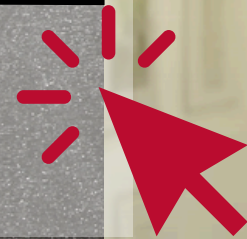


# Documentation & Advocacy

- The *how, what, and why* of documentation.
- How documentation relates to advocacy for Early Childhood Education.

**Watch Video Now**

**Certification**



**CLICK HERE**



Jacki Visman  
*Early Childhood Education Specialist*

# Video

Please review the professional development training video; you will need approximately 60 minutes to complete the training.



# Certification

Please take a moment to complete the learning review provided. Upon submission, your certification will be sent to you immediately.

**Start**



# Jacki Visman



- M.S. in ECE
- 10+ years in ECE
- Teacher and School Director, Infant-PreK
- Early Childhood Education Specialist
- Parent of a spirited Preschooler

We Skoolhouse, grounded in developmentally appropriate practice, guides teachers and parents in facilitating early learning and development of children from pre-birth to six years old.



# The Subject of Your Observation

Observation can be **spontaneous**, and it can be **planned**.

**Setting and Content:** decide who and what you are going to observe. What is the focus of the observation?

## Some possible subjects:

- Art projects
- Daily schedule/A Day in the Life
- Building Friendships
- What we do in our centers...
- The happenings of a read aloud/group discussion
- Repeated activities (self-portraits)
- Parts of a long investigation to piece together the story
- Different Developmental Domains
- An event



# The Art of Observation

Observation must be **objective** and **accurate**.

## Record...

- date, time, setting, the child (or children) involved
- only the facts – in a concise manner and in the order as they occur and exactly as you see it
- vivid details and quotes (what is occurring, what is the child doing, what are they saying...)
- what the child CAN DO rather than what they cannot do
- Stay back and observe the children without too much adult facilitation

## DON'T

- pressure the children to perform
- record anything you do not see or make assumptions
- state opinions while recording
- label behaviors, actions or feelings
- use subjective, bias or judgmental terms



# The Art of Observation

Use multiple methods of observation

**Note taking:** write down dialogue, actions of the children.

**KWL Charts:** Know, Wonder, Learn with the children

**Take pictures** of the scene, and candid photos of the children in their work and play.

**Save artifacts:** artwork, or, take photos of a structure built in blocks or made of loose parts

**Record a video:** video reflection can be a great resource in observation.

**Capitalize on Teamwork:** work together with your co-teacher, assistant teacher, and with your admin.



# Documentation Displays

## Can Include:

- A title for the project or display
- Children's artwork and/or writing samples
- Pictures of the children engaging in moment
- The steps to the process and the learning outcomes
- Anecdotal notes/the children's dialogue transcribed



## Tips For Display

- Place it where is it visible
- Use clear print, large enough to see and read
- Keep it neat and orderly, symmetrical
- Neutral tones, neutral backing
- Lean into creative use of space. You can hang documentation by strings/fishing line, hang on windows or make use of a windowsill



# Highlight a specific area of development



Sharing materials and toys



Playing together



## HOW CAN WE CREATE RELATIONSHIPS IN A NEW CLASSROOM?

It has been our first months by sharing a new "space" together with new teachers and friends where little by little we have been forming the Composers Class.

Through different ways of approaching each other and the different languages or resources (tools) that each one has to get closer to the other we have managed to create new friendships.

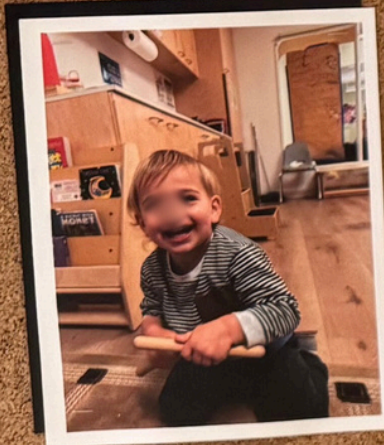
Children have a 1000 languages to learn but also to get to know the other, these languages are not necessarily through speech but in different ways such as through a look, a gesture, a hug, a kiss, say thank you.

Today we noticed that the children feel like an important part of our class and they start to create a new relationship between each other and with their teachers.

As a teacher we value building respectful authentic relationship with children, families and each other. Also, the warm and loving interactions between us develop their child's confidence, resilience and communication.



Offering help



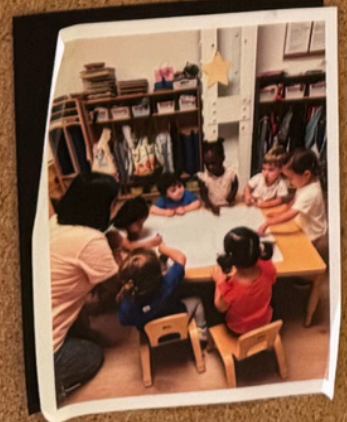
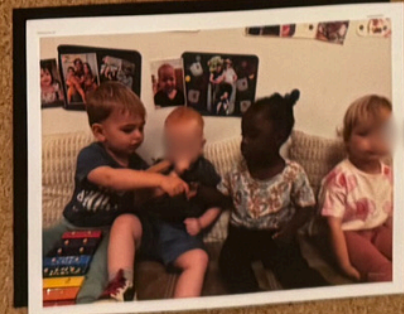
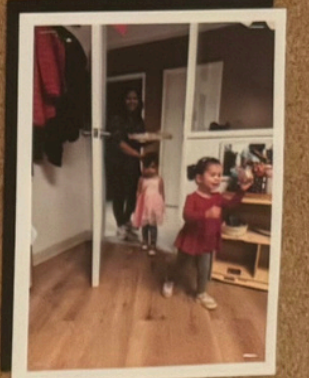
Exploring together



Discovering together



Sharing interests



# BLOOMING FRIENDSHIPS



At the Manhattan Schoolhouse, the children continue to build meaningful connections through their daily activities and different experiences at school.

