



Umbrella Program Excellence Team

Newsletter

Issue 8

2025



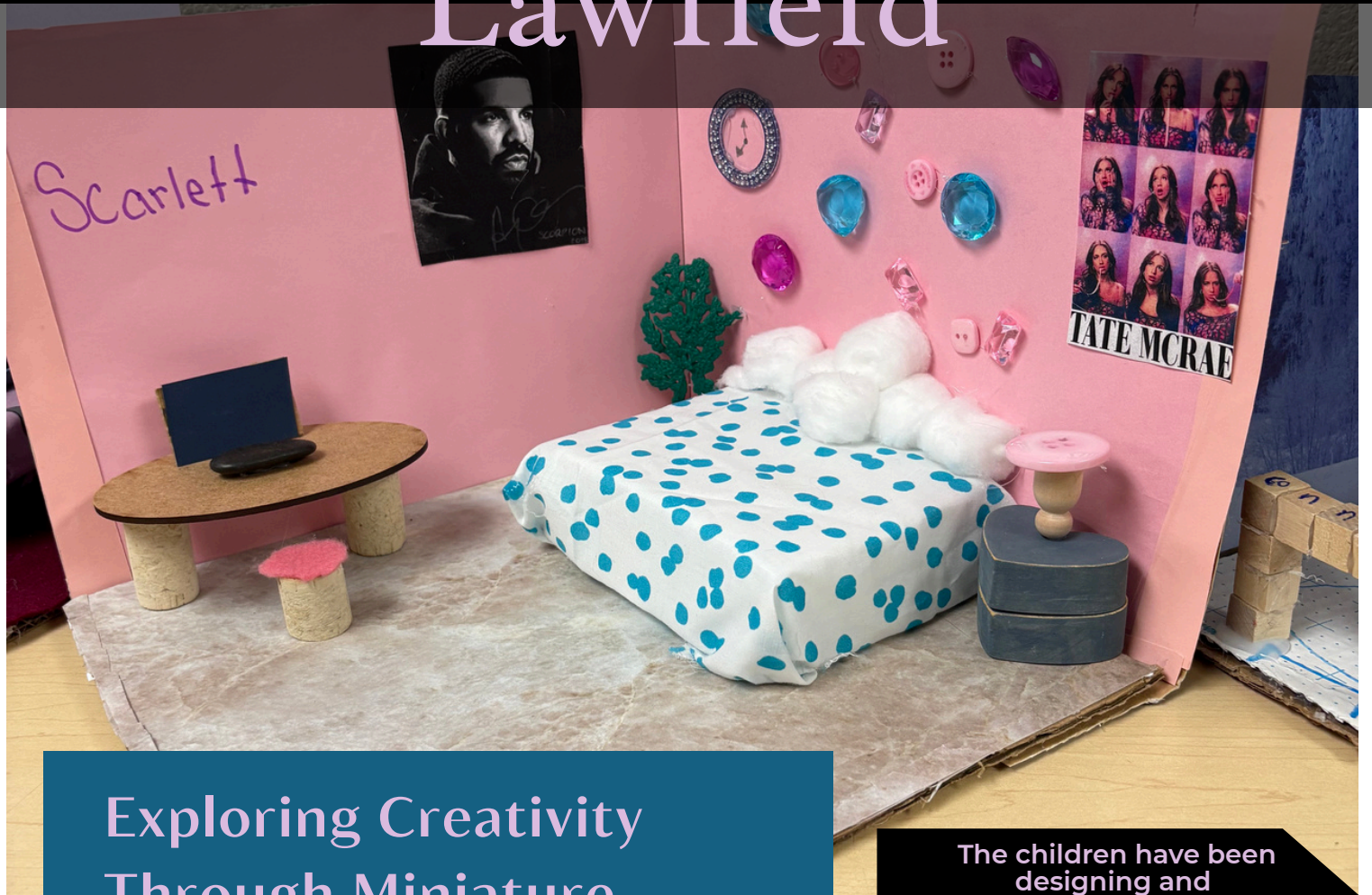
We wanted to take a moment to shine a light on the incredible work happening across our very own Umbrella sites. Each program is filled with creativity, intentionality, and a deep sense of wonder that reflects the unique inquiries and provocations unfolding with the children.

From thoughtfully designed spaces to meaningful projects that emerge from children's interests, it's clear how much dedication and care our educators pour into their work each day.

These moments are a powerful reminder of the rich learning environments being cultivated and the strong relationships at the heart of everything we do.

Let's continue to celebrate and share these inspiring stories from within our own community.

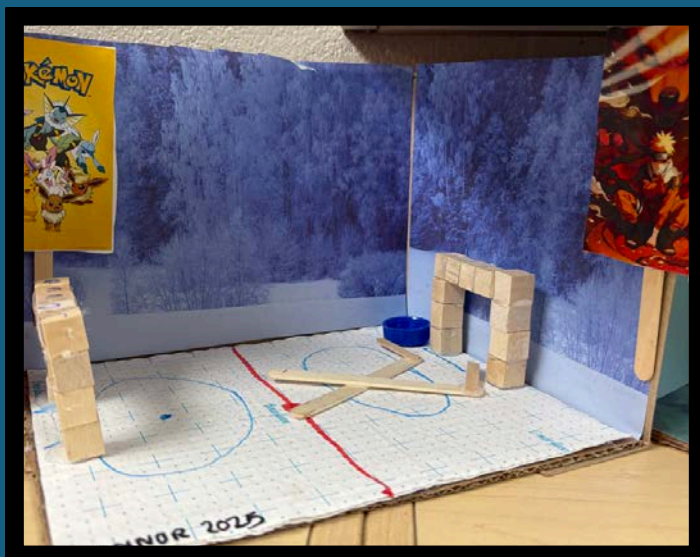
Lawfield



Exploring Creativity Through Miniature Home Building

Over the past few weeks, our group has been deeply engaged in a creative and collaborative project inspired by an idea I came across on TikTok/Facebook.

The children have been designing and constructing their own miniature homes, showing incredible focus, imagination, and problem-solving skills throughout the process.

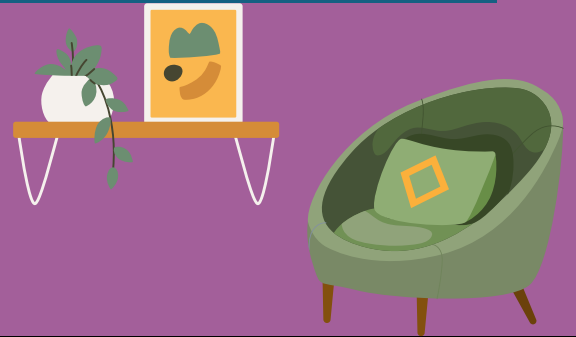


This activity has sparked rich conversations about structure, design, and storytelling, as each child brings their unique vision to life. It's been wonderful to see them take ownership of their creations, work together, and express themselves in such meaningful ways. We're excited to continue supporting this exploration and see where their ideas take them next!



'Play is our brain's favourite way of learning'

Diane Ackerman.



