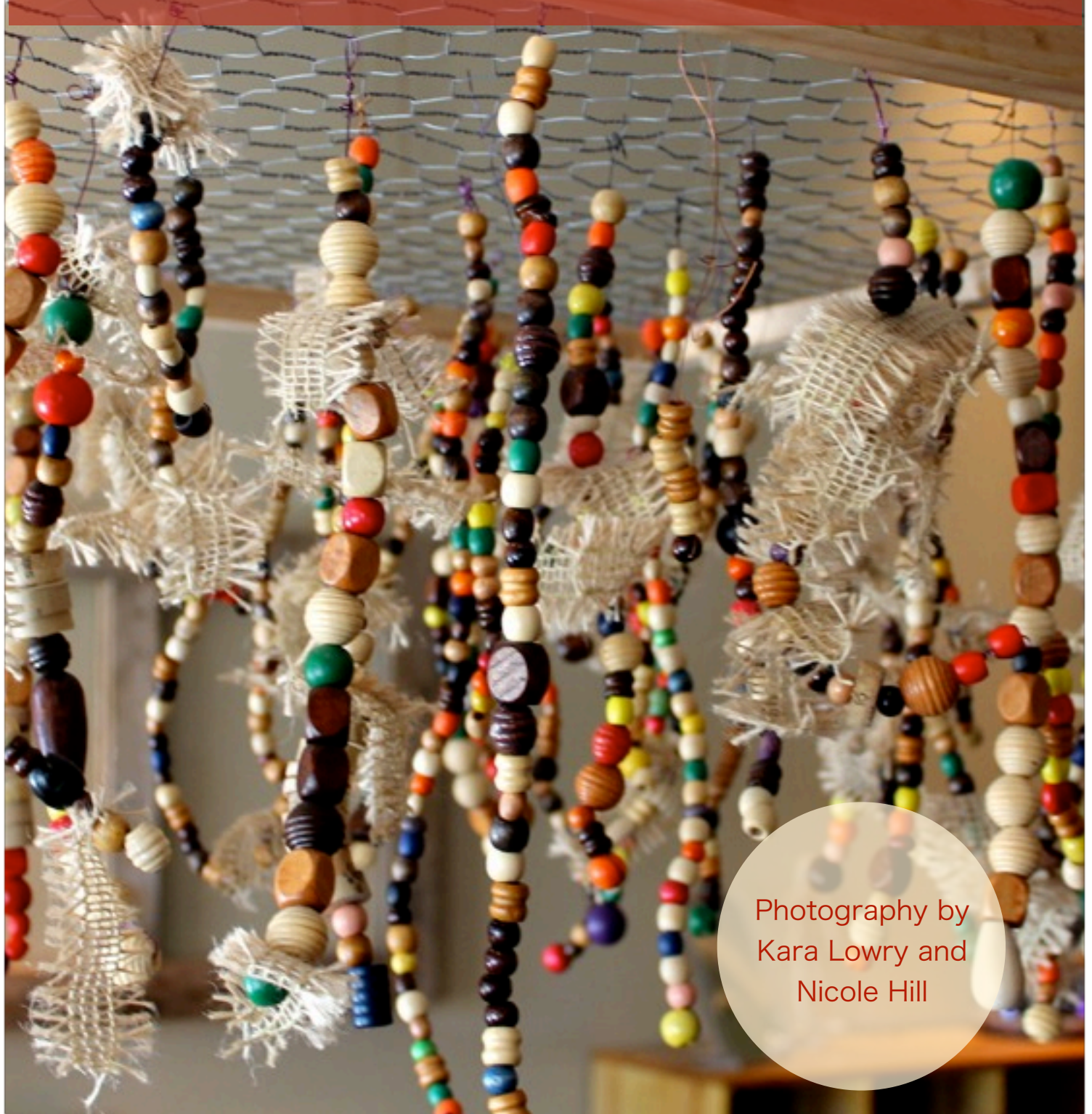


# *EVER-CHANGING* ENVIRONMENTS

A Pictorial Overview of Materials and Design  
at Rosa Parks Early Childhood Education Center



Photography by  
Kara Lowry and  
Nicole Hill

This ebook purchase enables Fairy Dust Teaching to fund a current project at Rosa Parks Early Childhood Education Center and to ship those materials directly to the school.

# Ever-Changing Environments:

A Pictorial Overview of Materials and Design  
at Rosa Parks Early Childhood Education Center  
Union Public Schools  
Tulsa, Oklahoma

## **Photographs by**

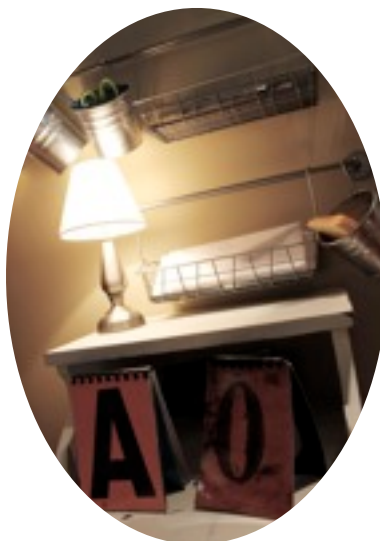
Rosa Parks Early Childhood Education Teachers  
Kara Lowry and Nicole Hill

## **Written and Organized by**

Rosa Parks Early Childhood Education Principal  
Lynn McClure

**A Fairy Dust Teaching Publication**

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## INTRODUCTION

Rosa Parks Early Childhood Education Center (ECEC) is located in Union Public Schools in Tulsa, Oklahoma supporting a 100% free and reduced lunch population of 400 young children ages three through four. Community partners support and fund the program.

As you walk into Rosa Parks Early Childhood Education Center, one can't help but notice the unique ambience reflected throughout the building. Low-level lighting and thoughtful presentation and placement of open-ended authentic materials are just a few of the aspects that shape the environment of our school. A reciprocal relationship between the unique environments and intriguing materials fosters independent, complex, and lifelong learners.

Parallel to the Reggio philosophy, we believe our environment is the third teacher. Our aesthetic environment allows children to engage in collaborative long-term investigations in which children construct knowledge through inquiries, explorations and conversations. Large group, small group, and individual areas enriched with authentic materials and provocations accommodate all learning opportunities. Documentation, including but not limited to pictures, videos, transcribed conversations, summary panels, validate children's new knowledge and enables them to share with other children, teachers, parents, and community members.

Many open-ended materials live in our environments. These materials encourage the children to think creatively and provide them more opportunities to expand their meaning of the world that surrounds them. The use of open-ended materials provides more exploration opportunities as the children use them in a wide variety of ways supporting both social and academic competencies. Each child gives the material their own unique meaning. Authentic materials are nonspecific and therefore can be taken to any area assisting in the adaptability of our spaces.