Friendships are vital to us here. We value the connections, bonds and interactions. The children spend all day together engaging in various activities, projects, and explorations both inside and outside of school.

We observe how the children engage in play and social interactions through their daily routines. Through these diverse and stimulating activities, the children learn how to communicate, share ideas, and work together to solve problems and express themselves.

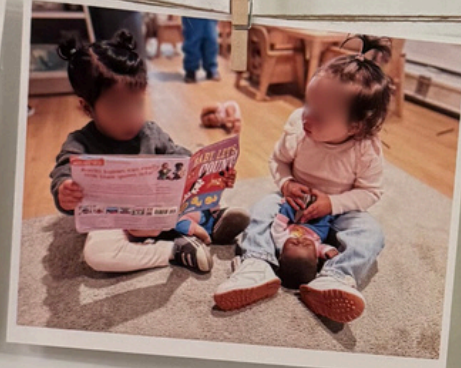
As the children navigate the dynamics of friendship, they also cultivate essential traits for lifelong interactions. We cherish each and every day that we spend with your children, and look forward to creating many more memories, as well as strengthening the bonds that are essential to the children's development.

This week the Engineers worked in groups exploring the centers around their classroom. **Freya and Rafaela** interacted with one another in a meaningful way. They helped each other find a book to "read to their baby dolls."

At first, Freya and Rafaela took their time exploring the books they chose, as they held the baby dolls on their laps. Freya chose a bigger book while Rafaela decided on a smaller size book.

Freya opened up her book and said "Ella, Ella read." Rafaela paid close attention and was very attentive as Freya observed the different pages on the book. Freya said, "wow" as she held the book and Rafaela said, "yes, yes".

We embrace both experiences and create space for more open ended explorations such as this to engage the children and foster their curiosity for learning.



Freya: "Baby, sit, sit."  
Rafaela: "Freya, read."



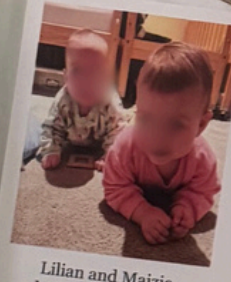
Rafaela: "Wow."  
Freya: "Sit, baby, boo."



Freya: "Ella, Ella, look, read."  
Rafaela: "Yes, wow."



Rafaela: "Hello, baby, sit."  
Freya: "Here, baby."



Lilian and Maizie during tummy time



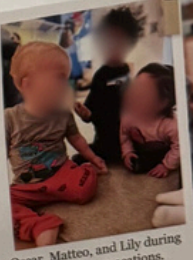
Oscar and Matteo practicing gross and fine motor skills while drawing with chalk



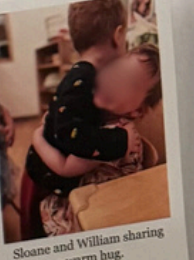
Poets expressing their creativity, inspired by fall materials: a pumpkin and an acorn.



Aidan and Marcel splashing each other with paint - sometimes the canvas is not a page!



Oscar, Matteo, and Lily during afternoon provocations.



Sloane and William sharing a warm hug.



Lilian, Mina, Riley, and Harrison on the way to their daily walk in John Jay park.



Poets reading together - their books of choice.



Belen and Mirabella finding shared joy over reading.



Maizie and Riley having fun during free exploration



Harrison and Eleanor exploring the outside world



Inventors 2 exploring fall-themed sensory materials: leaves, acorns, mini-pumpkins.



## INVENTORS 1 TUMMY TIME

Tummy time is an important part of child development, which helps strengthen their muscles, develop motor skills, and encourage movement.

For babies such as **Inventors 1**, who began the school year between three and five months of age, tummy time is an occasion to lift their head and chest, strengthening their arm, neck, and back muscles. It is also a natural step in the progression towards crawling, followed by the children pulling themselves up, and eventually walking.

The process of implementing and continuing the practice of tummy time should be approached with patience. The teachers at our Schoolhouse spend progressively more time encouraging the children to lay on their stomachs, providing various forms of entertainment to make it an enjoyable and developmentally appropriate experience.

## INVENTORS 2 MOVEMENT EXPLORATION

As the babies get older, they continue their exploration of movement, gaining more independence, strengthening their muscles, and practicing fine and gross motor skills. Our **Inventors 2**, aged between five and nine months old at the beginning of the school year, naturally practice movement every day.

The older infants are already used to tummy time and they move on to the next steps: crawling, supported and independent sitting, and pulling themselves up. Each child progresses through these stages at a different pace and we make sure that various activities supporting their development ensure that their individual needs are met.

We observe that the children are interested in the world around them and the new abilities they gain provide them with exciting ways of exploring their classroom, as well as the outside world.