TEMPLEMEAD

BACK PRESCHOOL ROOM

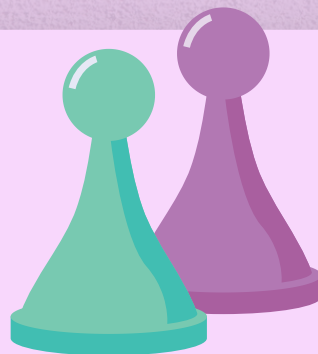
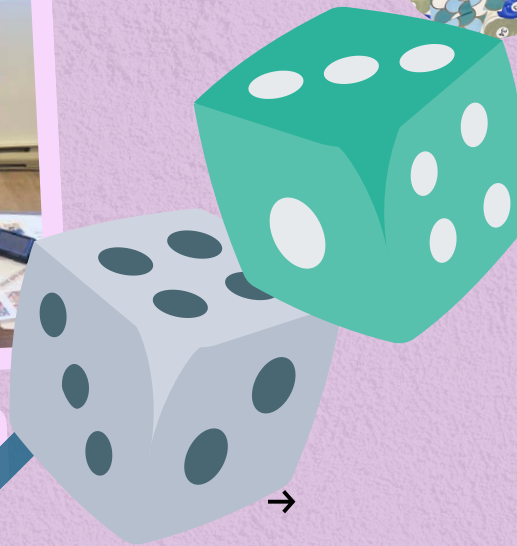
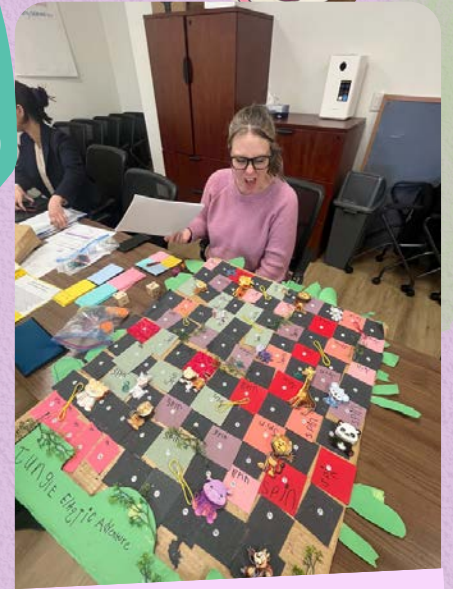
WATER PLAY

Templemead has taken water play to the next level by thoughtfully combining it with blocks, natural materials, and paint to spark rich, open-ended exploration. Children are invited to pour, mix, build, and create using wood, stones, coloured water, and other textured elements—transforming traditional water play into a multi-sensory, inquiry-driven experience.



March Break Mystery Board Game Challenge

The March Break Mystery Board Game Challenge was an incredible success! Children showcased their imagination and critical thinking by designing vibrant, creative, and truly one-of-a-kind board games. What made this experience even more special was the excitement and engagement from the supervisors, who couldn't wait to jump in and play the games themselves.

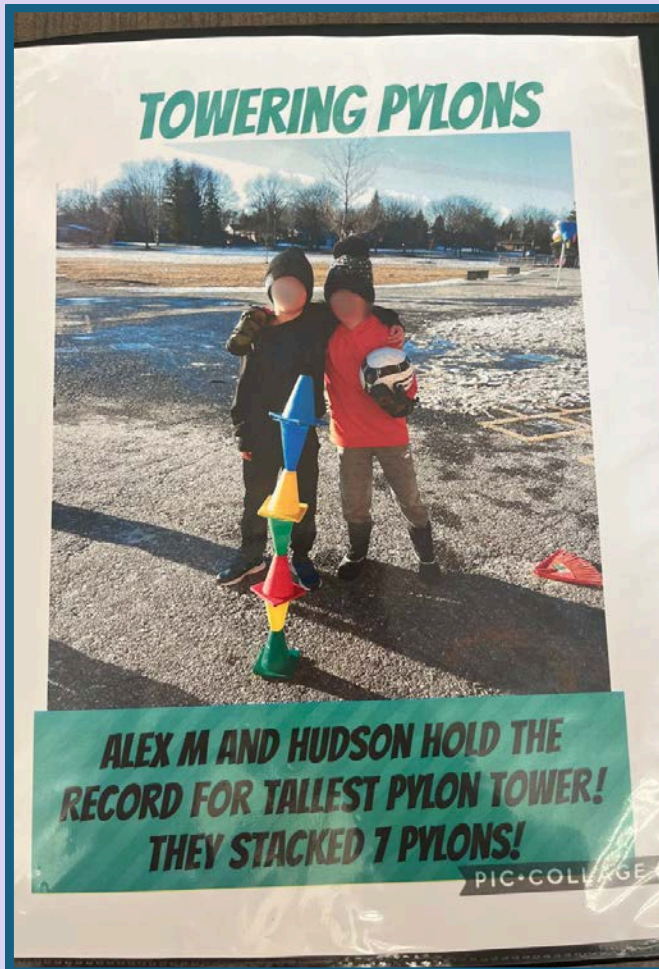


Cathy Weaver - School Age

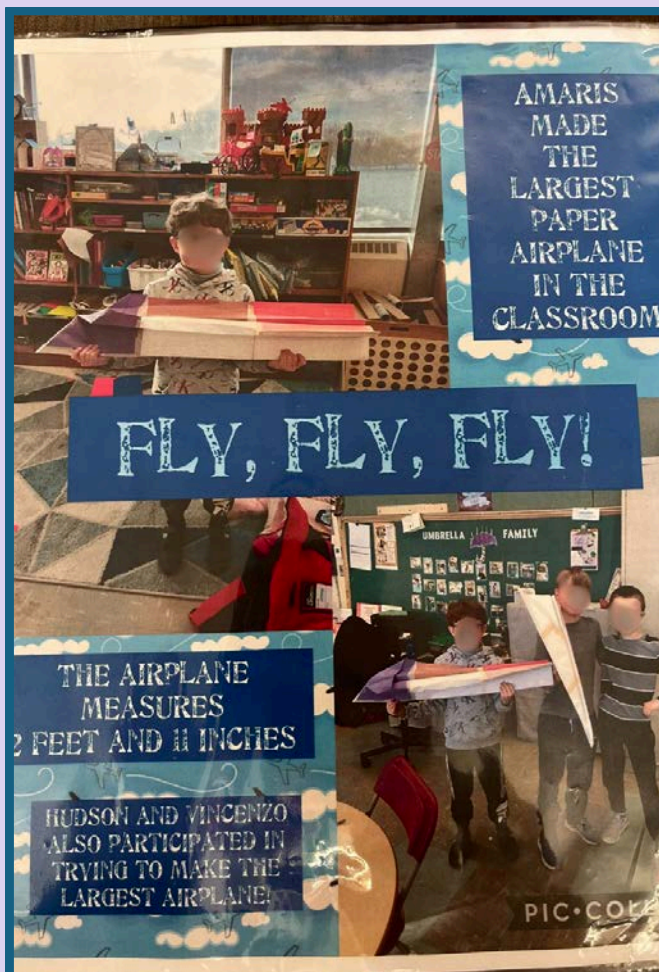
Jam Jars



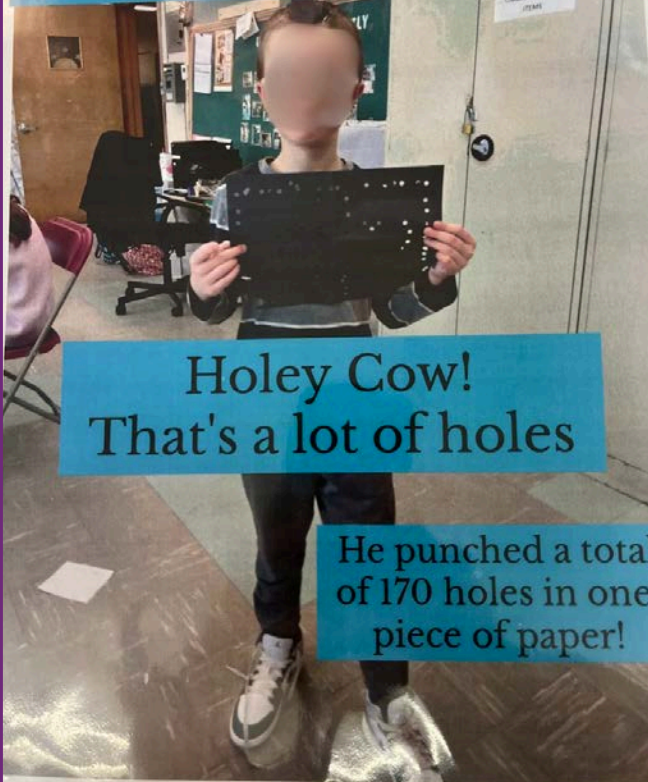
Buchanan Park



Throughout the school year, the children have been deeply engaged in creating their very own "World Records"—a long-term project that has sparked enthusiasm, creativity, and a true sense of ownership. From the tallest block tower to the longest hopscotch path, each record is imagined, attempted, and celebrated by the children themselves.



