



Barron Park Preschool Presents

Defending Your
Play-Based
Program

Play It Forward

by
Making Learning Visible

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Play It Forward. Defending Your Play-Based ECE Program by Making Learning Visible



When you leave . . .

You will have

- Gained a deeper understanding of a Play-Based ECE
- Had a chance to go deeper in your understanding of the importance of Making Learning Visible
- Practiced Observation and Strategies for Making Learning Visible



According to the CDC diagnoses of ADHD, obesity, depression and anxiety are all on the rise as the amount of time children are forced to sit in the classroom increases.

The American Academy of Pediatrics came out with a *stronger* position statement...

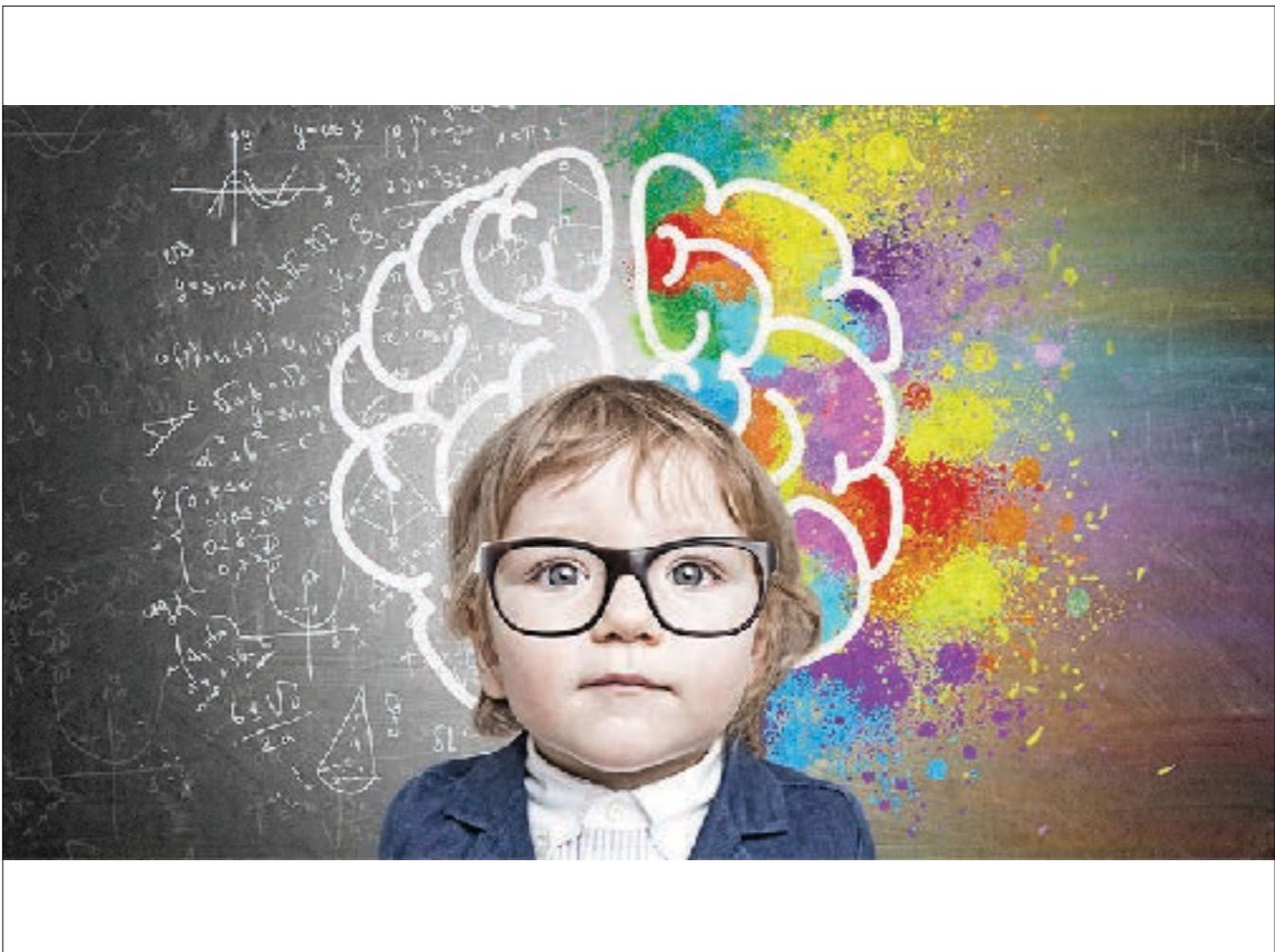
that supports play (specifically recess) as key in the development of kids' social, emotional, cognitive and physical skills as well as health. Without adequate time for play, children lack the opportunities to build social skills, expand their creativity, or gain problem solving skills.



- Play is so important that at the "Convention of the Rights of the Child" the United Nations, stated that all children have the right to play. Play is a legitimate right of childhood, representing a crucial aspect of children's physical, intellectual and social development. Therefore, it must be protected!

according to Peter Gray Ph.D., research professor at Boston College and author.

"...The most straightforward explanation for the rise of depression and anxiety in children and adolescents is that, as a society, we have increasingly forced them into settings that make them unhappy and anxious and have deprived them of the activities that make them happy."



Study by George Land

They gave the test to children (1600 children) age 4-5 98% tested at genius levels

Turned the study into a longitudinal study and re-tested 5 years later. Same children tested at 30%. Followed up 5 years later... 12%

Adult sampling scores are at 2%

Why?



WHAT IS HAPPENING TO PLAY?

With such strong correlations to these negative outcomes - what is happening to play?

in our efforts to educate, why are we taking play out? (and its worse in elementary school when "free play" is relegated to two 15 minute recess times and a 45 minute lunch break) if misbehaving you "lose" recess

In our striving to "get ahead" academics are being pushed down (No Child Left Behind, Race to the Top, and now Every Student Succeeds Act)



High stakes Standardized testing and assessment are driving educators to "teach" to meet the standard (in ECE the DRDP "measure") rather than support and document learning that children will naturally get from play.



AP

Perhaps another threat to play is just well meaning teachers...



This is combined with the over-scheduling of children in "activities" (lessons, sports, clubs) meant to enrich their education are not allowing play in the out of school hours either. pressure from parents to ECE educators to increase academics

The results

We are seeing creativity decline (as the study shows)

We are seeing a greater rise in depression and anxiety in children and adolescents than at any time in recent history.

So... now for some good news there is something out there that can turn this around and have a huge impact on kids lives right away...

**WE ARE THE
ANSWER!**



WHAT IS PLAY?