Our belief is that all children are eager to learn at any age and we feel our classrooms should support their readiness and their ready-made competencies. A warm and inviting environment of thoughtfully presented materials is critical in challenging children. We feel our environments should communicate to the children that we believe in their ability to become independent learners and analytical thinkers. In our classrooms, you will find materials presented on low, open shelving, which allows easy access for the children to choose the things that interest them. The materials are also placed in neutral colored baskets or clear and open containers so the material is emphasized, not the container, inviting the children to explore.

The essence of learning at Rosa Parks ECEC is the fusion of distinctive environments and fascinating materials. The emphasis we place on our environments communicates our high expectations and strong beliefs that all children are competent and zealous learners. Child engagement and success is evident throughout the school as the children independently and collaboratively explore the environments and materials.



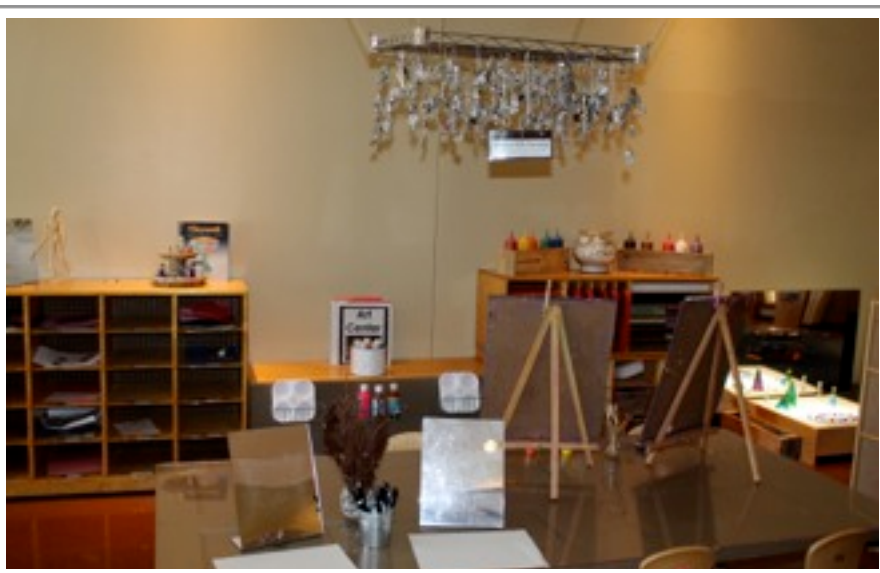
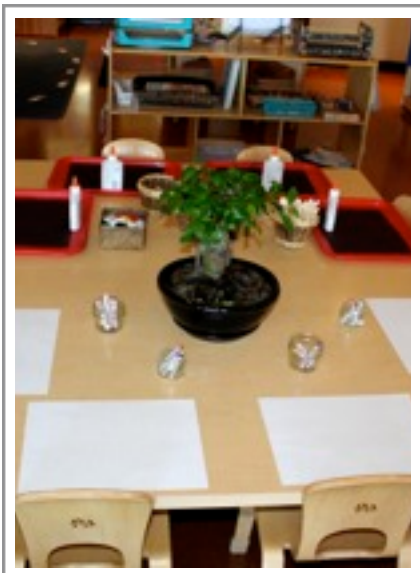
# Classroom Ateliers





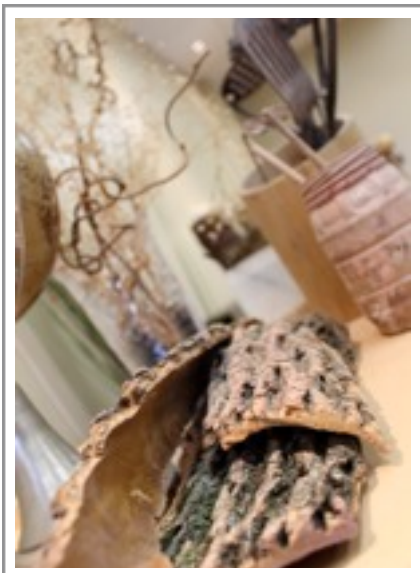




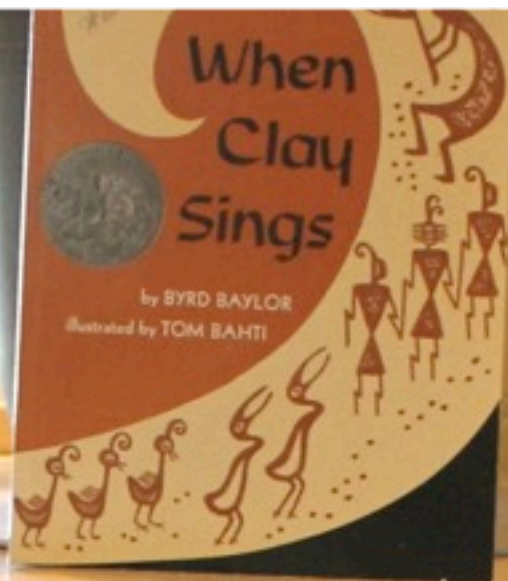














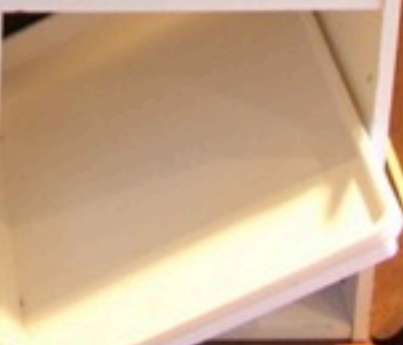
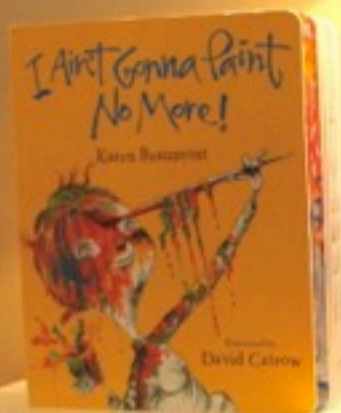