Vincenzo holds the record for most holes punched in a piece of paper!



Holey Cow!
That's a lot of holes

He punched a total
of 170 holes in one
piece of paper!

PIC•COLLA

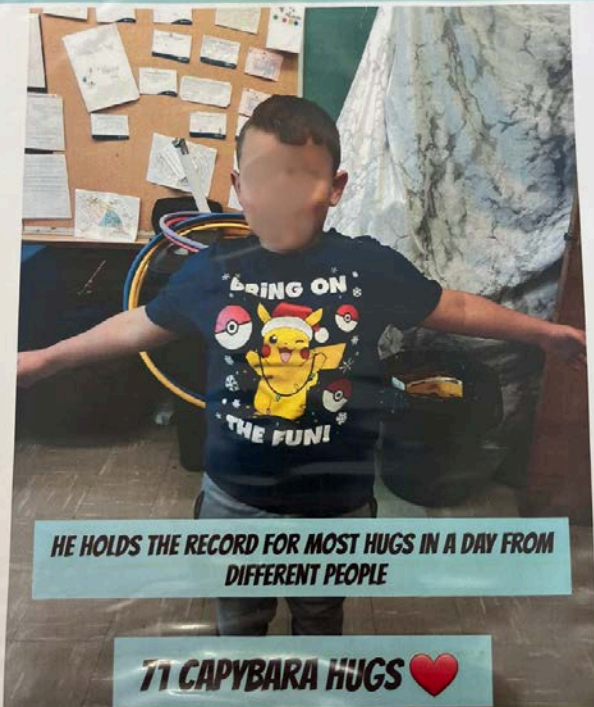


NICE SHOT

VINCENZO HOLDS THE RECORD FOR 5 STRAIGHT
FOUL SHOTS WITHOUT MISSING

PIC•COLLAGE

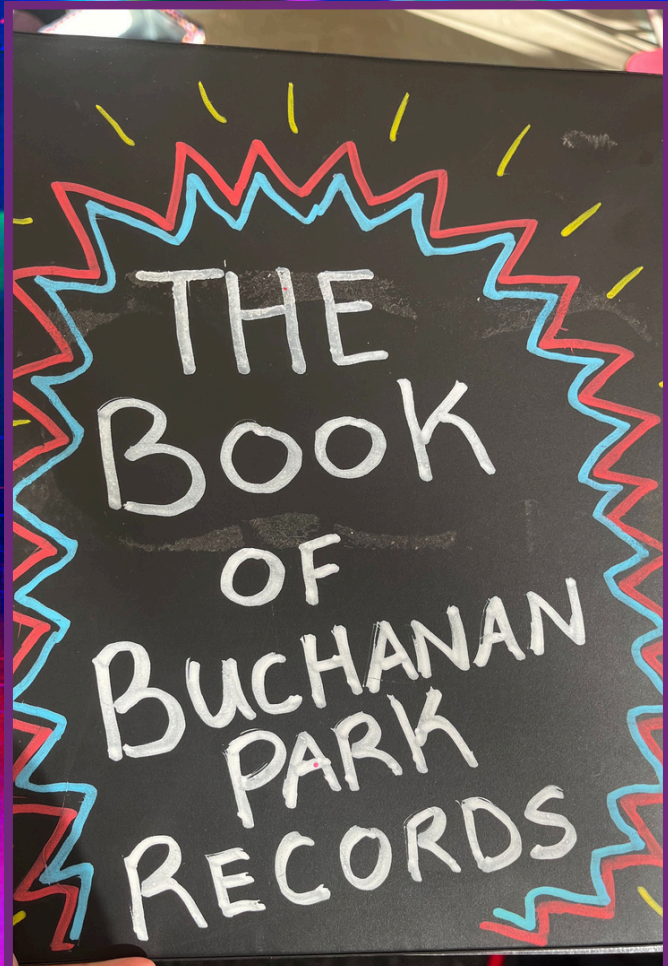
AUGUSTUS IS THE BEST HUGGER



HE HOLDS THE RECORD FOR MOST HUGS IN A DAY FROM
DIFFERENT PEOPLE

77 CAPYBARA HUGS ❤️

PIC•COLLAG



Pedagogical Documentation

Shannen K - Preschool Room

Preschool Room - Umbrella Family Shannen Koostachin

Process art

An approach that emphasizes on the exploration of materials and the creative journey over the creation of the finished product

made a new color! Nathan

*I'm gonna squeeze
a lot and a little.* Xavier



Nathan mixing the different-colored glue using a paintbrush



authors, protagonists and artists: children aged 2.6 to 4 Aleezah, Ayra, Braden, Damon, Nathan, Ryan, Xavier, educators: Kaye and Onessa

The flowerbed

A glue table project



*I'm gluing beside
Damon!* Ryan

*One piece at a
time!* Braden

*Look! I'm making a
tall tree!* Aleezah

*No, we are making a
flowerbed.* Ayra



HOW DOES THIS SUPPORT THE FOUR FOUNDATIONS OF LEARNING?



Glue

Glue is always accessible in our creative arts space, for big projects like our glue table and for individual art creations

Pedagogical Documentation Inspired by NAREA

Pedagogical documentation goes beyond displaying children's work—it is a collaborative process of making learning visible. Through careful observation, reflection, and interpretation, educators collect and share traces of children's thinking, dialogue, and creativity.

Aerial Sculpting

The hanging garden

Preschool Room - Umbrella Family Shannen Koostachin



Digital environment

Videos of wildflowers in nature are projected onto walls, ceiling, and floor, and towards the aerial sculpture, making it look like it is floating and with the images projected. It casts shadows of the masterpiece to the wall, creating a layer of black and white image.

authors, protagonists and artists:
children aged 2.11 to 4

Adrianna, Ayra, Damon, Ethan,
Levi, Ryan, Xavier

educators: Kaye and Onessa



My shadow is getting bigger. Xavier



3D art in multiple perspectives

Ryan intently observing
Adrianna hang the bugs
from the other side of the
sculpture



Dynamic interest

While the interest started with wildflowers, the children talked about the different bugs that they see on plants. Their conversations become cues on how to extend their interest



*Ayra: Buzz, buzz, buzz, the
bee is on the leaves!*
Ryan: You're funny!



It's a spider web. Damon

Can I put the spiders? Levi

*It's a Pterodactyl. That's
not a bug.* Ethan

HOW DOES THIS SUPPORT THE FOUR
FOUNDATIONS OF LEARNING?



Shannen K - Preschool Room



Wildflowers

The beginning

Preschool Room - Umbrella Family Shannen Koostachin



authors and protagonists:

children aged 3.6 to 4

Aleezah, Ethan, Elijah, Mivaa, Ryan

educators: Kaye and Onessa

The wonders and curiosities

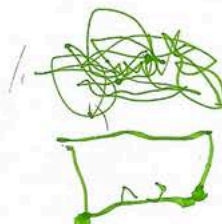
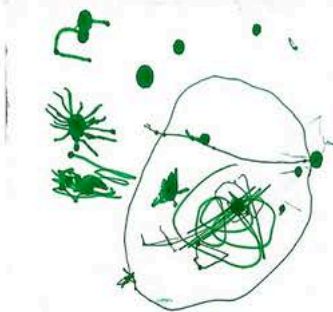
Mivaa: It's a baby plant

Aleezah: It will be growing like a tall tree. And if it grows like a tall tree inside, the classroom will break. We should bring it outside the classroom.

Ryan: I don't think it's gonna break the classroom. I think it's gonna break the light.

Aleezah: I think it's gonna break the wall.