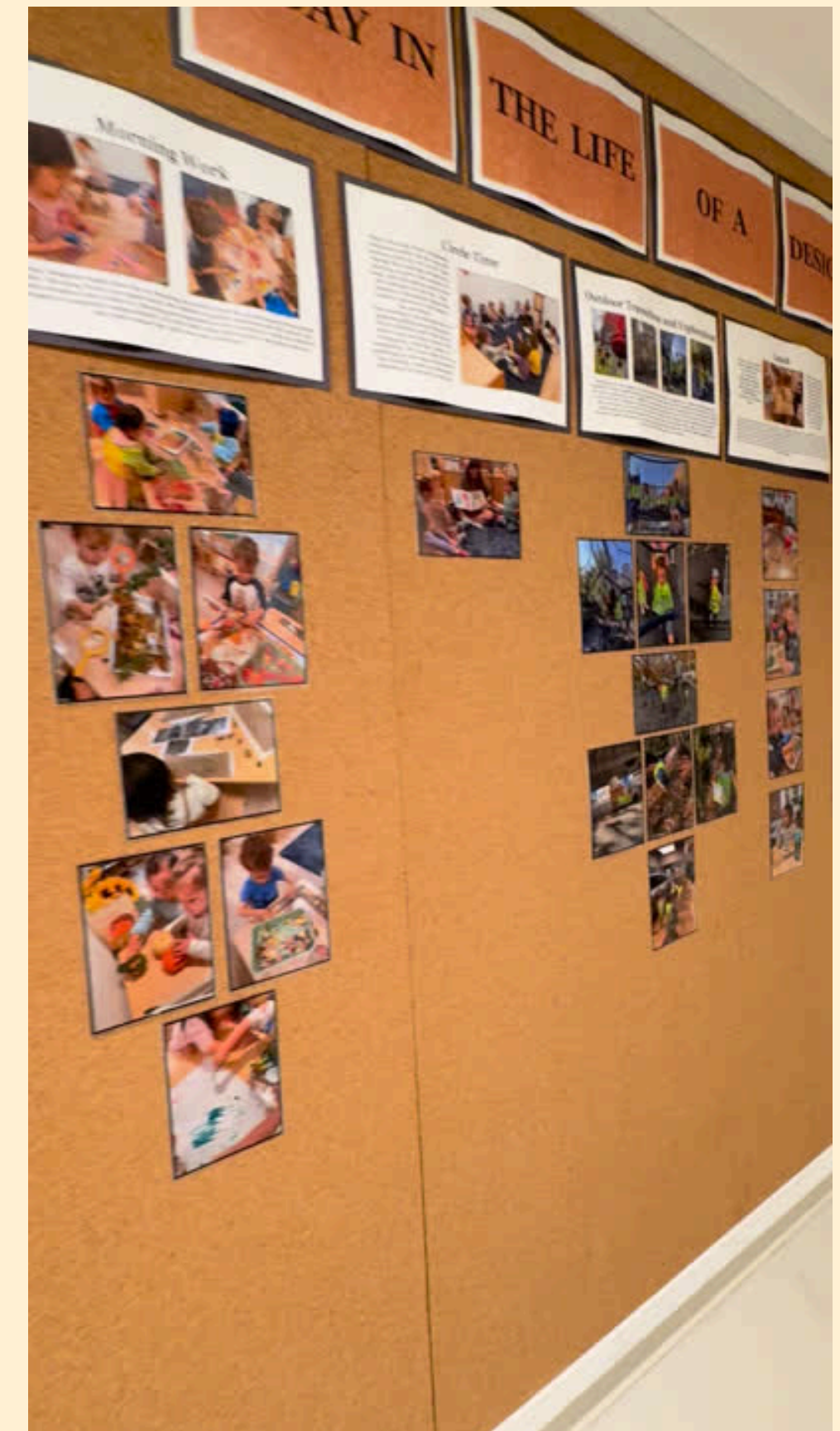
A long horizontal display board featuring a grid of small photographs and text blocks. The text blocks describe the developmental progress of individual children, such as Oz, Eleanor, Milo, Grayson, Glain, Benjamin, Grayson, Glain, Benjamin, Lilian, Maeve, Harrison, Mina, Riley K., Sam, Maizie, Sam, and Lilian. Each child's progress is documented with small photos and short paragraphs of text.

A second long horizontal display board, similar to the first, showing photographs and text for children like Oz, Eleanor, Milo, Grayson, Glain, Benjamin, Lilian, Maeve, Harrison, Mina, Riley K., and Sam. The board continues the documentation of their developmental milestones.