Play memory:

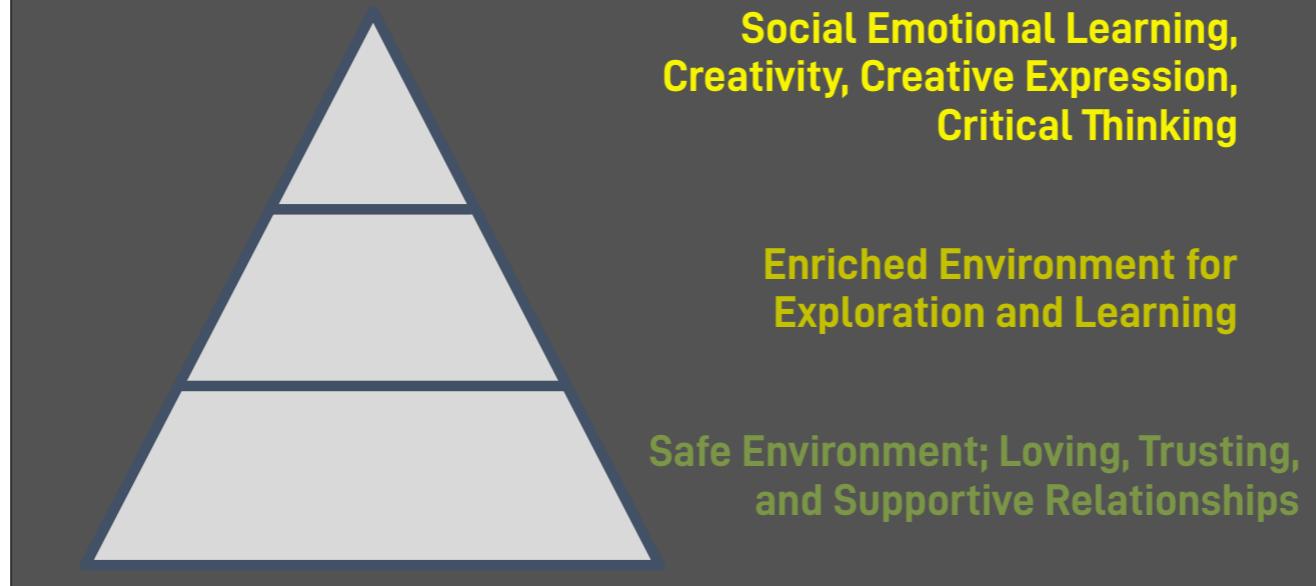
What were you doing?
Who were you with?
How old were you?
What time of day was it?
What season was it?
Can you identify what you were feeling? smelling? touching?

Worksheet:

What was the topic
What color was the paper?
How old were you?

Our brains were wired to remember the play memory and not the worksheet memory. As adults (especially as educators) we could probably look back and decipher what we were learning through that play as well.

The Barron Park Preschool Teaching Pyramid



WHAT IS PLAY?



the problem is we may not all have a common definition of play or play-based ECE

Take a minute to write down some characteristics of play- just make a list. Stop when I ring the bell

Find a partner and share lists - decide on three characteristics that you agree upon. When you are done put your cards in the air.

Find another pair and decide on 3 that you all agree upon. When you are done put your cards in the air.

Find a group of 4 and repeat

Find a group of 8 and repeat

compare with Peter Gray's list (next slide)



5 CHARACTERISTICS OF PLAY



According to an article in Psychology Today titled "the Value of Play" Doctor Peter Gray lists 5 characteristics of play:



1. Play is self-chosen and self-directed;



2. Play is activity in which means are more valued than ends;
process over product



3. Play has structure, or rules, which are not dictated by physical necessity but emanate from the minds of the players;



4. Play is imaginative, non-literal, mentally removed in some way from "real" or "serious" life; and



5. Play involves an active, alert, but non-stressed frame of mind.

WHY DO CHILDREN NEED TO PLAY?



We know what can happen when kids don't get enough time to play but lets take a look at some of the benefits

Play is an ideal state of mind for creativity and learning.

The mind is focused on means not ends (process not product) so fear of failure is absent and players feel free to incorporate new sources of information and experiment with new ways of doing things.

During play, a child's brain takes in information using all of his senses...

Have Participants name the senses... Sight, smell, touch, taste, hearing

*add **proprioception** (or kinesthesia is the sense through which we **perceive the position and movement of our body** -senses that depend on the notion of force.) and **vestibular** (the sense of **balance and spatial orientation**)

These combine making connections in the brain that create the foundation for future learning and development.



Brain Development and Play

Each region of the brain consists of a highly sophisticated neurological network of cells, dendrites and nerves which interconnect one portion of the brain to another.

The brain changes physiologically as a result of experience. New dendrites are formed every day, "hooking" new information to old experiences. As the child experiences an event for the first time, new dendrites have to be formed. As other information is gained, the brain looks to associate the information to existing dendrites

Sergio Pellis, a researcher explains that "The experience of play changes the connections of the neurons at the front end of your brain, And without play experience, those neurons aren't changed," -University of Lethbridge in Alberta, Canada suggests

Why is it important to change connections at the front of the brain?

It is here (the pre-frontal cortex) where critical thinking, self regulation, empathy, creativity, problem solving and higher order thinking skills take place



We used to believe that play was "practice" for adulthood.

Experts have come to believe play has an another important role:

"The function of play is to **build pro-social brains**, social brains that know how to interact with others in positive ways," Jaak Panksepp at Washington State University.



CHARACTERISTICS OF PLAY-BASED ECE

- Freedom of Choice
- Freedom of Movement
- Freedom of Time

Characteristics of Play-Based

Edith Dowley Founder of Bing Nursery School and Research Lab At Stanford University

Freedom of choice

Freedom of movement

Freedom of time



FREEDOM OF CHOICE

Freedom of choice looks like-
grinding all the sidewalk chalk to dust for the sake of watching the transformation take place.

choice of materials to create, construct, manipulate (trains everyday)
snack?

Freedom of choice can be scary- for a teacher who has the idea that he or she must be in control of a classroom.

In play-based classrooms children are "in control" of their own learning
your lesson plan may violate choice. They have the choice to opt out.

Adult led play can happen, but when we take "choice" to participate away, it is no longer PLAY (tell a story of circle time gone bad?)



FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

Freedom of movement looks like...

- moving literally from one area to another (no area in the space is off-limits) the fence in the blank area is "closed"
- hauling water from water table to the sand box
- bringing the dramatic play props to the block area (or the fabric outside)



FREEDOM OF TIME

Freedom of time looks like...

long blocks of uninterrupted time for play responding to the idea that play (and learning) happens when in a state of active, alert, but non-stressed frame of mind

If you have events in your daily schedule labeled "fill in the blank... time" (snack time, circle time, center time, inside time, outside time, story time,...) you might want to take a look at how they are effecting play.

The Role of the Early Childhood Educator

Boss or Guide?



A "guide" will be a fellow explorer while maintaining the safety of the group.

REFLECTING ON OUR OBSERVATIONS

**What are they doing?
What might they be learning?
How might you tell this story?
How might you extend the learning?**



the tool you will use is designed to create a framework for making the learning visible. jot down notes of what children are doing and learning then- tell the story (visually) and finally decide how you might extend the learning.

what are the domains of development?

social/emotional, physical, language, cognitive, and approaches to learning (self regulation)

OBSERVING TO MAKE LEARNING VISIBLE

What are they doing?

What are they learning? (Developmental Skills)

Physical	Social / Emotional
Language / Literacy	Cognitive
Approaches to Learning / Self Regulation	

How might you tell this story?

How might you extend the learning?