The visual interpretation



I'm gonna draw a plant like a butterfly. Mivaa



I see white things. Maybe they are marshmallows? Ethan

The use of multimedia



I see seeds and rocks. Aleezah

I don't see eggs. I see Spiderman! Ryan



I'm scared of the plant growing, Kaye. It looks like a spider. Elijah

Shannen K - Preschool Room

BURDOCK *Nature's velcro*



Preschool Room - Umbrella Family Shannen Koostachin



authors and protagonists:
children aged 3.2 to 4.1
Aleezah, Ayra, Chloe, Ethan, Elijah,
and Ryan
educators: Kaye and Onessa

Chloe

*It makes my skin
itchy when I touch it.*

Chloe

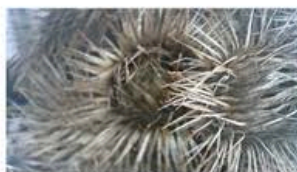


Use of digital tools

The handheld microscope is one of the digital tools that the children are using in the classroom to explore items from nature. They see these natural materials with their eyes and through a special lens enlarged and magnified.

*I see bugs.
They look like dolphins
in the ocean.*

Elijah

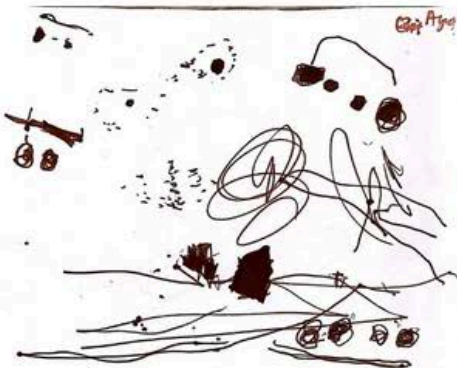


Mark-making

A striking similarity between what the children saw through the microscope and their drawings. They also catch details that adults usually do not notice.

I see small spikes.

Ethan



I see a spider.

Ayra



I see orange bugs.

Ryan



*Why is it the shape
of an eyebrow?*

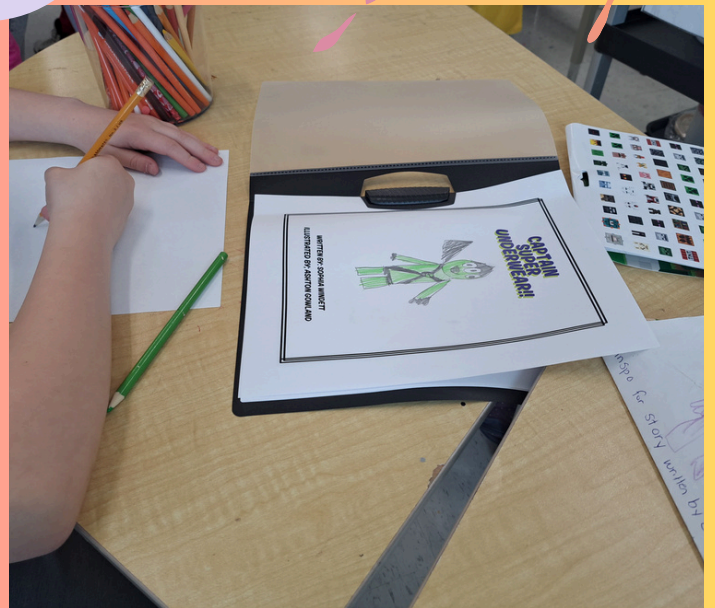
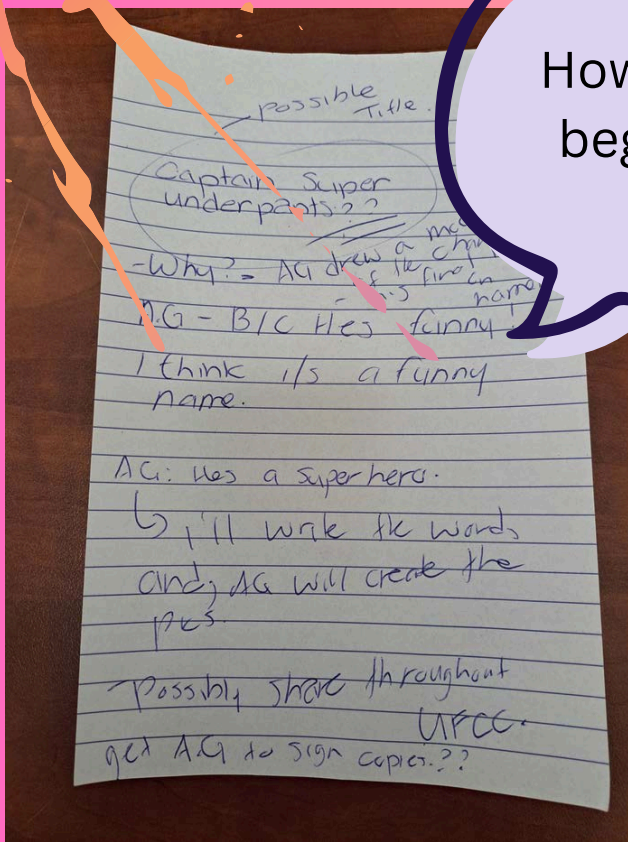
Aleezah



Shannen K - Preschool Room

shANNEN KOOSTACHIN

How it all
began...



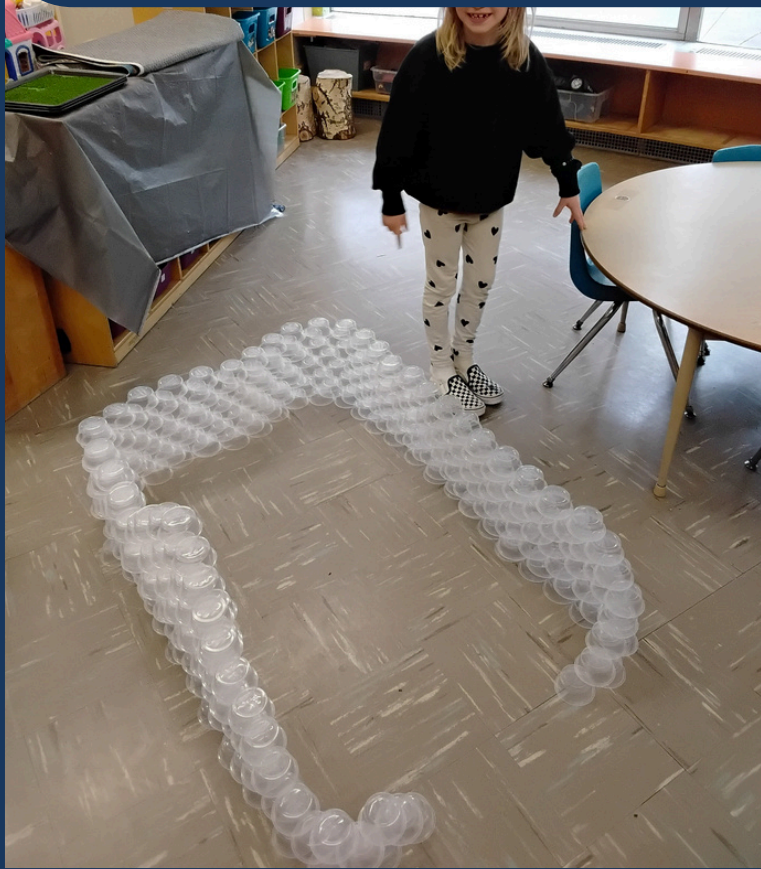
A series of art collaborations and conversation, birthed a project between an author and a emerging artist from our Shannen Koostachin School Age Program.