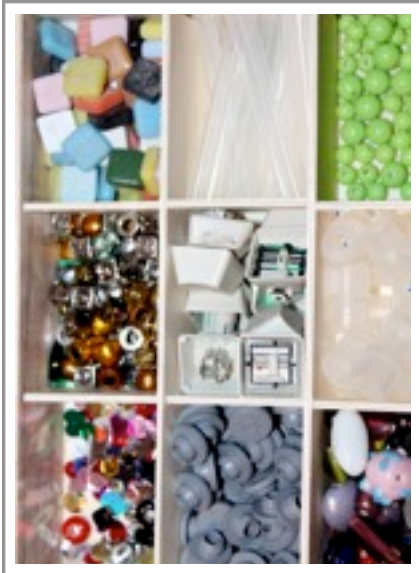






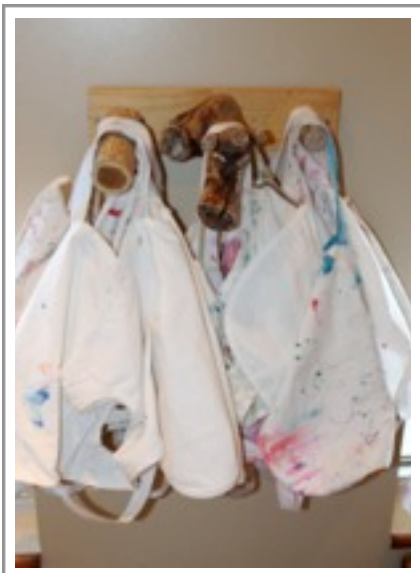












































# Construction and Building Mediums

















































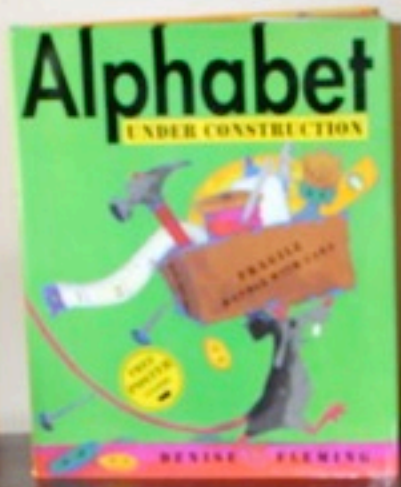








































A photograph of a classroom corner. A white shelf is mounted on a tan wall. On the shelf, from left to right, are a small potted plant with long green leaves, a book titled "sky color" with a drawing of a person, a black stapler, five small metal tins labeled "Alphabet", "Pencil", "Pencil", "Pencil", and "Marker", a red box with a large black letter "A", and a red box. Above the shelf, a string of small wooden plaques hangs vertically. Below the shelf, two tree stump stools are visible. The floor is covered with a patterned rug.

# Messaging

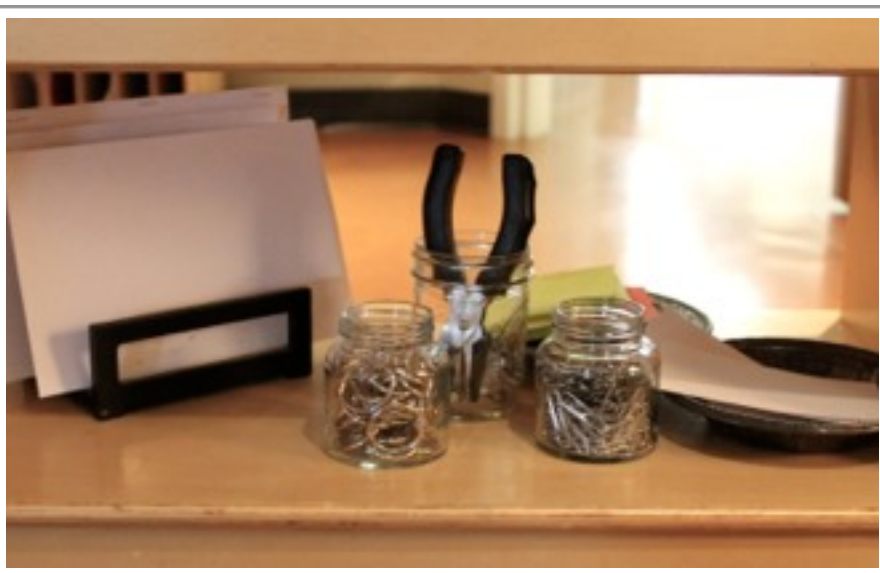




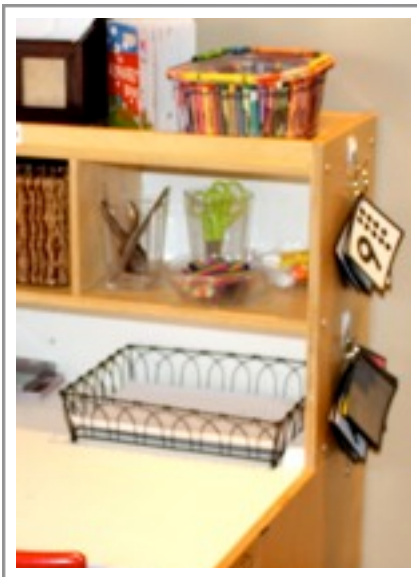
















# OUR BOOKS







# Chandeliers





Multi-colored  
beads  
are used to make a  
nest for the children  
to make the nest  
stronger and  
longer.





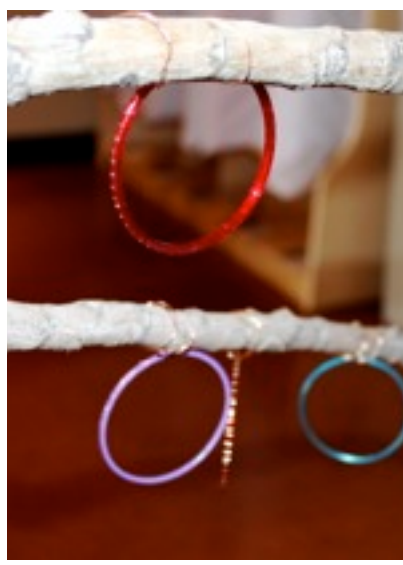






*Candelero de la clase 7 y 8 y Cuernavaca*  
Los niños de la clase 7 y 8 y Cuernavaca  
de esta hermosa candelero de la clase 7 y 8 y Cuernavaca  
candelero está completo, los dos clases se reúnen para  
decidir donde colgar su maravillosa trabajo. Un niño dijo:  
"En el pueblo" Luchaban los otros niños de acuerdo, "Claro  
que sí", mientras otros sólo dijo: "Para que así muestran  
mamas y papas pueden verlo." Así que los niños han decidido  
colgar este punto perfecto, porque todos las familias en las  
salones pasará a medida que continúan en su habitaciones.























the parents and children of Hopkinton.  
The children had the opportunity to  
and the materials they are using at  
parents and children collaborated  
contributing to the school's









This beaded curtain was made in the summer of 2013 by the students in the "Owl Class". They decided to make their wire long so it could be "so, so tall!" - Khort'Len. This beaded curtain was a gift from the "Owl Class" to the 2013 class in Room 1.  
July 2013