# Exploring Color, Texture, and Art



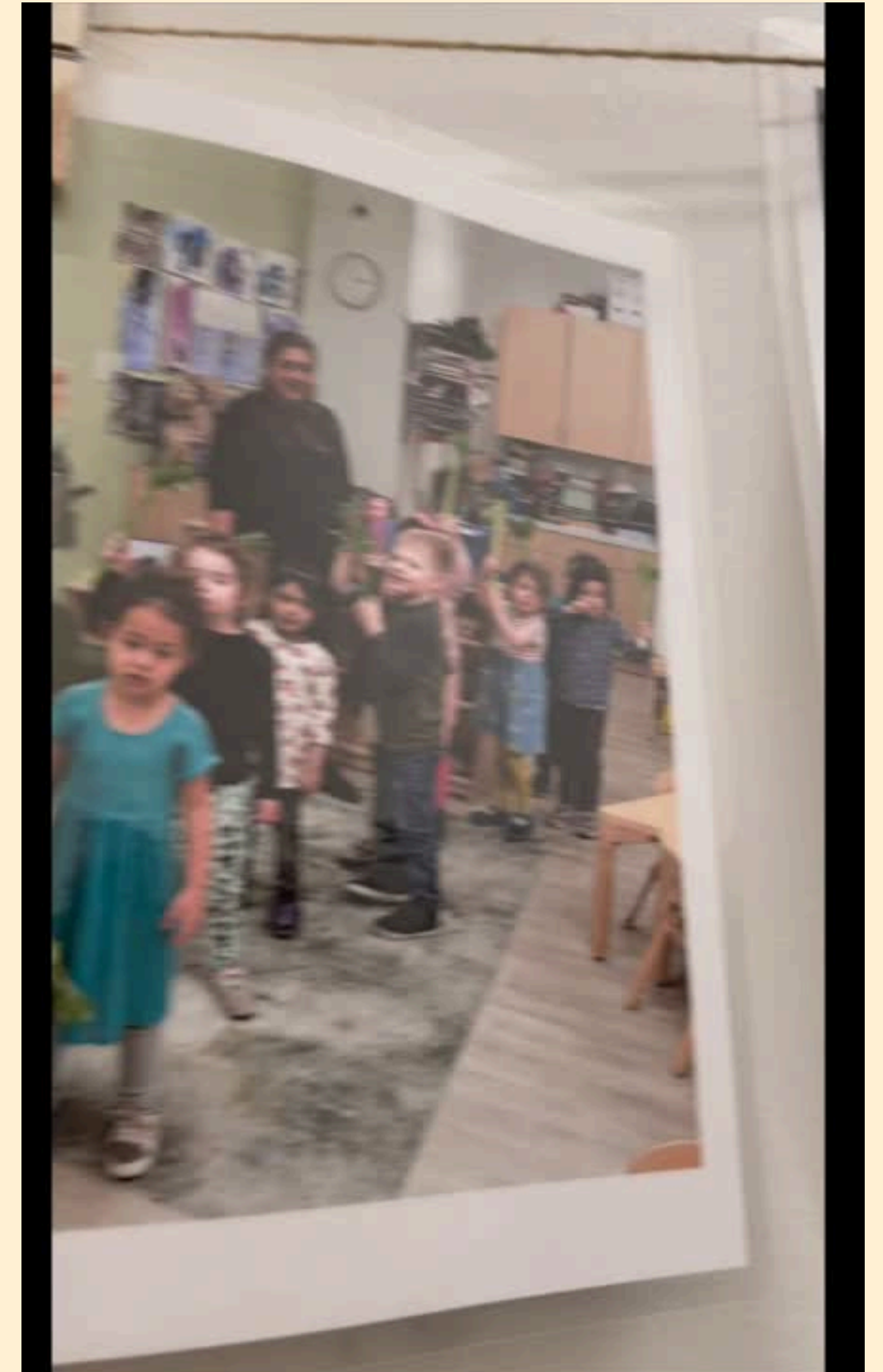
# “A Day in the Life” - highlighting routines of the day