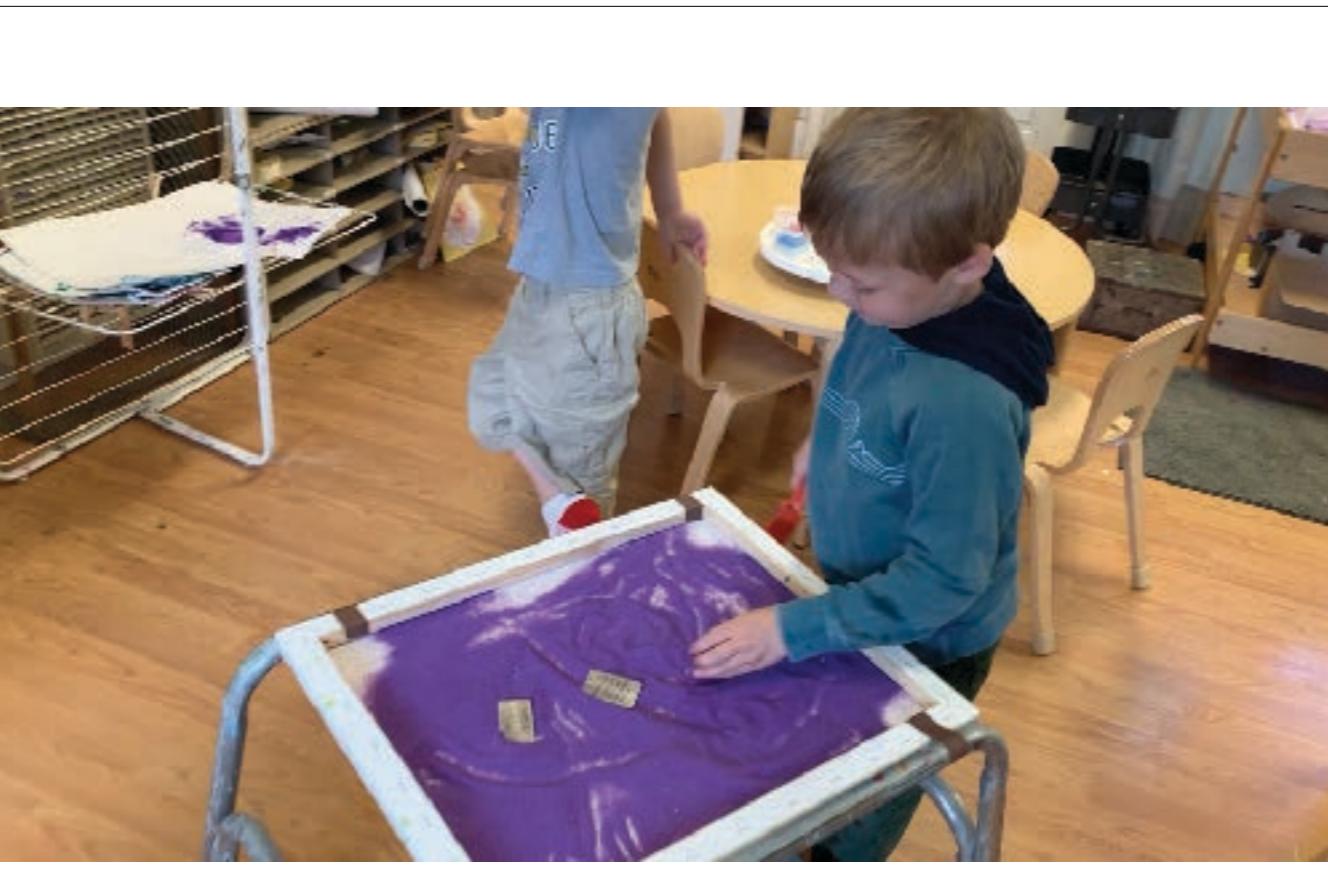
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playbarronpark.com

this file was uploaded on the conference resources page

it can also be found via my website

Show one of the videos and practice







gross motor, problem-solving, social skills (team work, collaboration, give and take, communication skills)

Engineering, cause and effect,

Identity of Self in Relation to Others 8

2 Social and Emotional Understanding 9

4 Relationships and Social Interactions with Peers 11

5 Symbolic and Sociodramatic Play

Perceptual-Motor Skills and Movement Concepts 38

2 Gross Locomotor Movement Skills 39

3 Gross Motor Manipulative Skills 40

5 Safety



MAKING LEARNING VISIBLE

- Why?
- Who?
- What?
- How?

WHY?

you will be reminded of the value of play and play-based learning AND the need to support this practice by making valuable learning visible

WHO?

you will define who the displayed documentation is for

WHAT?

you will see examples of different types of displays for documenting learning

HOW?

you will learn how to make a —— using Apple Pages templates (how?)

you will learn how to make a meaningful display (how?) Why do we need to do it?



Why?

Capture what is emerging at any given time.
Encouraging to the community.
Keeps us aware
Best Practice



Who?

Make the process visible to children, parents, staff, and visitors.

What?





DISPLAYING LEARNING

Telling the story

Books, Apps, Displays,

Other ways?

Drama
art show
video

Make Books



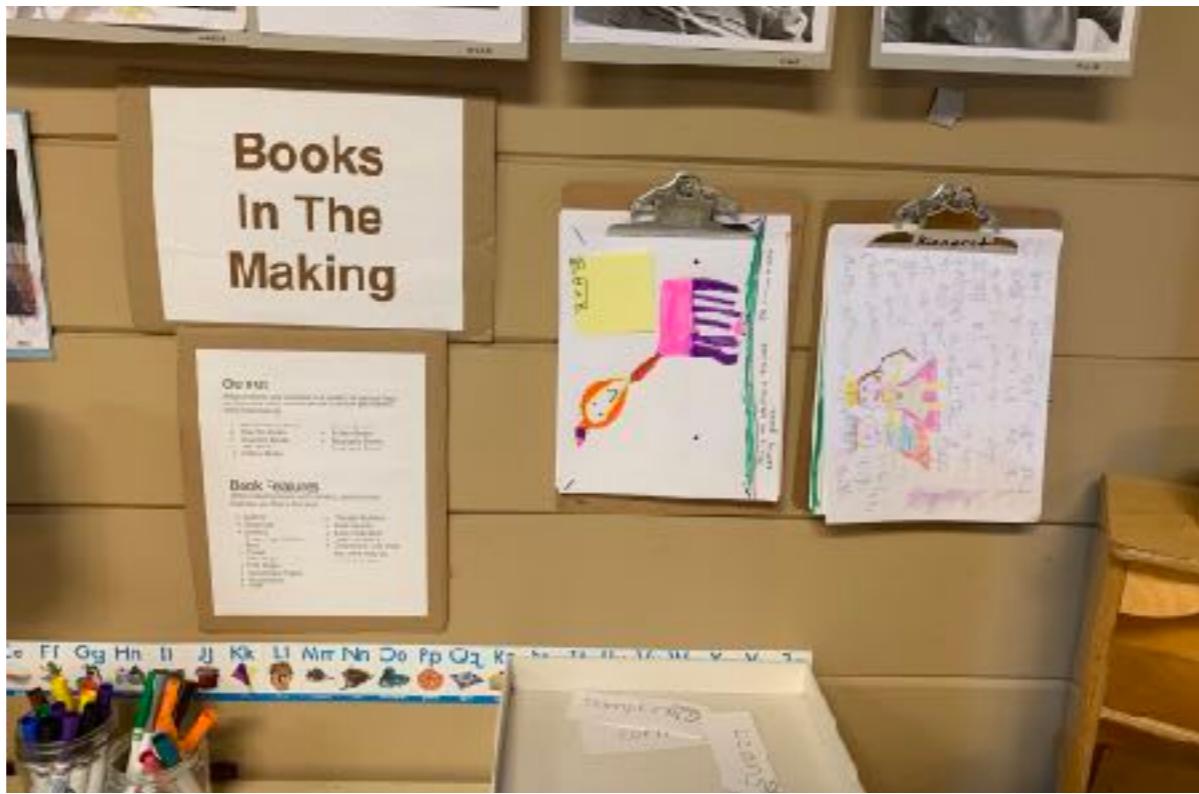
Books

Made by Children

Help children make

Teachers make for the Kids (about events or interests)

Teacher make for adults



Book making area at our preschool

Use an App!