# Dramatic Play

































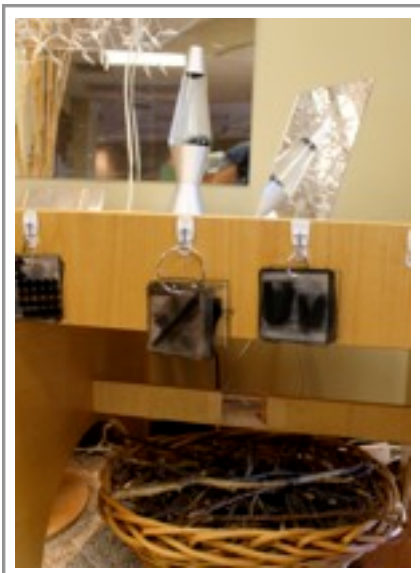








# Light and Shadow









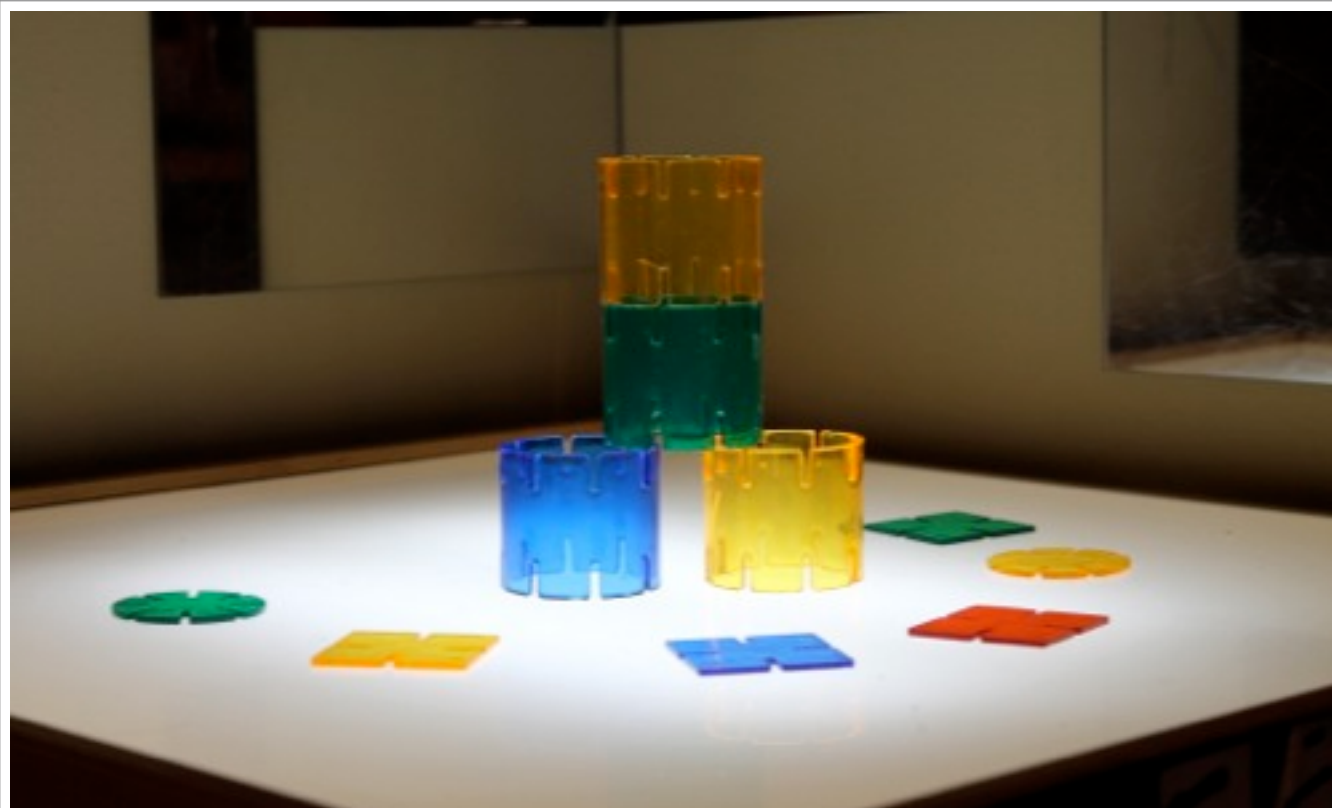