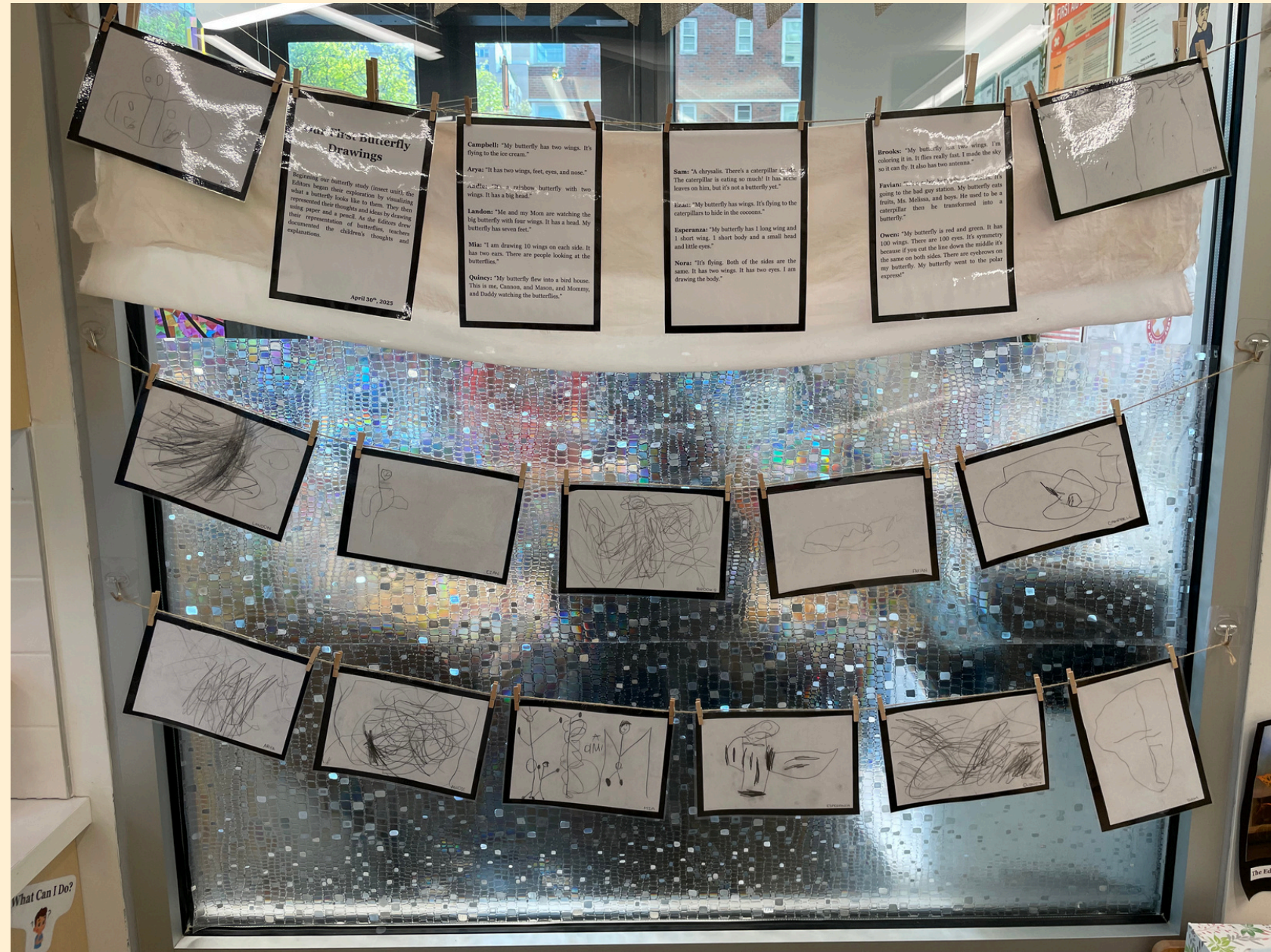
# 3D Art Project, placed a long a windowsill



# Artifacts of a longer investigation



# Window displays



**“Collecting natural materials, creating a suncatcher with them”  
Hung on a window.**



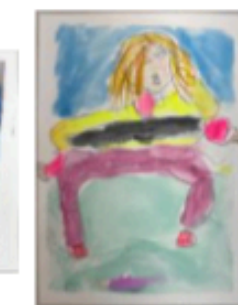
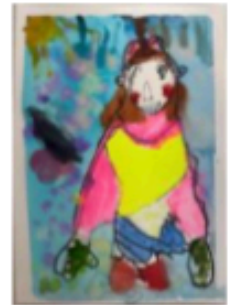
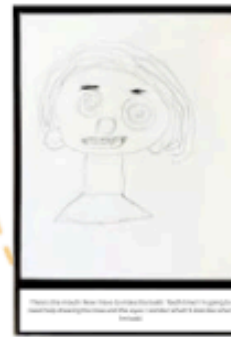
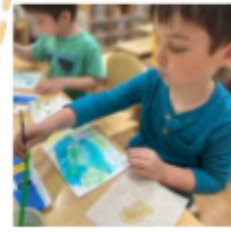
While walking to the park, the children noticed that it was a very windy day. As we approached the park, Oliver said, "leaves falling over there." Seeing how excited the children seemed by watching the leaves falling from the trees, we decided to stop and collect some leaves to bring them back to school. Once we were back to school, we thought of how we could use the leaves that Engineers had collected and decided to turn them into art and make a Fall collage to preserve the leaves as well as the effort that they had put in by collecting the leaves.



**Self Portraits**  
and other  
**revisited**  
**activities**



# A Preschool Study of Self-Portraiture



The children of Manhattan Schoolhouse's preschool dive deep into a study of **self-portraiture** each year. This study **dedicates ample space and time** for the child's **deep observation** of the self: **their identity, their capabilities, and their self-appreciation**.

**A SELF-PORTRAIT IS AN INTIMATE, BOLD DECLARATION OF IDENTITY. IN THEIR SELF-PORTRAIT, A CHILD OFFERS THEMSELVES AS BOTH SUBJECT AND ARTIST. WHEN WE LOOK AT THEIR SELF-PORTRAIT, WE SEE A CHILD AS THEY SEE THEMSELVES. THE STORY OF SELF-PORTRAIT WORK IS A TENDER STORY TO TELL.** -LORIS MALAGUZZI



Throughout the school year, the preschool children revisit the art of making their self-portrait. With each experience, the child thinks more deeply about themselves, and their portrait. They practice new ways of exploring their image and representing themselves. They reconsider: what is their own view of themselves? How can they represent themselves through art?



As the children explore their portraiture, and sense of self, the teachers photograph the children at work, and record a transcript of the children's spoken dialogue, which demonstrates the child's thinking and expressive language.