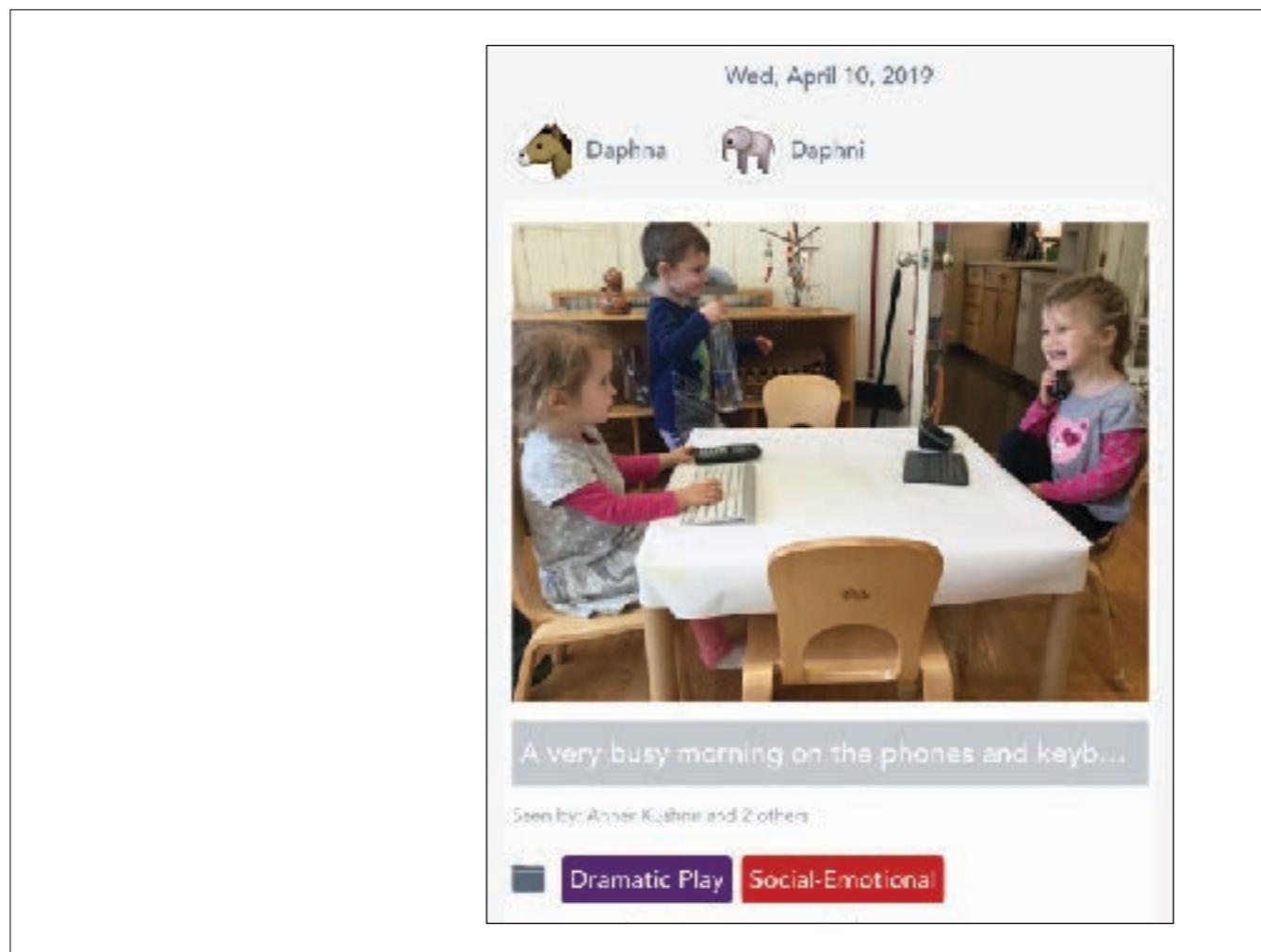
Instagram



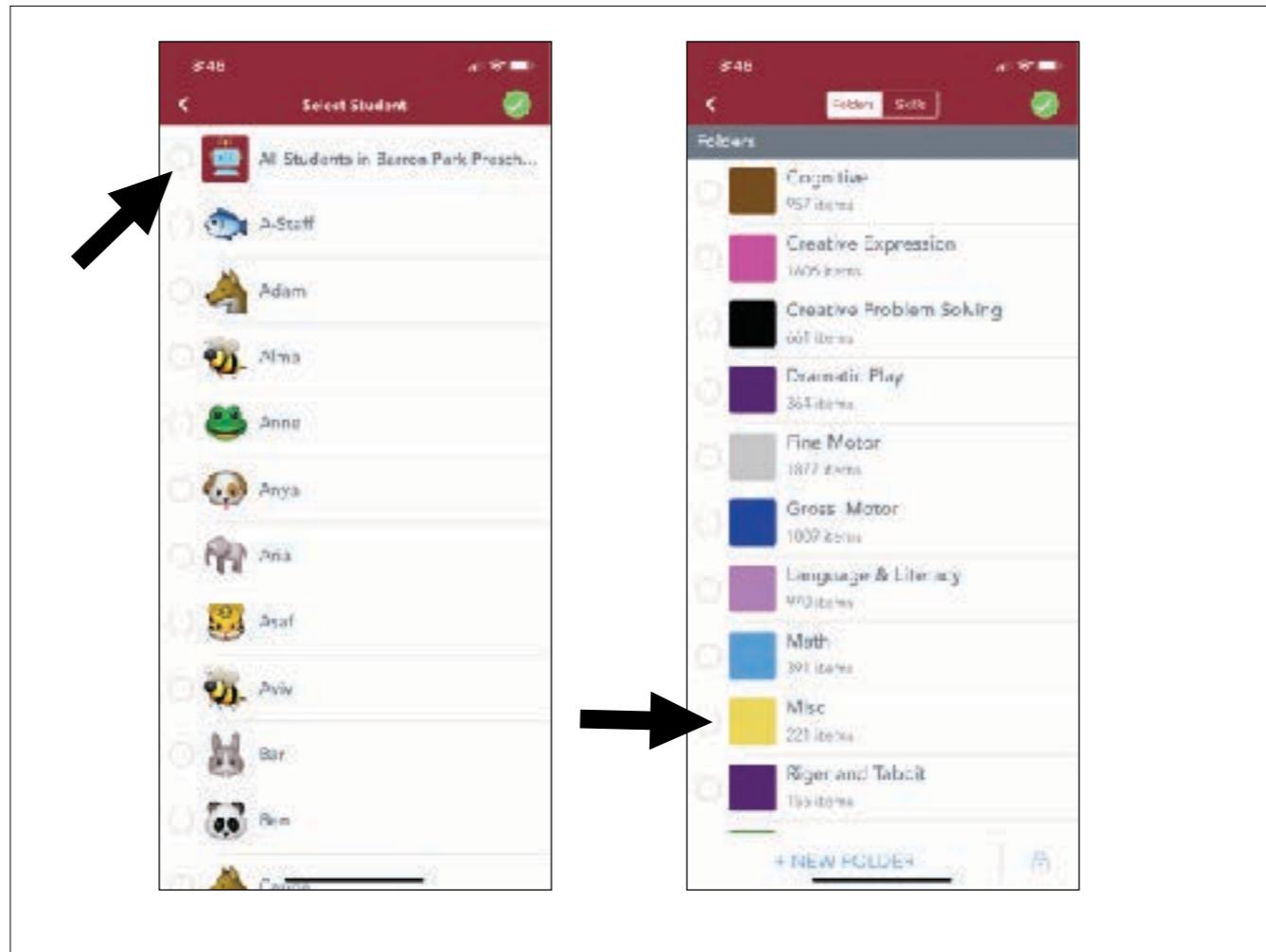
Kaymbu

others?