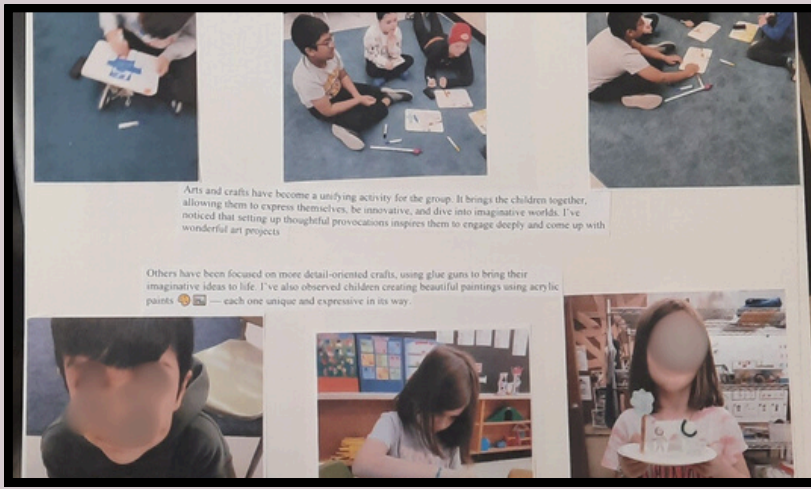


Buchanan Park



Buchanan Park – Collaborative Cup Art
At Buchanan Park, children explored creative expression by using small plastic cups to design a collaborative art installation.



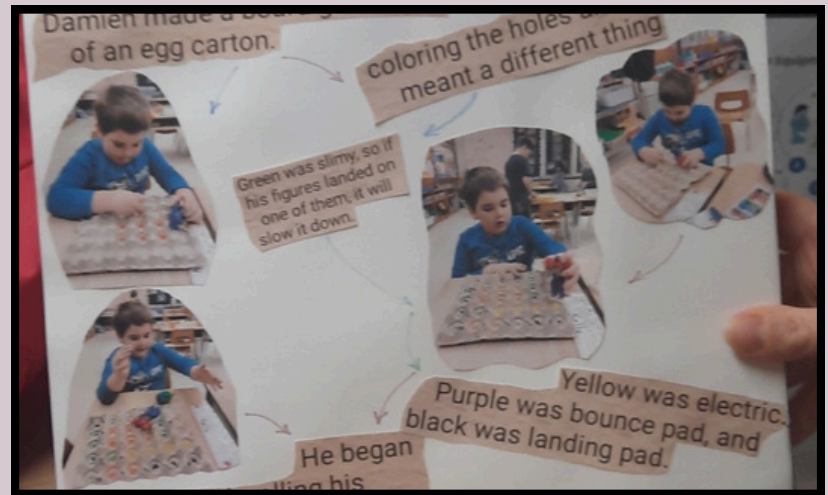


Scrapbooks as a Tool for Documentation

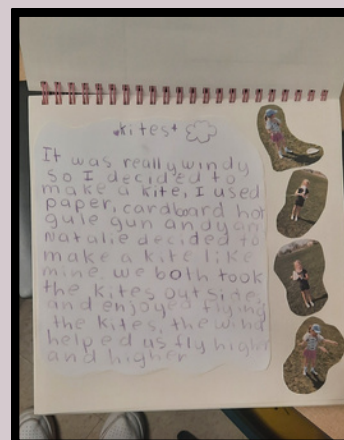
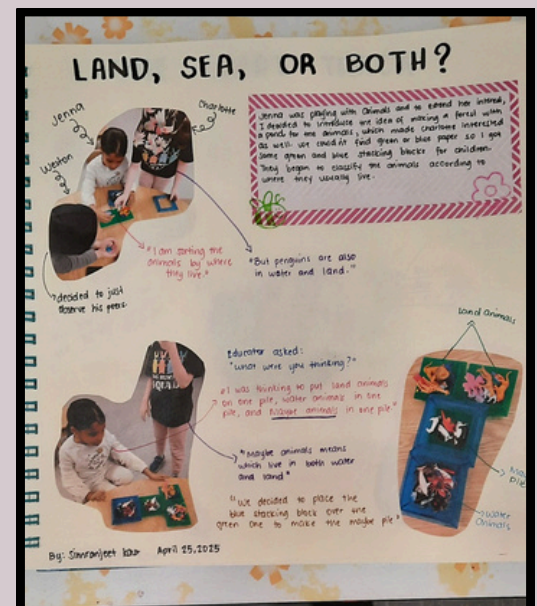
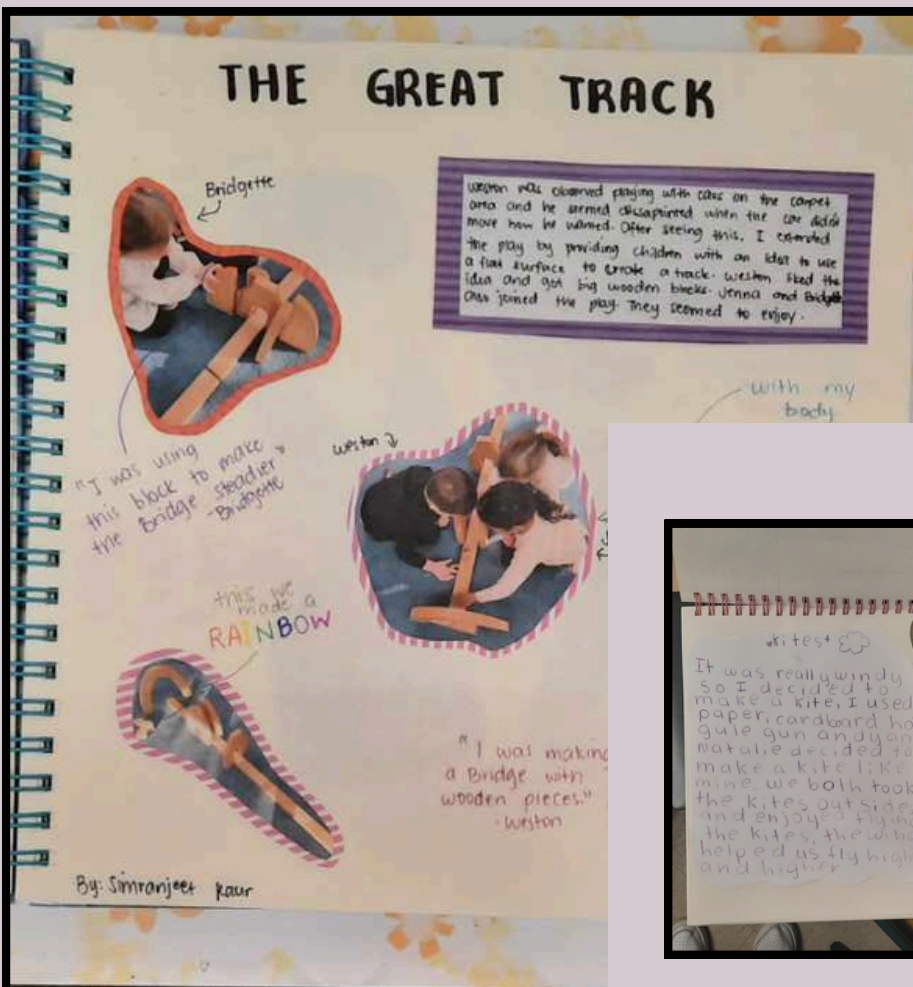
Scrapbooks offer a meaningful and accessible way to document children's learning, creativity, and daily experiences. By collecting photos, artwork, observations, and children's words, educators create a visual narrative that reflects each child's unique journey.

JAMES

MACDONALD



SCRAPBOOK DOCUMENTATION



Balaclava

CLASSROOM CALENDAR AND JOBS

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
Dean's B-day 1	2 Pet Appreciation week	Bike Day 3	Hug your Cat Day 4 National Cheese Day	World Environment Day 5	PA Day 6 Donut Day	Chocolate Ice Cream Day 7
BFF Day 8 Ocean's Day	Donald Duck Day 9	Ice Tea Day 10	Making Life Beautiful Day 11	Peanut Butter Cookie Day 12	Friday The 13th 13	Bath Day 14
Father's Day 15 Nature photography Day	Fudge Day 16 National	Eat your Veggies Day 17 Pollinator week	Picnic Day 18	19 Juneteenth	Summer Solstice 20 Bring Dog to work Day	World Day of Music 21
Onion Ring Day 22	Summer B-day 23 Pink Day	Summer B-day 24	Catfish Day 25	Work from Home Day 26	PA Day 27 Ice Cream Cake Day	28
29	Corvette 30 Day					

Classroom Jobs

Door Holder	Line Leader
Substitute	Teachers Assistant
Snack Helper	Master of the List
Hallway Monitor	Cleanup Crew

TAYLOR

Evelyn

Elijah

Niko

Paige

Jonah

Blair

Colton

Sign Up To Teach For A Day!