"I'M MAKING MY TASTE BUDS. ALL OF MY TASTE BUDS I NEED TO MAKE MY TONGUE LONGER. MY TONGUE IS SOO LONG (SHE STICKS OUT HER TONGUE AND LAUGHS) I'M MAKING THE NOSTRILS VERY VERY VERY DARK, AND A LITTLE BOO-BOO. I FORGOT TO ADD MY CHIN BOOP! THERE'S MY CHIN. (REFERRING TO HER PHOTOGRAPH) SHOULD I ADD THE DOORKNOB? WELL, THE DOORKNOB IS SO EASY TO DRAW!" -Margaret



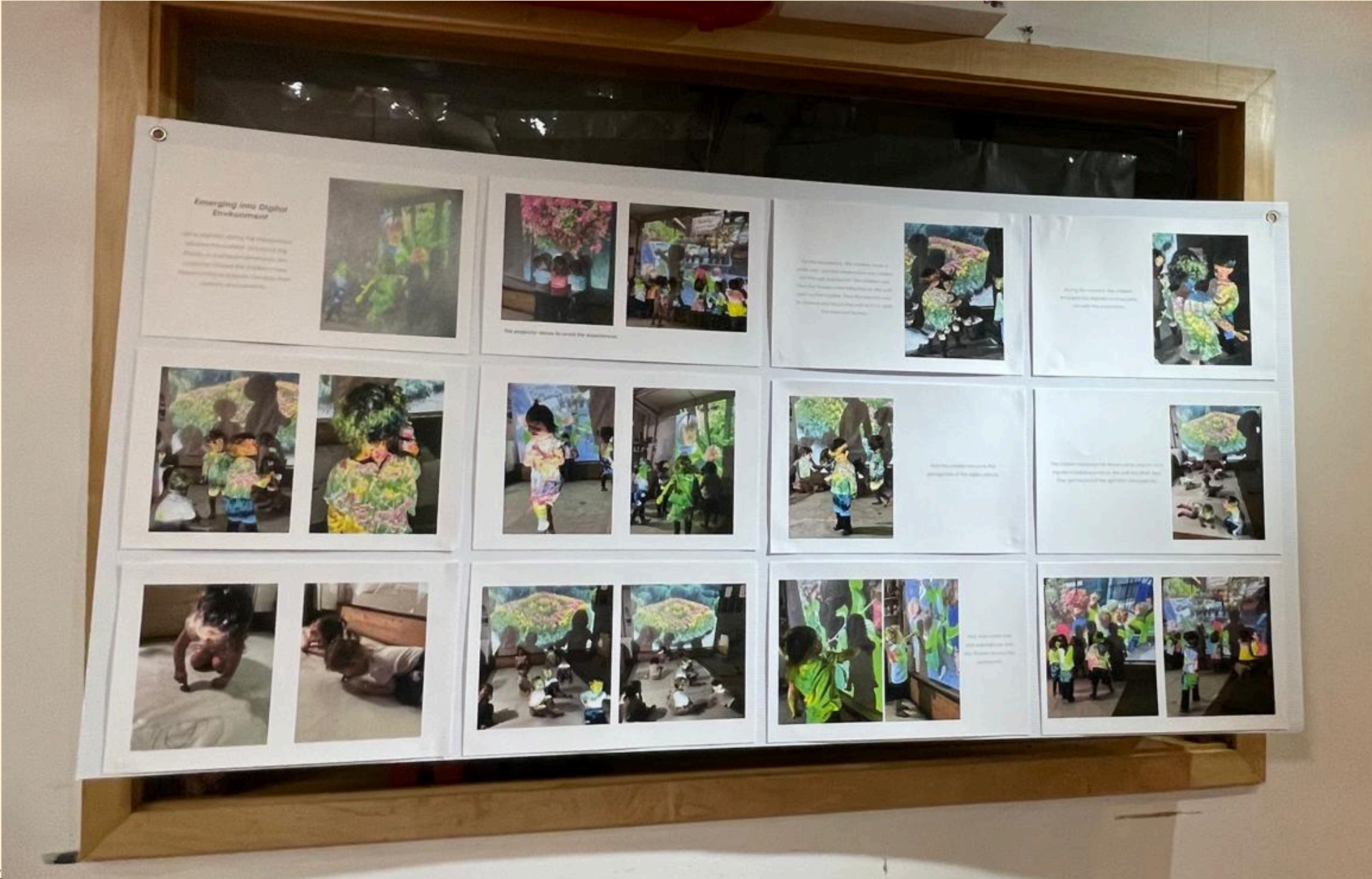
"I USED STRING FOR THE HAIR, POM-POMS FOR THE EARS, CAPS FOR THE EYES, A CUT RUBBER BAND FOR THE MOUTH, TWO PIECES OF STRING FOR THE DRESS, AND ONE FABRIC TRIANGLE PIECE FOR THE NOSE. I DROPPED THE RUBBER BAND MANY TIMES AND SEED WHICH ONE I LIKED, AND I LIKED THAT ONE THE BEST!" -Sophie

After several accounts of portraiture, the teachers have a historical log and artifacts of the children's growth in their own sense of self, and representation of oneself.

#### Areas of Development and Learning Supported:

- **Social and Emotional:** Creating a self-portrait promotes self-awareness, personal reflection and expression, while allowing the child to represent themselves in a way that is reflective of their unique perspective and feeling.
- **Language:** The child will exercise expressive language as they communicate how they're designing their self-portrait, or what they are thinking throughout the process.
- **Fine Motor:** Sketching with drawing tools, or manipulating loose parts, supports finger dexterity, visual perception and hand-eye coordination.
- **Cognition:** The child will embrace their prior knowledge and understanding of the art materials to utilize them in a specific/more directed way. They will embrace attention to detail and sequence, while also fostering concepts of size, shape, and scale.
- **Approaches to Learning:** The child will think symbolically, and persist and focus on their sketching.