Kaymbu, Seesaw, Brightwheel, (private pages on) Instagram or Facebook



We use SeeSaw



WE make the individual child's learning visible by...

Use Displays



Physical Space to show what's happening in the kid's play

use Displays



Highlight a single child's work



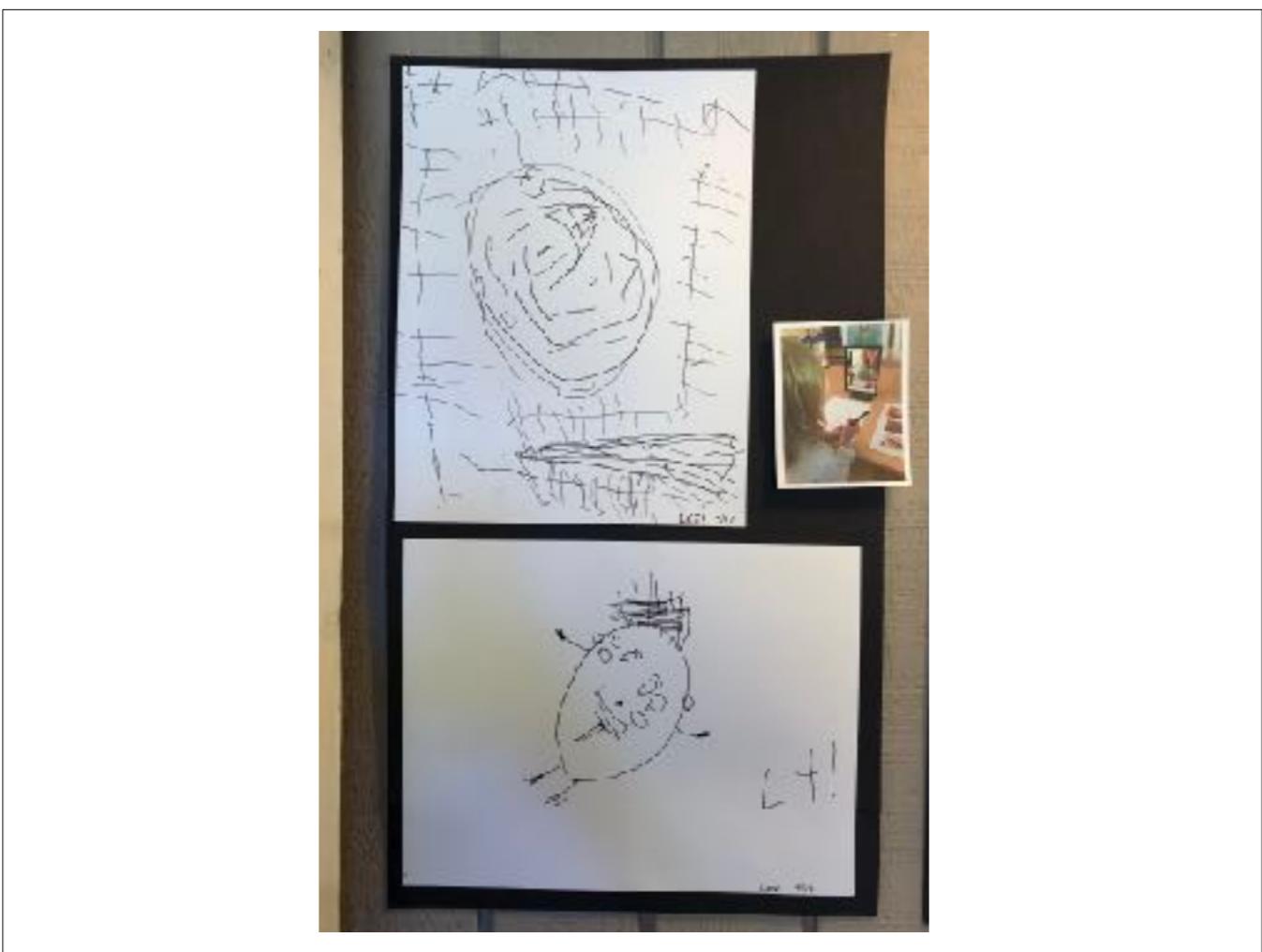
Document a design challenge (keep the animals safe from the crocodile. Using the book Crocodile Beat)



Document children's responses to a provocation (Anne's bird)



Document children's development over time (one of the few “must do’s” Teachers ask children to draw a self portrait)



these two drawings are 1 year apart



Displays don't need to be big or include every child (or all the work).

In this case a small display of an experiment the children did putting dried out markers in jars of water- discovery was that it made beautiful watercolor paint.