Name

Axel

Deitah

Taylor

Ally

Idea

Be loud

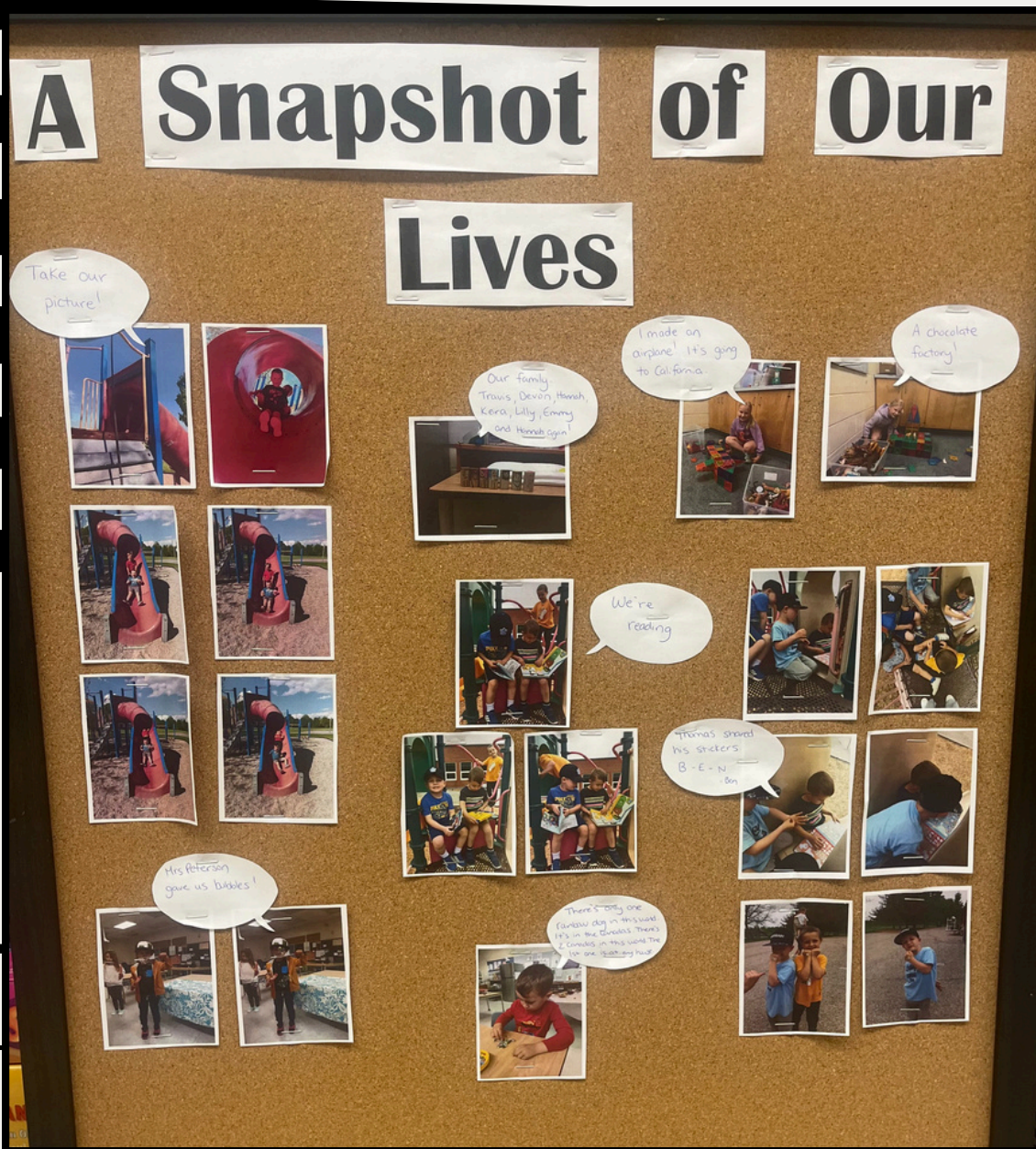
how to shot a puck

how to do tie die

o.t

Documentation

by: *Balacava*



Balaclava

Child-Led Photography in Action



Empowering children to take their own photos invites them to see themselves as active participants and storytellers in their learning. Through the lens of a camera, children capture what matters most to them—moments of curiosity, friendship, and discovery. This form of documentation honours their perspective, supports autonomy, and provides authentic insight into their thinking and experiences. The resulting photos offer a powerful window into how children see and make meaning of the world around them.

Balaclava

OUR ADVENTURE

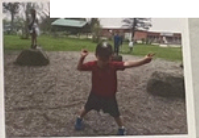


That's me and Hannah
hugging by a tree.
- Keira

I took all of these ones.
- Thomas



Gilbert and Hannah are
picking flowers.
- Keira



That's a picture of me doing
something weird.
- Keira

I'm doing an electric guitar.
- Dallas



I took this picture.
- Thomas



That's scary.
- Luke



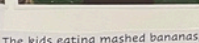
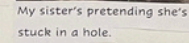
Miss Victoria is standing in
the unknown.
- Blaire



The big hill looks so small.
- Keira



That's Isla skipping.
- Keira



I'm playing basketball.
- Leo



I'm reading Dogman.
- Gilbert



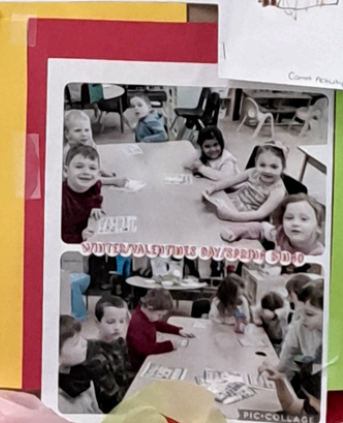
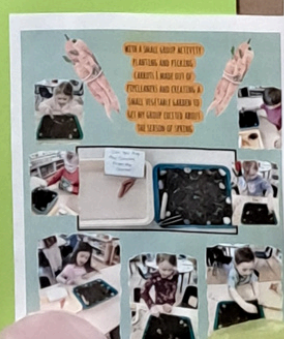
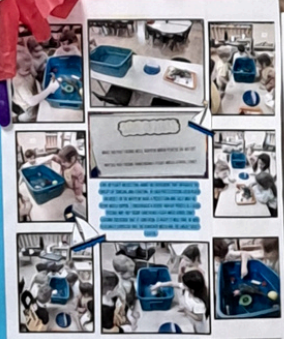
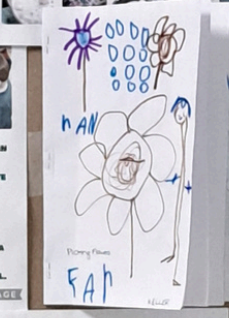
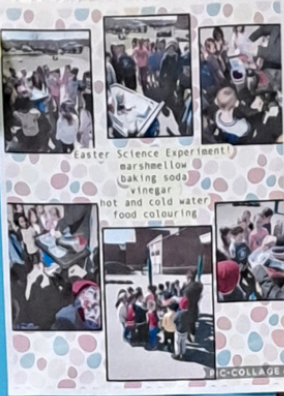
The kids eating mashed bananas,
peanut butter and marshmallows.
- Blaire