# Hanging Panels



**Growth**

After researching their different seeds and using the big question that the teacher provided to think and when to plant some seeds and how they grow? The children learned the difference in different growing materials to see what will grow the fastest. And some of them, the teacher decided to take some of the seeds "Planting a Rainbow" by Lois Ehlert & "When Spring Comes" by Kevin Henkes and illustrated by Laura Dronos.

**Planting a Rainbow** by Lois Ehlert

These two seeds helped the children learn about different flowers and how they grow.

**When Spring Comes** by Kevin Henkes

These two seeds helped the children learn about different flowers and how they grow.

**What Do the Flower Needs to Grow?**

The children kept making flowers using the spring table to grow flowers and making different kinds of the flowers growing. The seed from the table is growing their own flower. They learn about what the flowers need to grow.

- Water "Sun"
- Air "A lot of air"
- The "ground"
- Soil "Water"
- Chase "Sun"

**What Do The Flower Needs to Grow?**

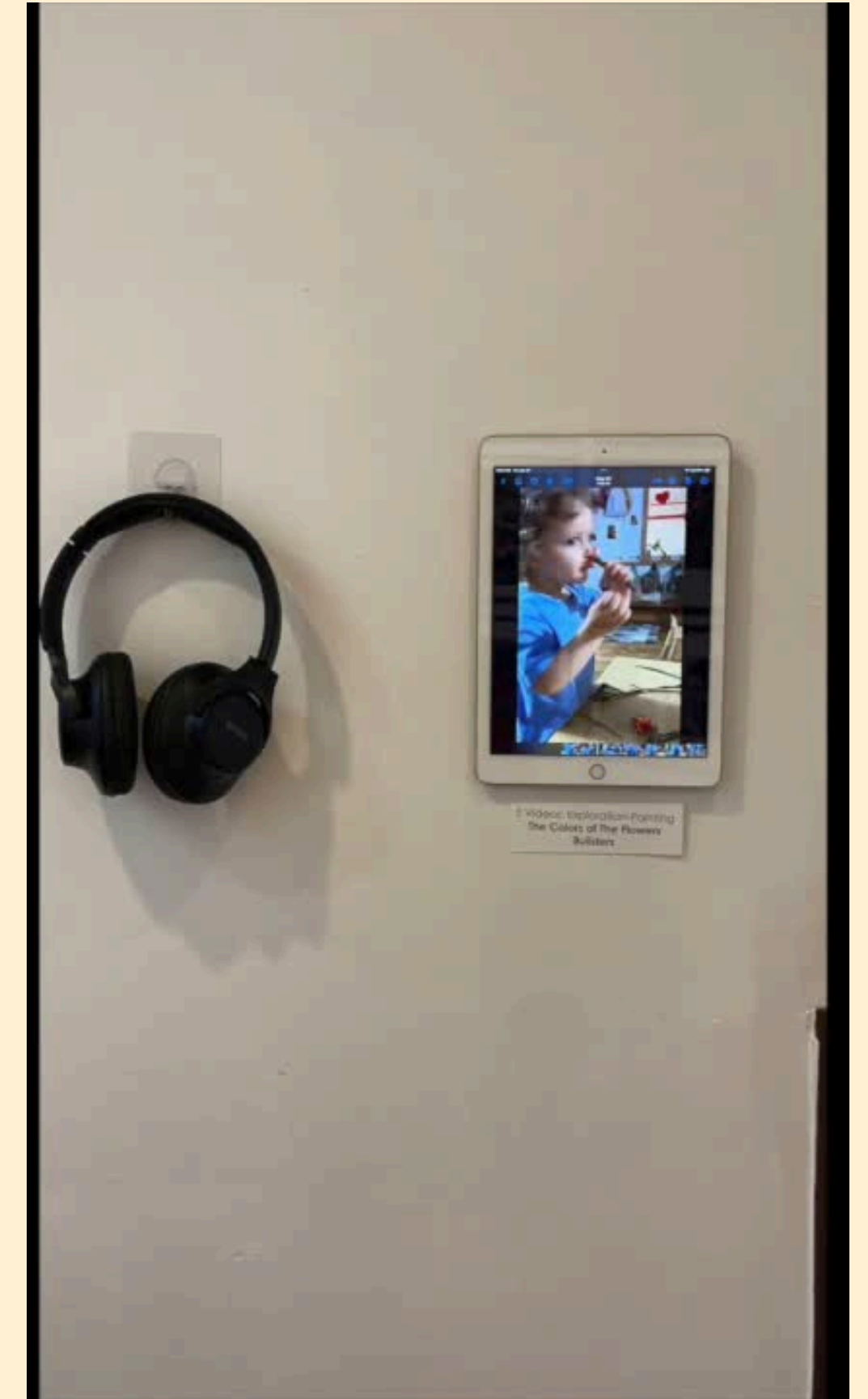
The children used the table to see what the flowers need to grow. The children used the table to see what the flowers need to grow.

**Getting Our Growing Materials**

After our discussion of growth we decided to get all the materials we needed to grow our own flowers in a cup. The children were given a list of growing materials, such as soil, water, and light. They were given a list of these items to go to the garden to get the materials. The children received the growing materials by taking a picture with a camera to see how they grew from the seeds.