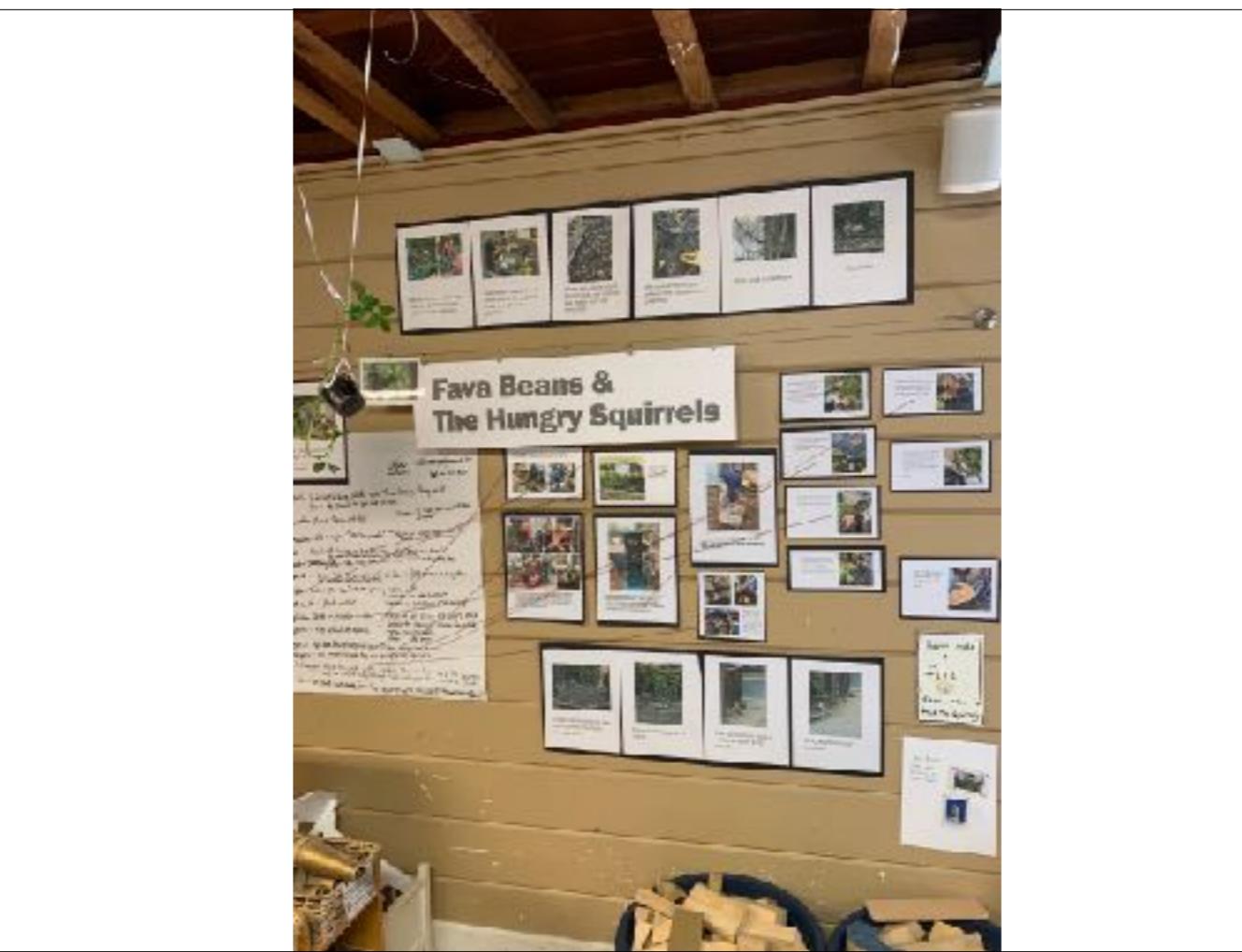


Displays can be teachers work (Love letters to the kids)



Or they can document parent's work

We did an activity at our annual "all family meeting" where parents were given an opportunity to experience what a child might feel when faced with limited ability to understand verbal communication.



Displays can tell a story about an **emerging theme and a project over time**.

the following **3 slides** show this display in more detail - we have the actual display now made into a book.



Today at circle time the owls saw a squirrel in our garden.

The squirrel dug up a seed.

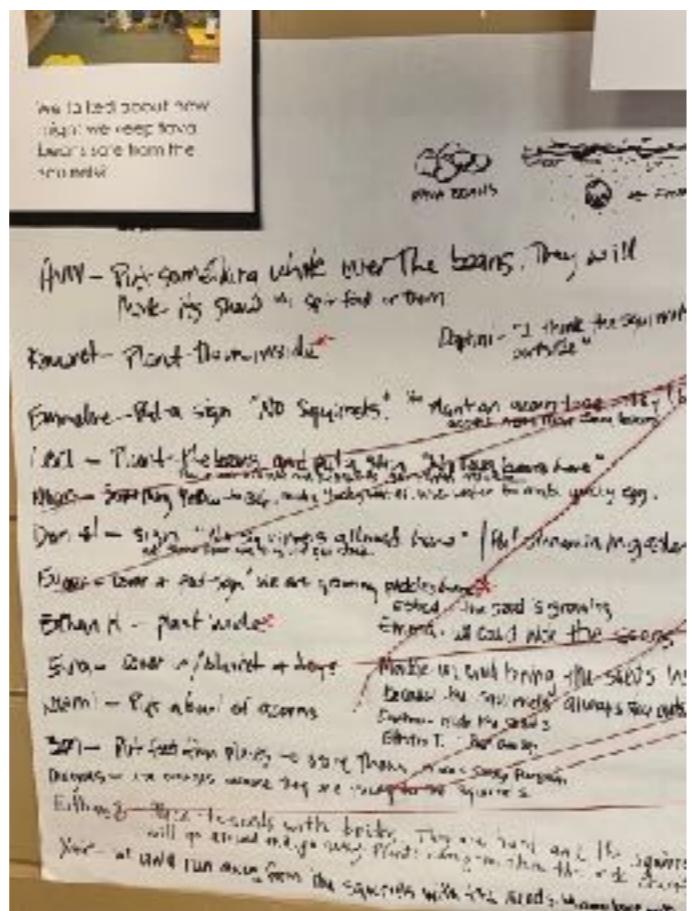
The squirrel ran away with the seed in its mouth.

Goodbye sneaky squirrel.

The hungry squirrels ate our fava beans



Our design challenge...how might you keep the beans safe from the squirrels?





How?

What to Include

- Work Samples
- Photos
- Narrative
- Provocation Clues

How to Display

- Clue of how to approach.
(Title)
- Colors
- Position
- Tools



What to Include:

Work Samples
Photos
Narrative
Provocation Clues

How to display:

Clue of how to approach. (Title)
Colors
Position
Tools (next slide)

Suggested Supplies for Creating Displays

Double Sided Tape



Commercial Grade Guillotine Paper Cutter



Gaff Tape (1" wide)



Laminator



Spray Mount Adhesive



Comb Binding Machine
and related supplies:
Comb spines
Clear covers



Neutral Colored Mounting Paper
(black, gray, white, brown)



String and/or Wire (wire cutters if using wire)

Plastic Laminating Sheets

Clear Packaging Tape (2" width)

Cardboard

Clothespins, Binder Clips

Butcher Paper

String or wire

Clear packaging tape

Cardboard

Clothes pins and Binder clips

Butcher paper

The screenshot shows a digital document titled "Design Challenge Saving the Sunflowers". The title is at the top in a green header bar. Below the title are two small photographs: one showing a tray with foil-wrapped items and another showing children at a table. A larger photograph at the bottom left shows children gathered around a table. To the right of the photographs is a text block:

The design team was tasked with saving all the sunflowers from the dreaded "singameverpoopala bug" who, if given the chance, would eat them all. The only way to save the seeds is to float them in the salty ocean where the menacing bug cannot travel.

Learning Outcomes:

- Creative Problem Solving
- Collaboration
- Communication
- Resiliency in the face of failure (Growth Mindset)
- Science concepts - buoyancy, properties of materials, engineering
- Trial and Error

Examples of Using Templates to Create Documentation Write-Ups

Design Challenge

Painting With Magnet Wands

Children held magnet wands under the canvas and watched colors spin and splatter off of magnetic balls as an unseen force moved them across the canvas. Different movements of the wands caused the balls to spin, bounce or even stack on top of each other.

- Hand eye coordination
- Fine motor skills
- Spacial relationships (over/under, up/down, across)
- Language/social interactions
- Mixing colors
- Science concepts of magnetic forces and cause and effect



provocation / Marble Painting

A Cradle with a Story...



Tucking in her baby.



Children using the cradle as their main prop in construction play.

You may have noticed our new doll cradle in the big room. The children have already incorporated it into some rich dramatic play scenarios. However, the story behind the cradle brings its addition to our environment to a new level.

The cradle was built by a friend (and woodworker) named Vince Foudy. Vince is a volunteer in children's ministry at St. Charles Borromeo Church in my hometown of Livermore. Vince recently asked to attend a Positive Discipline workshop series, that I led, to learn some new tools for his work with the children, and in return he offered to build something for the preschool.



Vince Foudy, woodworker

Not only did Vince build the cradle, but he also incorporated outreach to seniors at a local care facility, who were charged with the task of painting the new cradle.

The beauty of the simple cradle is in its creation—which has provided a small circle of people with the means to meet needs for connection and contribution. We learn in Positive Discipline that meeting these particular basic human needs is the key to psychological well-being.

Our new cradle does not just hold our baby dolls; it contains a lesson about giving and receiving in community.

—Kim

A special event: a special friend of the school made us a wooden cradle. Kim tell story of Mr. Foudy if time permits



"Orange" you glad they weren't bananas?

The citrus scent of homegrown oranges filled the school as the children washed and squeezed the fresh fruit. Children (and even some parents) choose just the right orange to wash and then (after Kim cut it in half) used great care to squeeze it, capturing the orange juice in the cups below.

Some children struggled to manipulate the oranges around the juicer while others became expert juice squeezers. Excited conversation accompanied the washing and juicing efforts.

The children enjoyed the fruits of their labor at snack time!