Child-Led Photography in Action

Winona

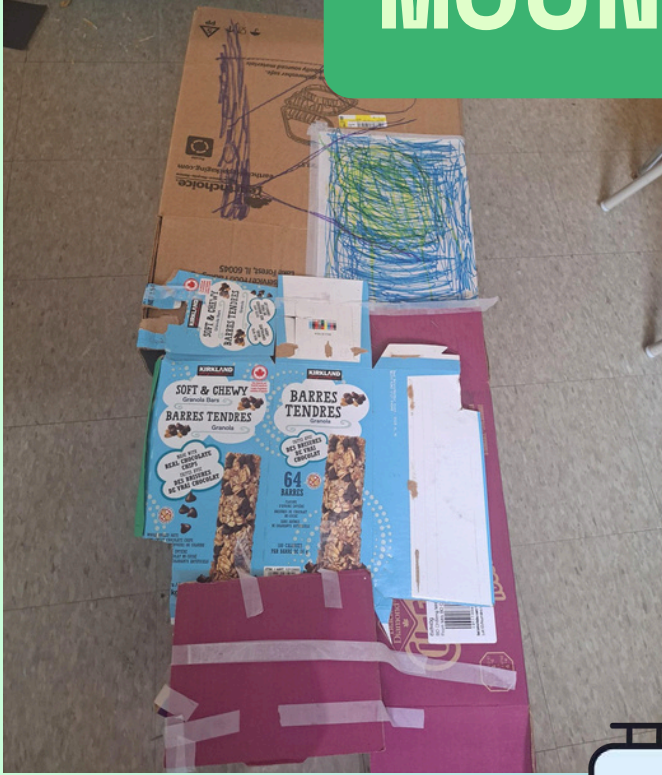
FAVOURITE MEMORY IN AFTERCARE



Ray Lewis Toddler Room



MOUNTVIEW



A group of children from Mountview utilized a large box and other recyclable materials to create an RV.

When asked what sparked the interest in RV's, one of the children explained that his grandparents had one and he loved the experience of being on it! That ultimately led to exciting conversation between peers and a project was birthed! Check out their flat screen TV and remote 😊

Building an RV

ray Lewis



The School Age Groups at Ray Lewis, found a great way to repurpose an old cart. Many afternoons were spent creating, configuring and testing out their collaborative project- a bicycle.



PVC Pipe Innovations!



In celebration of Black History Month - Inspired by Tyree Guyton's use of found objects and his message of hope and change, children participated in a process art experience using recycled materials. The focus was not on the final product, but on exploration, creativity, and expression—honouring Guyton's belief that art lives in the everyday and that everyone has the power to create beauty and meaning from what surrounds them.

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Digital Tools as Intentional Prompts for Learning

Inspired by the values of the Reggio Emilia approach and the work of NAREA, digital tools—such as tablets, voice recorders, light tables, flashlights and projectors—can be used with intention to provoke curiosity, dialogue, and collaboration. When thoughtfully integrated into learning experiences, technology becomes more than a tool; it becomes a means of expression, reflection, and co-construction.



TEMPLEMEAD

BACK PRESCHOOL ROOM

Learning Through a CHILD'S LENS

Capturing Children's Voices as Documentation

Recording children's voices offers a powerful and authentic way to document their thoughts, ideas, and understandings.

By listening closely, educators gain deeper insight into children's perspectives, making their thinking visible and valued. This form of documentation affirms children as capable communicators and co-constructors of knowledge.

**Record It,
Hear It,
Keep It!**



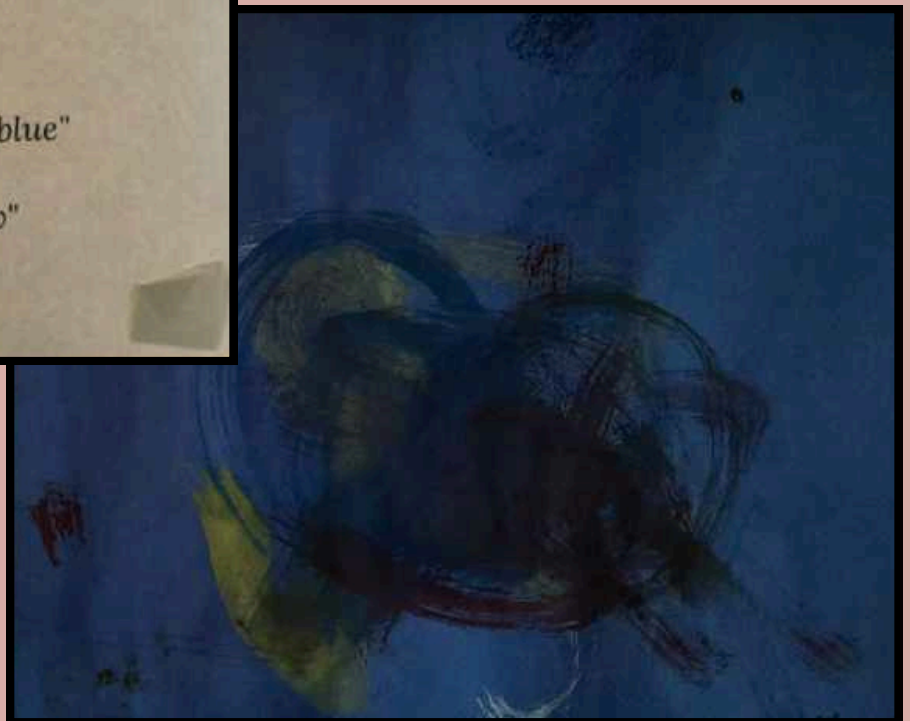
MARGOT

"I like to paint"

"Mommy, Mommy is blue"

"David's turn now"

**Bellmoore
Toddlers**



Record, Reflect, Remember

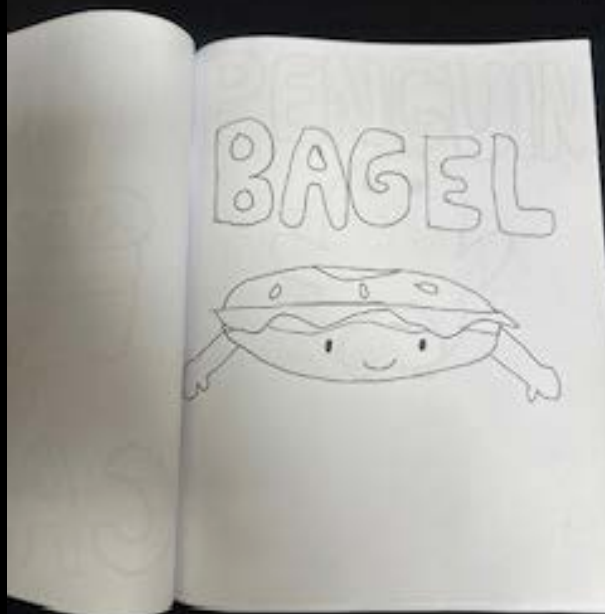


LUCA

"it's working now"
"I'm making for my Momma"
"I see my paper"
"Mama"
"I put more blue"
"I add more blue"
"all done"