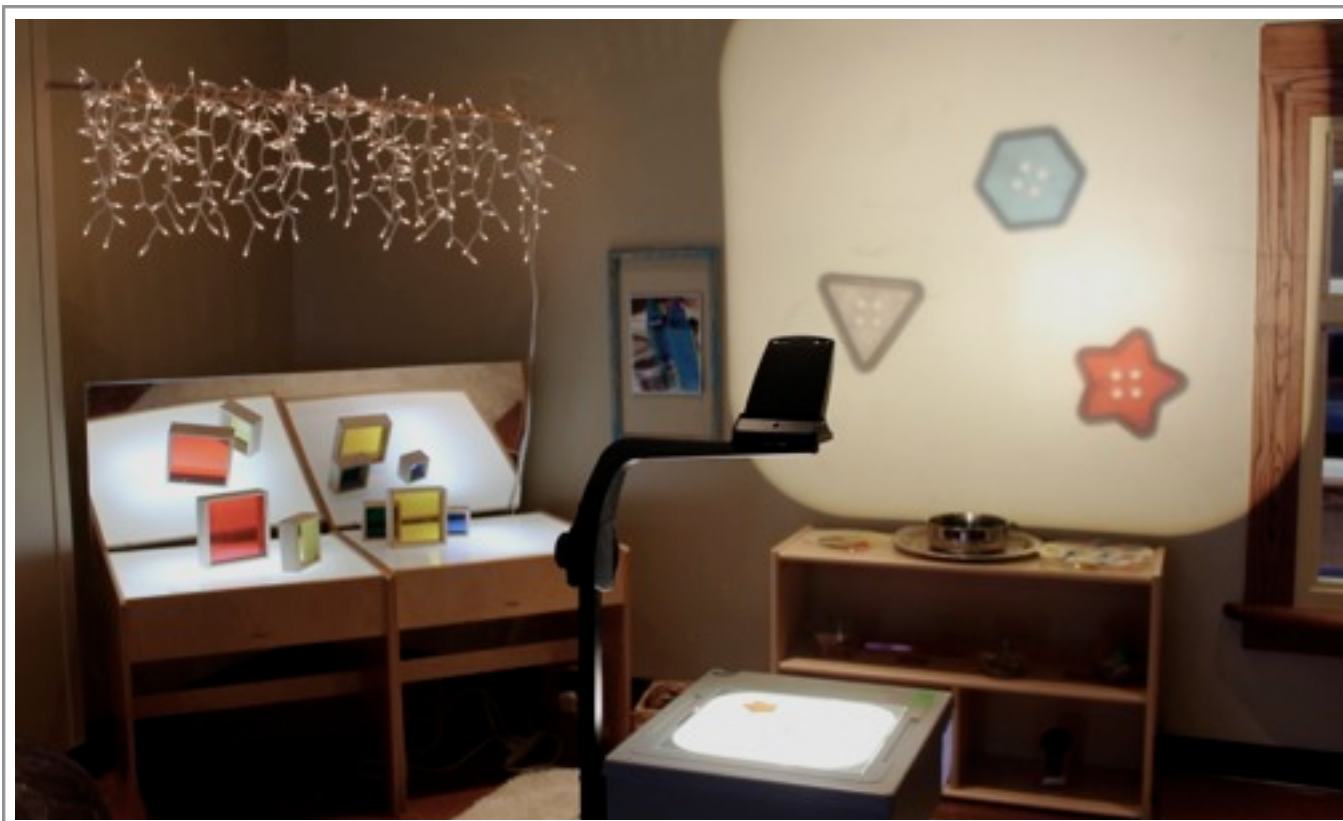


















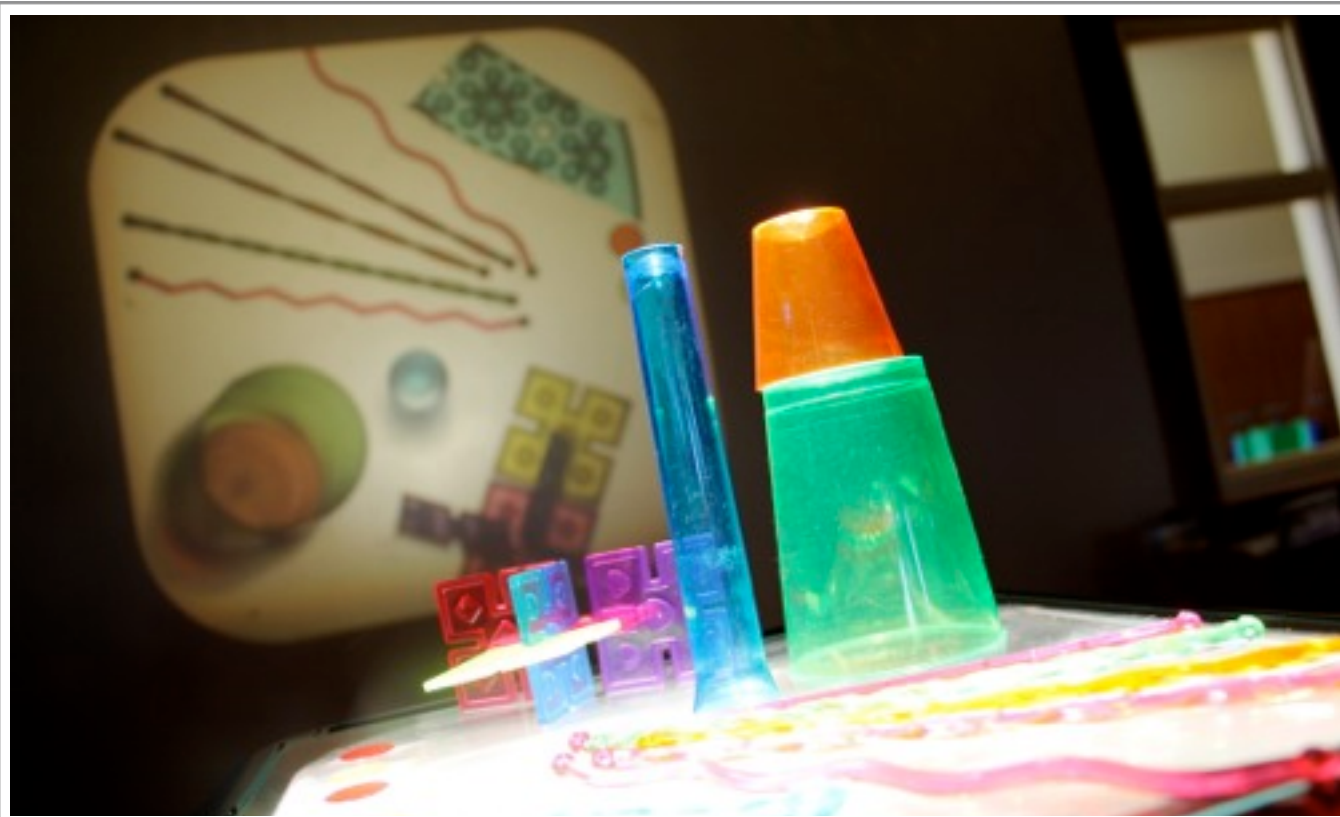
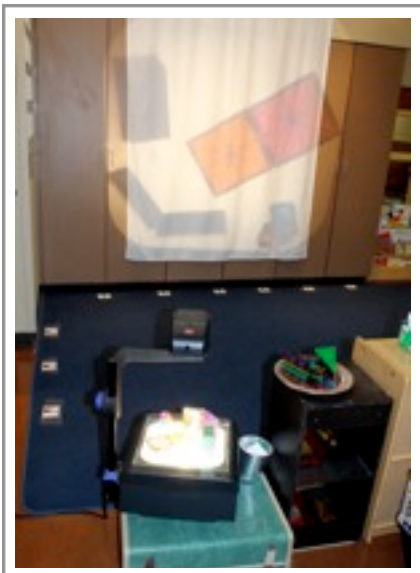