Learning and Development Outcomes:

- hand/eye coordination
- fine motor development
- cause and effect
- sensory exploration
- communication skills
- language development
- number sense
- parts and whole
- measurement (volume of liquids)
- transformation of matter

Quotes:

"I liked to wash the oranges." - Bar
"I liked washing the oranges with brushes." - Naomi

"The orange juice feels like we are squishing lemon juice and orange juice. I liked squishing." - Eyaar

"I liked squeezing it. It feels like it was lemonade. The oranges were so wet and they were so squeezy." - Noam

"It almost felt like an animal that died in the water. I noticed it was juicy, and yummy. Could you do that work again so I can squeeze an orange instead of a lemon?" - Daniel

"When we drink it, lots of people loved it. I think I did more than ten oranges" - Aviv



The story:

"The citrus scent of homegrown oranges filled the school as the children washed and squeezed the fresh fruit..."

We really try to capture the story of what was happening. We use words that evoke a "feeling/sense" of the activity or event.

Here we include Quotes:

"the orange juice feels like we are squishing lemon juice, I like squishing" -Eyaar

"It almost felt like an animal that died in the water. I noticed it was juicy and yummy. Could you do that work again, so I can squeeze an orange not a lemon?"- Daniel



Mixing colored water and collecting samples.



Collecting samples.



Gluing samples.

Learning Outcomes:

Fine motor development

Social skills

Communication skills

Give and take

Children coaching children

Science

Cause and effect

Properties of water

Primary and secondary colors

Math

Quantity

Volume

In this case the photos did most of the “story telling” with simple subtitles like “Mixing colored water and collecting samples”

Here we highlight “Learning Outcomes” this could also be titled “Implications” rather than outcomes

RAINBOWS



Hand/eye coordination
Fine/gross motor development
Classification
Identifying colors in the spectrum
Social / communication skills
Noticing natural phenomenon
Joyful artistic expression



We are noticing many rainbows emerging in the children's artwork. Although rainbows are often a popular theme in children's paintings, we can't help but wonder if the rainy/sunny weather with real rainbows in the sky may be inspiring this current fad

How?



We observe a child or children doing something. Since our teachers have access to iPads, we also took video.

MAKING TRACKS



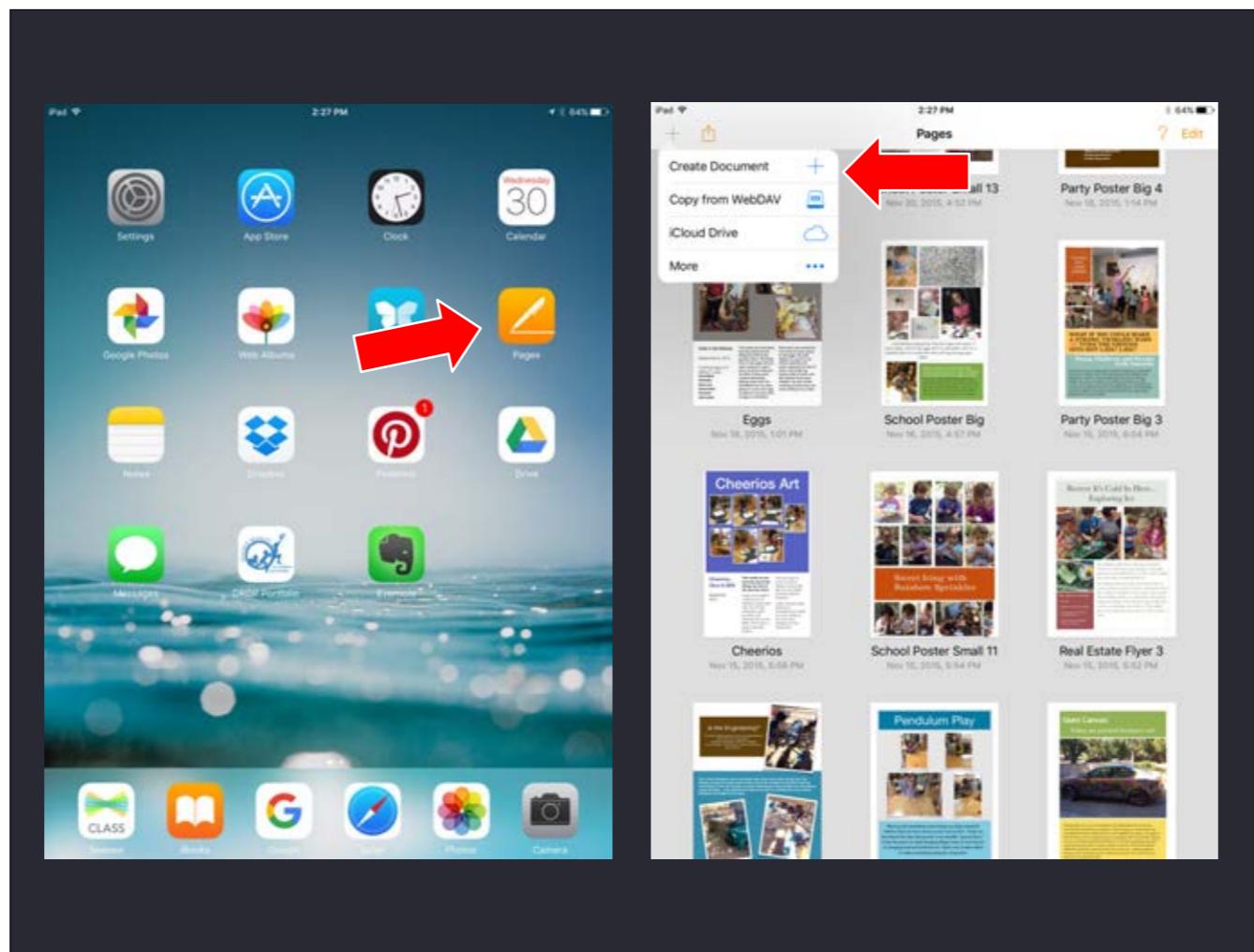
Gross Motor
Determination
Coordination
Cause and effect
Creative expression

The owls have been pushing the heavy black cart around the back yard with the purpose of creating "tracks." Here we see Yair using all his strength to push. Yair could not see over the cart when pushing so he would stop periodically, walk to the side and look ahead at the desired path.

We captured a screen shot from the video, we documented the play using the "Observing to Make Learning Visible" form, and made this write up,

The children have been pushing the heavy black cart around the back yard with the purpose of creating "tracks." Here we see Yair using all his strength to push. Yair could not see over the cart when pushing so he would stop periodically, walk to the side and look ahead at the desired path