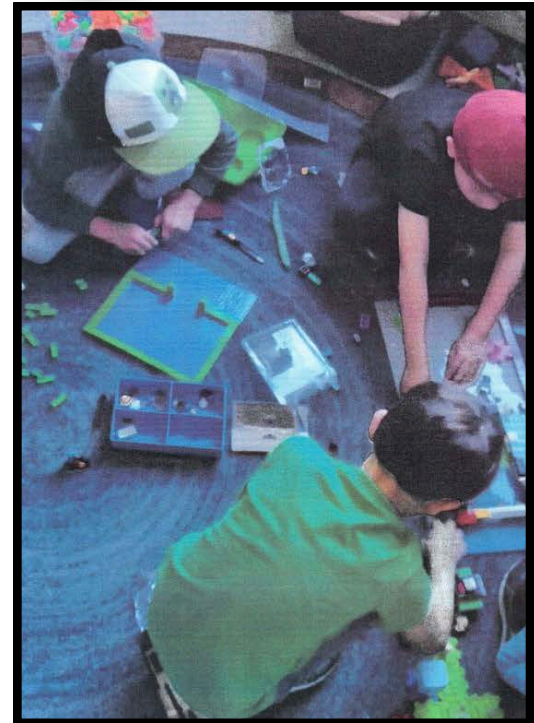
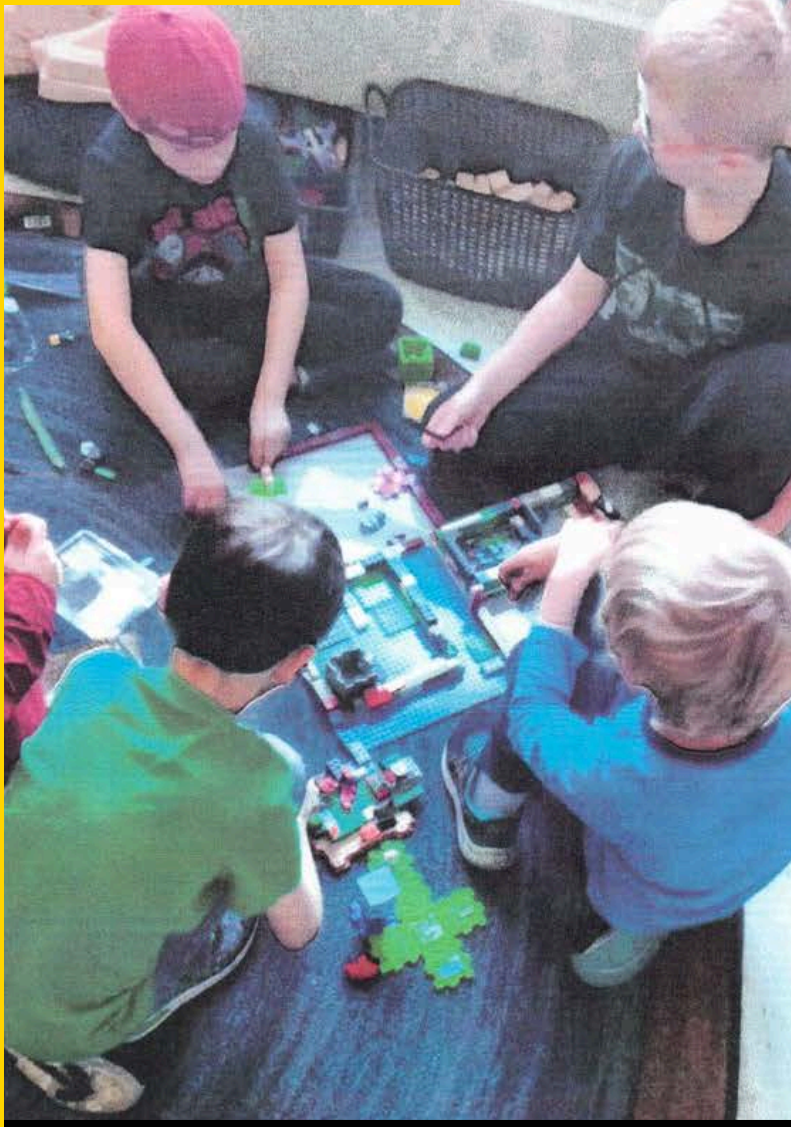
Bellmoore - Toddlers

Michaelle Jean



The groups Michaëlle Jean turned their interest in colouring pages into a program project. Together, they created their own colouring book that speaks to the unique interests of the children who attend

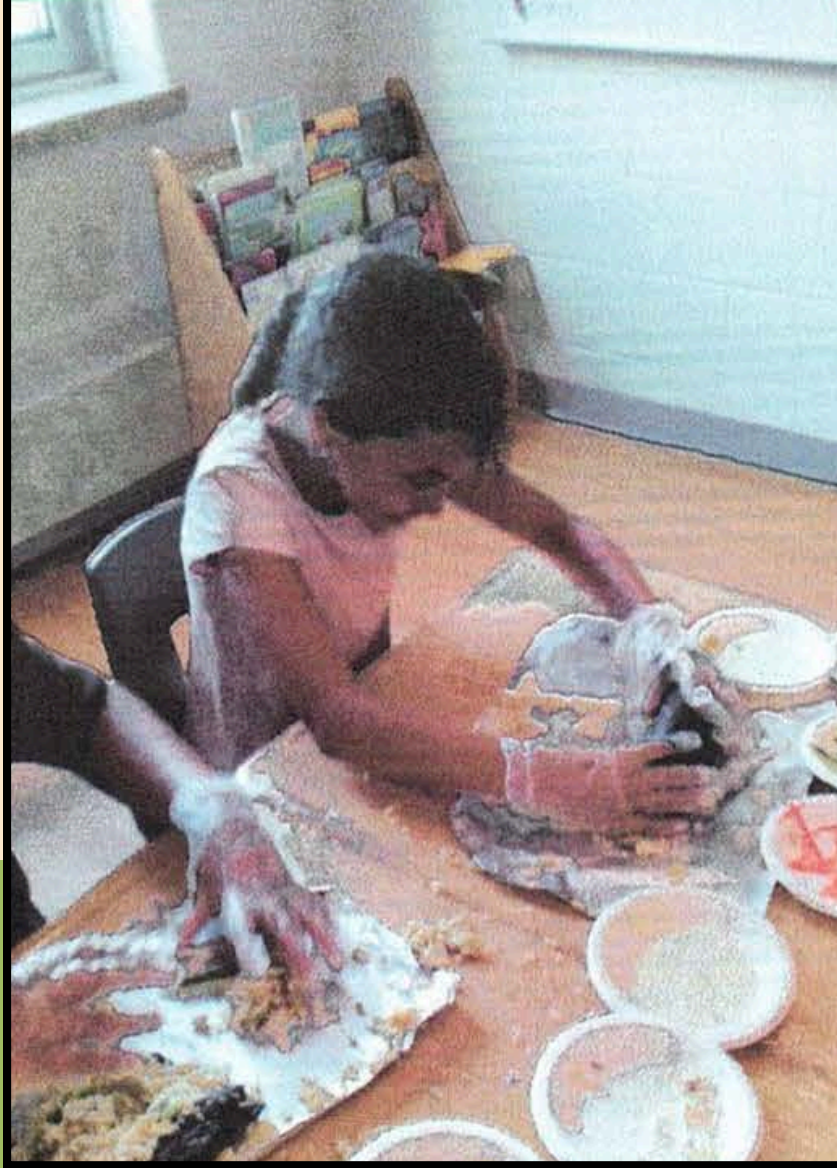
LEGO



There's something magical about a pile of LEGO bricks—limitless possibility in every tiny piece. Today, we watched as children became architects, engineers, storytellers, and dreamers. Towers reached the clouds, spaceships launched from tabletops, and entire cities came to life one block at a time.

SOUTH MEADOW





SOUTH MEADOW SCHOOL AGE



Our cooking classes have become a beloved tradition—led by the children themselves! From brainstorming recipes to preparing the ingredients, our little chefs are always whipping up something delicious.



Documentation

Bellmoore



"I got red,"
'm doing it with my hands, all the colour
"Look at this, Miss Karly,"
"Nice and clean"
"it's a skadoo."
"All sticky"
"Look at my hands."
"Sticky sticky bubble gum"
Look, Miss Karly, I rubbed ll the paint in"



"Wow"
"Blue"

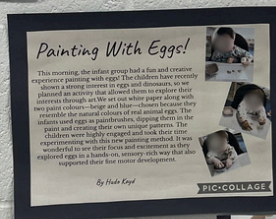


Painting Together

This morning, we introduced group painting in the infant room—an activity we rarely get to explore due to virus infections and our children being sick. Today, we chose watercolour paints, adding a bit of water to the palette to make the colours more vibrant. The infants immediately engaged with the materials, eagerly painting and even sharing the paint pots with one another. It was wonderful to see each child so engaged and curious, experimenting with the colours on paper. Their excitement and collaboration made the experience truly rewarding. We look forward to incorporating more group paintings to continue fostering creativity and social interaction among the children.

By Heidi Kayd

Voices



Viola Desmond