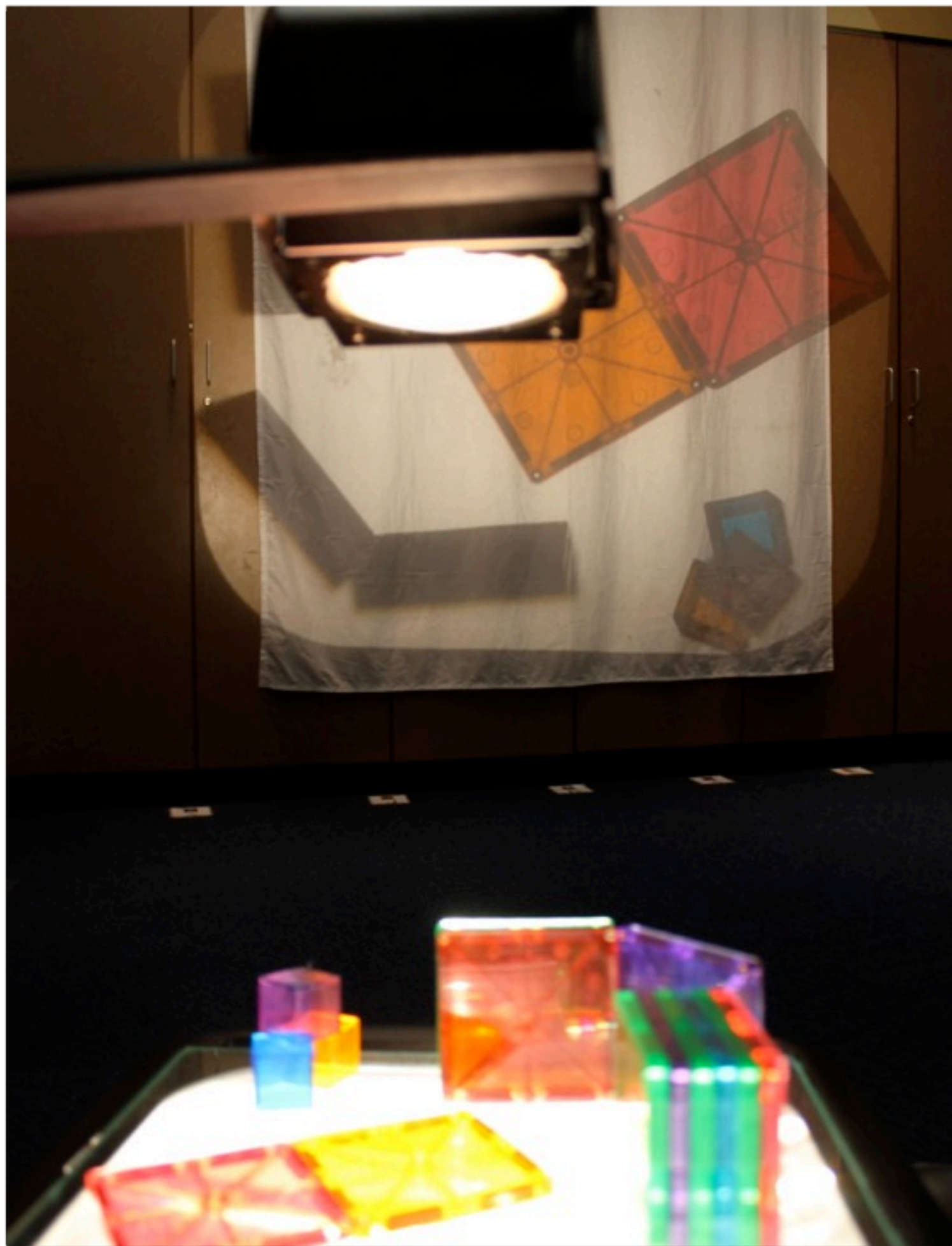


















# Documentation

Room 3 Child Sign-In

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Ameeta A	Murhal M	Olivia O	Bella B	Kiemya K
Jennifer J	Travis T	Saul S	Brayan B	Austin A
Janelle J	Blue B	Octavio O	Jeria J	Jimmie J
Victor V	Alasia A	Ivanna I		









# FROM BLANK PAGES TO BOOKS

**IMPETUS QUESTION**  
How can we as teachers support our children to see themselves as capable writers and storytellers?

When the writing was done, the children were asked to read their stories to the class and to the teachers. The children were very proud of their work and the teachers were very impressed by the quality of the writing. The children were also very happy to see their stories in the book.

The first time the children were asked to write a story, they were very nervous. They had never written before and they were not sure if they could do it. But when they started to write, they found that it was not so hard after all. They began to think of their own stories and they were soon writing with confidence.



Children began to enjoy the idea of making a book and finding ways to express their thoughts and experiences on paper.



As the children began to write, they found that they were also learning to read. They were using the words they had learned in their stories and they were beginning to understand the meaning of the words.



Children discovered how to learn to read when making a book. From the first time they began to write, they were also learning to read. They were using the words they had learned in their stories and they were beginning to understand the meaning of the words.

As the children began to write, they also began to show an interest in reading their books to the other children during our group meeting times. The opportunity to share their books helped reinforce the idea that they truly are authors and illustrators.



With these experiences, along with the other things we have done, the children have become confident writers and readers. They are now able to write their own stories and to read them with pride.



The children were very proud of their work and the teachers were very impressed by the quality of the writing. The children were also very happy to see their stories in the book.

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## MINI STORIES

# The Language of Art

Classroom 10  
2011-2012

## Stuffing



## Wrapping



## Weaving



## Collage



"The compositional research was sometimes symmetrical, sometimes random, sometimes unexpected, often aesthetically beautiful"

- Children, Art, Artists

## El idioma del arte

Classroom 10  
2011-2012

## El relleno



## Envolver



## Tejer

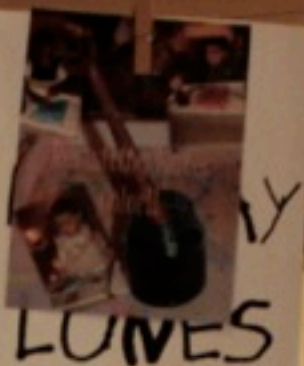
## El Collage

"La investigación composicional fue a veces simétrica, a veces aleatoria, a veces inesperada, a menudo estéticamente hermosa"

- Children, Art, Artists



OUR  
WEEK  
NUESTRA  
SEMANA



TUESDAY  
MARTES

WEDNESDAY  
MIÉRCOLES

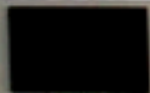
THURSDAY  
JUEVES

FRIDAY  
VIERNES

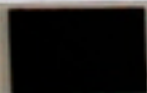
# FAMILY



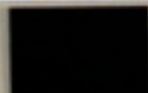
MONDAY



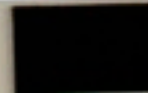
TUESDAY



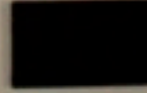
WEDNESDAY



THURSDAY



FRIDAY



SATURDAY



SUNDAY





Dear Mr. & Mrs. Rodriguez, (Mr. & Mrs. Rodriguez)  
Please accept our warmest wishes for a very happy birthday to your daughter, Katya. We hope she is having a wonderful day and is surrounded by all her friends and family. We are so proud of her and all she has accomplished. We hope she has a great day and is having fun. We are so proud of her and all she has accomplished. We hope she has a great day and is having fun.



**TODAY WE...**

Today is our birthday girl's birthday! We hope she is having a wonderful day and is surrounded by all her friends and family. We are so proud of her and all she has accomplished. We hope she has a great day and is having fun. We are so proud of her and all she has accomplished. We hope she has a great day and is having fun.



**happy birthday**



Feliz Cumpleaños Katya!

W

Th

F



*Theories Take Flight  
Mini-Stories  
2011-2012*

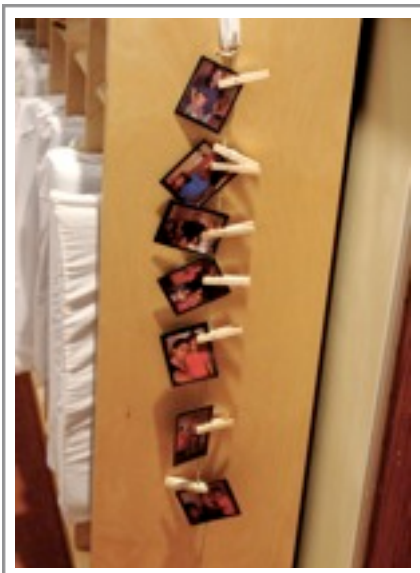
*Teorías Tomas Vuelo  
Aula 11  
Investigación 2011-2012*

Children's theories of flight are often based on their own experiences and observations. They may think that a plane can fly because it is big and has engines, or that it can fly because it is light. These theories are often based on simple, concrete concepts that children can understand. As they learn more about the world, their theories will become more complex and sophisticated.