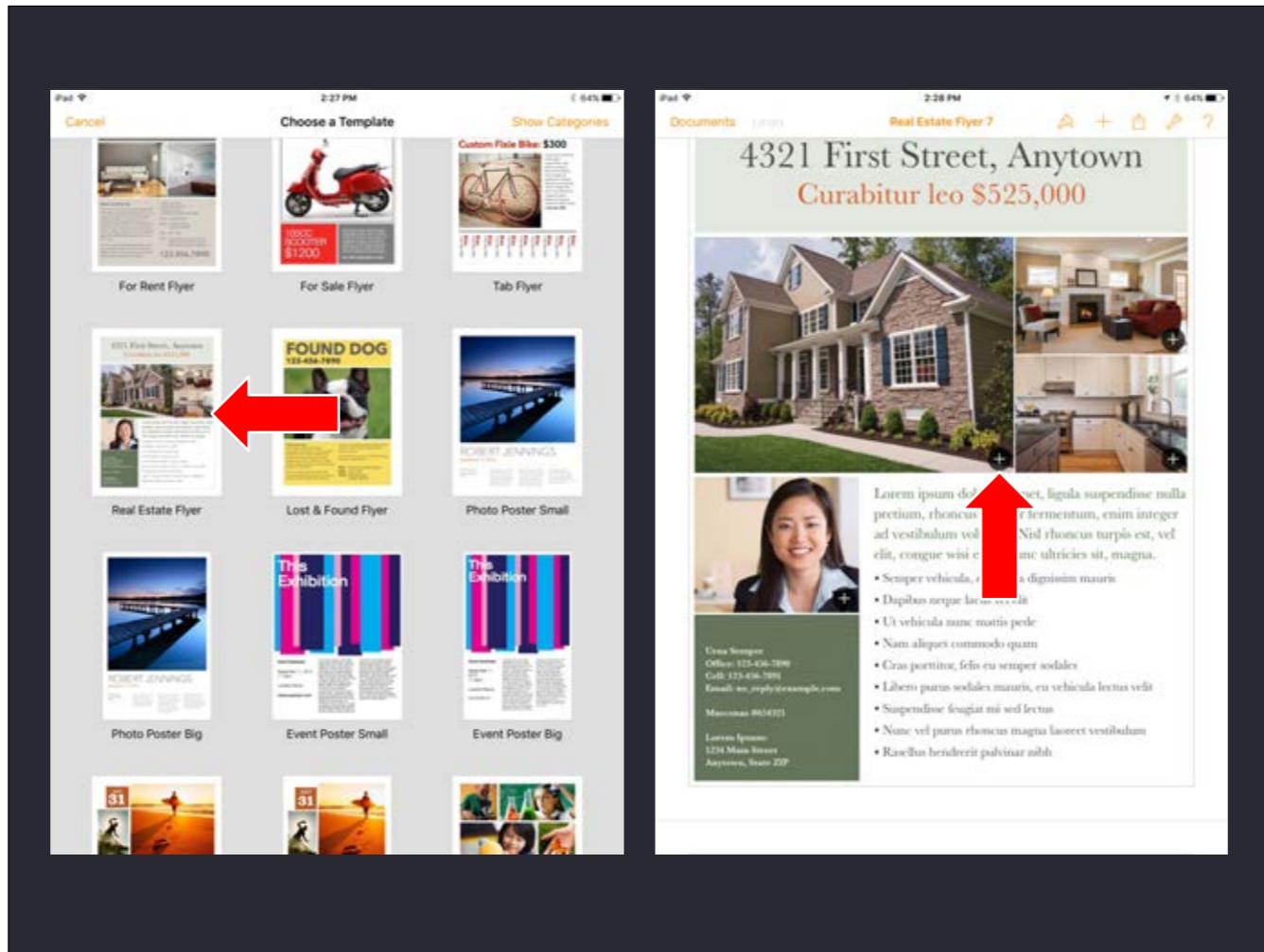
Gross motor
determination
coordination
cause and effect
creative expression



Again, since we use iPads, we create "write ups" using Pages templates

open the app

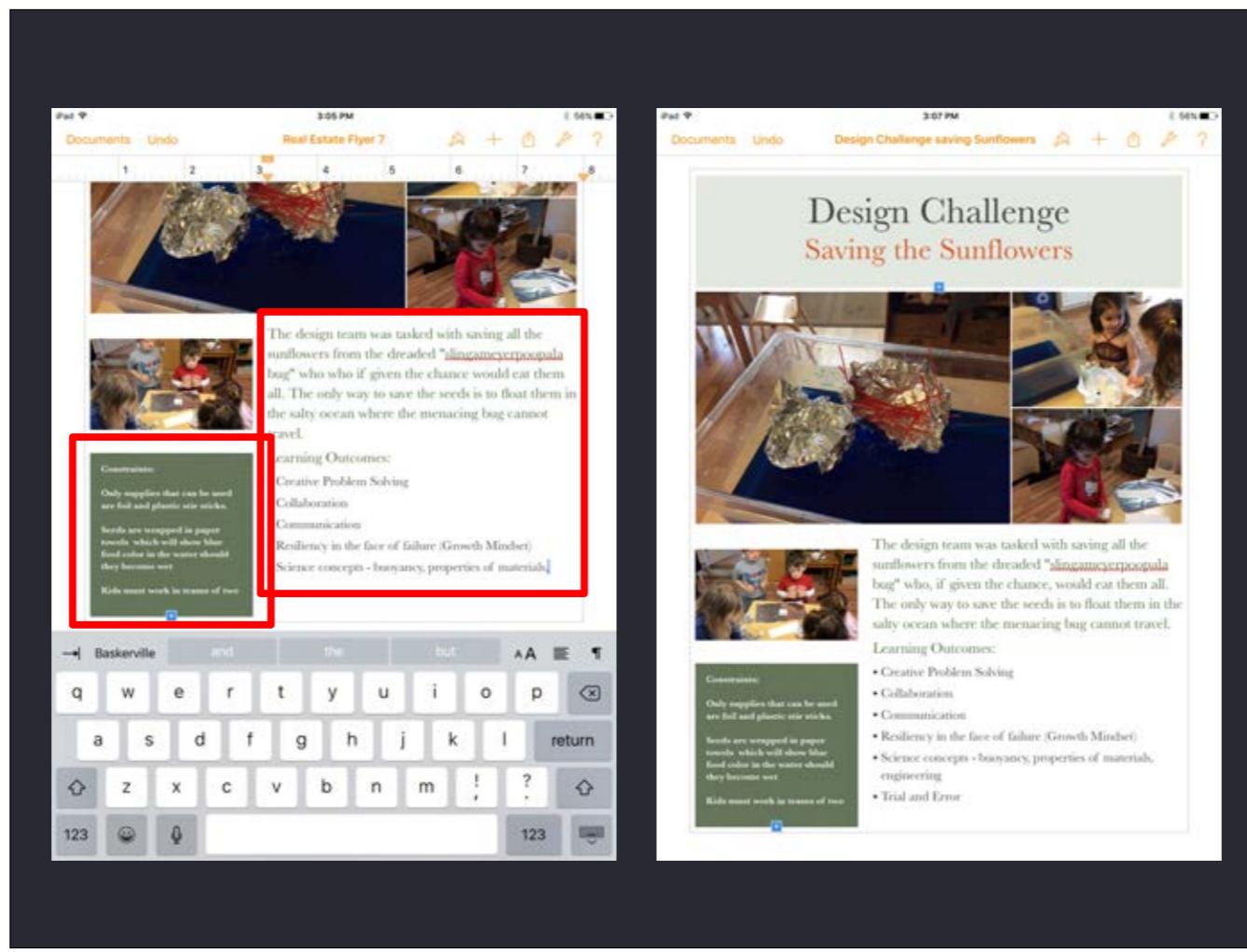
tap the plus sign and select "create document"



scroll down and select desired template

RENAME THE DOCUMENT

add content like photos to template by tapping the plus sign in bottom right corner



add a title and text by tapping inside the text box and typing

use "call out" boxes to highlight learning outcomes



WHAT QUESTIONS DO YOU HAVE?

**PLEASE TAKE A
MOMENT TO FILL OUT
AN EVALUATION**



INVITATION



Please Feel Free to Come for a Visit

Join us for an Educator Exploration Day (at BPP) -

Or we would be glad to join you for your staff day or event

Please print your contact information on the evaluation and we will send you information

CONTACT INFO



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