**Global Question**  
How are experiences of flight related to the experiences of feeling and wonder of the world?









# How can small body play support the sharing of ideas and theories?

This year the children in classroom 8 appeared captivated by the act of motion. Not so much large motor motion, but small body motion. They enjoyed the controlled repetitive play of blowing and rolling small objects. Reflecting on the children's work and our observations as teachers, we wondered, how can small body play support the sharing of ideas and theories?

One day, three children were observed as they blew wooden balls across various pieces of molding in the block center. When asked what they were doing, Marlon responded, "I am blowing it and he is blowing it back. We are blowing it backwards and forwards." Trevor responded, "Blowing." We, the teachers, wondered how the other children would interpret "blowing" so we had the three friends demonstrate their technique to the whole class. This inspired curiosity in the other children and they began to experiment.

While experimenting, the children tested how many wooden balls they could blow at a time. They discovered how to create a split level and gave each level a name, drop off and slide. They tested their theories pertaining to velocity. "I blow it hard to go fast," Tamer said. They even tested their abilities to blow objects on various surfaces. Some examples include molding, tile, wood boards, carpet, table tops, and plastic.

We began to wonder if the act of blowing could be extended into other centers of the classroom and would the children show this much interest? In a series of provocations, the children investigated different types and sizes of straws with liquid watercolors. Madi and Tysane discovered how to make new colors. Madi said, "I used my mouth to blow in the straw. My colors move to make purple." "I blew red and blue and it mixed to purple!" said Tysane. "Watch, I blow hard!" Kohda discovered blowing hard into the straw caused the paint to spread out across his paper. Alshda noticed changes in size when she stated, "The little dots move to make large dots when I blow."

As the next few months unfolded, the children naturally shifted from using their mouths to make an object move to using their hands. The children began to experiment with different rolling strategies and selection of materials. We noticed the children were creating ramp like structures, creating structures that an object would roll down as they created motion.

We, the teachers, became curious about what the children's ideas might be if they were to demonstrate some of these rolling theories/strategies in a whole group setting. While demonstrating, the children made comments about how the objects were "rolling." When asked what makes something roll, Tysane said, "The slide." As Tysane clarified she stated, "Something only rolls unless it has a slide to go down." So later at center time, Kohda and Jayden tested her theory. They laid a piece of cover molding on the carpet and then set a wooden ball on top of it. Kohda said, "It doesn't move." He then grabbed one block and said, "We put the slide on the block." He then placed the wooden ball on the slide and watched it roll down. Kohda and Jayden took turns as one rolled the ball down the slide and the other caught the ball at the bottom. Kohda said, "Pass it to me! Gotcha! Go Jayden! Try this one, it's a small one. Try it." Jayden rolled the small wooden ball down. Kohda observed, "It rolled faster to me. He rolled it faster to me." The boys then predicted that the big wooden ball would go faster than the small one when Kohda stated, "The big one goes faster and the small one goes slowly." The teacher asked them to test their theory. Kohda and Jayden decided to set up a second slide. They then experimented by rolling both balls down the slides at the same time to see which ball rolled the fastest.

During this observation and several others, the teachers noticed the children acquiring knowledge about force, velocity, incline, movement of materials, and cause and effect. They also used a variety of communication skills as they shared their theories through demonstration and encouraging participation.

As the investigation progressed, we the teachers, wondered what would happen if we took the children on a quest around our school to find new materials to support their continuous exploration in rolling. Would the children be engaged on our quest? What type of materials would they be curious about? Would they use creativity and communication to brainstorm ways to use a found material? Would new terminology be created? Would they focus on slides and pathways or would they be open to a variety of materials?

During our quest the rich comments and conversations between the children, children to teachers, and teachers to teachers, was overwhelming. They shared their creative thoughts about a found material and other would share theirs; same or different, the children seemed to thrive in excitement. "This can be used to trap the ball," said Tysane. "Look at this Trevor," said Peyton as he held up a long black tube. "We can use this as a tunnel," he continued. Tade found a red piece of plastic which had a lower or curve out down the middle of it. She said, "This is a pathway." Marlon ran into the tall grass to fetch a yellow object he saw from the distance. And in the tall grass, he held the object up high for all his friends to see as he shouted, "It's a ball! It's broken but it can still trap a ball." Mahera picked up an interesting piece that others passed on by. She studied the material with detail, turning it all around in her hand. She said, "Maybe, a slide and a tunnel." The children were so focused and enthusiastic, they even noticed a pathway that was created in the dirt from tire tracks. They loved the idea that they were the moving objects across the large pathway.

Through this experience the children communicated, collaborated, and were persistent and purposeful in their pursuits. They communicated their thoughts on the possibilities the material offered them; they collaborated as they used problem solving skills to obtain obscure materials and were always aware of their purpose as well as thoughtful towards their friends' ideas.

Our job as teachers is best described by Ellen Lynn Hall and Jennifer Kofkin Rudkin in the book, *Seen & Heard: Children's Rights in Early Childhood Education*, when they stated, "They [teachers] are listening carefully, documenting events in order to help children extend their work together, and are ready to step in when children desire assistance." The authors go on to say, "It means being available as a support and guide when needed and stepping back to allow children to engage in their own process when possible."

This year, the children in classroom 8 took ownership in constructing their own knowledge, which is a powerful approach in becoming lifelong learners. We observed the children communicating in multiple languages, solving problems while being persistent, and involving their peers in a variety of ways. The children supported the sharing of ideas not only through verbal language but also through non-verbal language. The children questioned, imagined and investigated theories enhancing their development in cognitive, language, and social areas. They utilized many authentic materials making their learning visible and allowing them the opportunity to negotiate curriculum and their role in it.

*"To know the scientific concepts through experimentation, to understand simple cause and effect, to consider the 'what if' factor, to build concentration, to see a problem through to the end and to have the imagination and creativity to see beyond the here and now form the foundation skills and dispositions of an engineer."*

*(The Young Child as an Engineer) Writing post: Earlychildhoodonline.org, N.p., 28 Feb. 2012; Web. 13 Mar. 2013.)*





How can the exploration of storytelling in a variety of mediums support children's literacy and cognitive development?



When writing and illustrating stories about the three little pigs, many children began drawing a picture of a pig in the margin from the story page. Many children also began drawing a picture of a pig in the margin from the story page. Many children also began drawing a picture of a pig in the margin from the story page. Many children also began drawing a picture of a pig in the margin from the story page.

While writing and illustrating stories about the three little pigs, many children began drawing a picture of a pig in the margin from the story page. Many children also began drawing a picture of a pig in the margin from the story page. Many children also began drawing a picture of a pig in the margin from the story page.

When the children began to write the story of the three little pigs, many children began drawing a picture of a pig in the margin from the story page. Many children also began drawing a picture of a pig in the margin from the story page. Many children also began drawing a picture of a pig in the margin from the story page.

Children's use of storytelling is an effective instrument for teachers' ability to learn more about the child. What story they choose and how they choose to tell the story are indicative of what a child thinks and feels, expressed uniquely during a particular time period. The process of selecting, practicing and telling stories is a way for children to explore themselves and relationships between people. - Kaufman, 1997

# Mediums Of Storytelling





## Initiating with Clay



How can learning about our school pet rabbits help us become more compassionate and empathetic toward all living things?

"Sometimes, clay seems to offer children the chance to embody ideas of great importance to them. This is true even though we cannot see the things that they say are in the clay. In some ways, the children are capable of seeing beauty and significance, power, and magic in what, to us, look like abstract forms of clay, random marks in pencil, or sweeping gestures of paint. As authors of stories have the ability to put together the stories they want and need to tell through working with a medium that invites them into this realm" (Lanier Boyd Cadwell).

## Gender Identification



## Communicating Through Writing



## Representation Through Sketching



## Establishing A Welcoming Environment



## Multiple Languages

These experiences enhanced not only the children's ability to recognize and support the needs of ourselves and others but also supported their ability to communicate the importance of feeling secure in the world around them and how they fit in. We often worked in small groups supporting collaboration, risk taking, sharing of ideas, negotiation of roles, and plans of action. They questioned, imagined, and investigated theories enhancing their development in cognitive, language, and social areas. We offered many authentic materials making their learning visible and offering them the opportunity to negotiate that we learn ourselves through our interaction with peers, adults, things in the world, and symbols (Lewis, 1999).







MALENY DREAM

MAKE A LOT OF FRIENDS 😊

Jordan Hope he learns to pay more attention.

Hope Dra become more friendly and become prepared for pre-K !!

For Leah to enjoy school

I hope she is very happy

Kira Howard #social skills

Eiley 😊 I hope develop a love for art learning and friends 🤗

I want to Read !! Book

♥ I hope MINA learns to love school ♥

🌸 Independence & Friendship 🌸 Elysia

♥ HAPPY & CONFIDENT

MAX MARTINEZ

A Leader

Jordan I hope he makes a lot of friends

PUE SEA FELIZ

Heel

Hope to learn ABC's

Be more social

Lazaro Carreño

make friends  
Be Patient ★







# FAMILY

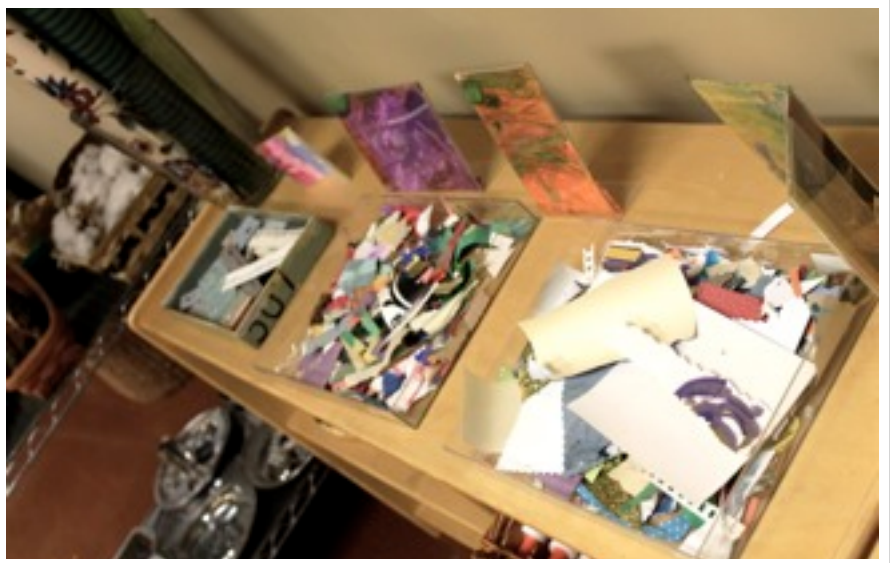






# School Atelier and Material Collection Space

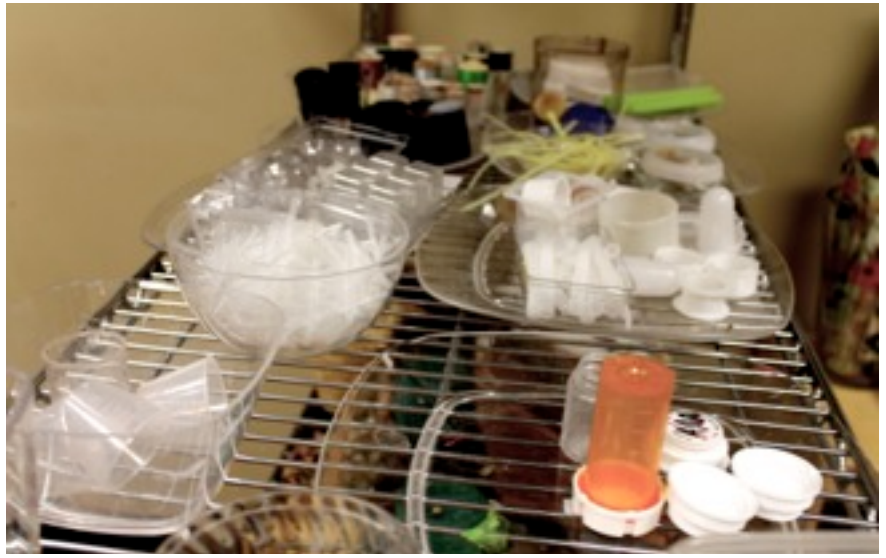






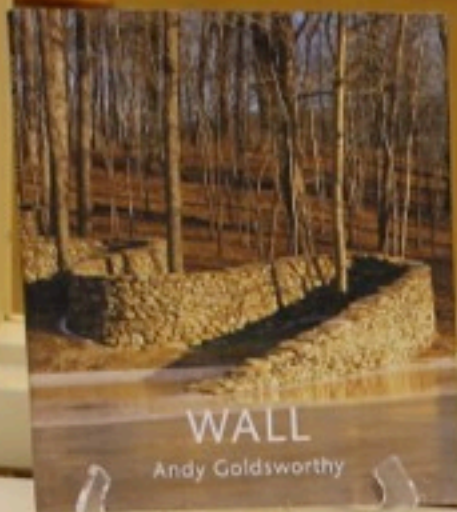




























## Special Thanks

This project would not have been possible if not for the generous, dedicated and talented faculty and staff of Rosa Parks Early Childhood Education Center.

It's the people. It's the teachers, site leadership teams, front office staff, custodians, food service, family support specialists, counselors, and community partners. It's each person loving our students and our work. It's each one of us owning the mission of "100% graduation, college, and career ready."

Thank you for you for caring so much for our students and for one another. It shows in everything you do!!!



*“What children learn does not follow as an automatic result from what is taught. Rather, it is in large part due to the children’s own doing as a consequence of their activities and our resources.”*

Loris Malaguzzi