# Light and Other Digital Enhancements



# Emailed Journals/Daily and Weekly Recaps

## Schoolhouse Journal

May 2nd, 2025



This week, the teachers invited our older toddlers, the **Engineers**, to explore a variety of loose parts and recycled materials, creating a rich environment for open-ended discovery. With curiosity as their guide, the children were encouraged to touch, sort, stack, and imagine—using bottles, egg carton boxes, legos, dolls, and other everyday items in new and inventive ways. Through this sensory and exploratory play, the toddlers engaged in early problem-solving, collaboration, and creative expression, highlighting the endless possibilities that emerge when children are trusted as capable and competent learners. **We observed the meaningful interactions that were created amongst the children.**



Through the teacher's observations, the Engineers used their little hands to explore, engage and create something (if they choose to)

Engineers were actively involved with the materials and as a group, we observed that they supported each other during decision-making and solving problems. We also observed that the Engineers seemed to enjoy engaging with the materials and had different ideas throughout their exploration. For example, the teachers observed that the children's preferred material to work with were egg cartons. All of them seemed interested in what they could put inside of them. **"Eggs, two eggs here!"** Said one Engineer when we asked **"what are putting inside of it?"** **"Are they legos?"** asked the teachers, since they were putting legos inside of the egg cartons, the teachers were curious to hear their answers: One of the Engineers said: **"no, no legos, eggs, blue eggs, hot, hot!"** Another engineer has said something very interesting as well: **"I have muffins, corn muffins, yellow muffins, do you want muffins?"** Another Engineer was very focused on making a book fit inside of the egg carton, we approached her and asked: **"what are you doing?"** **"This, put book inside, close, open, said this engineer while giggling.**



Abby was engaged with the egg carton box. Karine, who was visiting the classroom asked **"Abby, what is in your egg carton box?"** Abby, starring at the box, smiled, but did not answer.



We observed that Karine's question sparked curiosity amongst her other friends. **Talia, Rafaela, and Maeva**, all came over and started to look, point, and talk about the egg carton box. Karine asked the question again, but this time, **Freya**, who was on the other side of the room answered **"a book."**



Freya quickly ran over to the table and said "there's a book" as she came over to join her friends.



Karine was amazed to see that Abby, did in fact have a book inside the egg carton box, and how Freya, knew this information even if she was initially not directly playing with Abby. We observe how the older toddlers naturally engage in a rich process of social learning by observing one another. These quiet moments of observation are powerful as children are not only gathering ideas, but also learning about cooperation, turn-taking, and communication without the need for direct instruction. **The environment encourages this type of interaction, fostering a sense of community and shared discovery where each child's ideas inspire and influence the group.**



Freya: I think this will fit.



Freya: it fits!



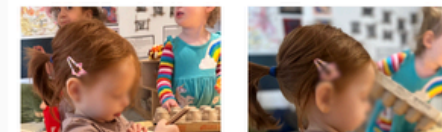
We then observed how the children tried putting different materials placing the baby in it. Rafaela, seeing that the baby fit in this, said **"yes it fits."**



The children engaged in conversations and also connected this activity to previous provocations that they have done in the past. For example, we observed that **Rafaela** pretended to pour water on the babies' head. Rafaela said **"take a bath."** In the past, The Engineers have pretended to bathe the babies. We observed how past provocations stay relevant even through different and current provocations.



Talia pretended to cook. **"Cooking"** said Talia as she used the wooden fork to stir.



The younger toddlers continue to express themselves joyfully through movement, even in the simple act of running back and forth across the classroom. Azaan happily ran from one end to the other, sometimes chasing the bouncy balls around the classroom. As Azaan ran, he said **"Hi Kiki, bye Kiki."** These bursts of energy are not only a celebration of their growing physical abilities, but also a reflection of their enthusiasm and comfort within the environment.



We view this movement as a vital part of their learning process, an expression of curiosity, freedom, and emotional well-being. Whether they are chasing a friend, exploring space, or simply reveling in the rhythm of their own bodies, **these moments of motion are meaningful and filled with a sense of discovery and joy.**

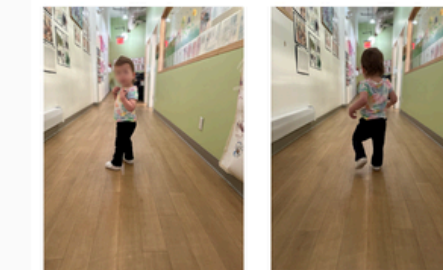


We are deeply grateful to the parents who entrust us each day with the care and growth of their children. It is a privilege to be part of these early and foundational years, and we honor the trust placed in us with every interaction and moment shared. Each morning at drop-off, we

Maizie, from our infant room, giving her mom a couple of more hugs before going into her classroom.



We are so proud to witness how many of our infants are now walking and moving confidently through the environment that has supported their growth from the very beginning. Not long ago, these same children arrived as young babies, nestled in arms, observing the world from the comfort of their parents embrace. **Now, they explore their surroundings with curiosity, independence, and joy, each step a reflection of their growing confidence and sense of self.**



We see this milestone not just as a physical achievement, but as a symbol of the learning journey they've been on—supported by strong relationships, thoughtful environments, and the natural rhythm of their development.



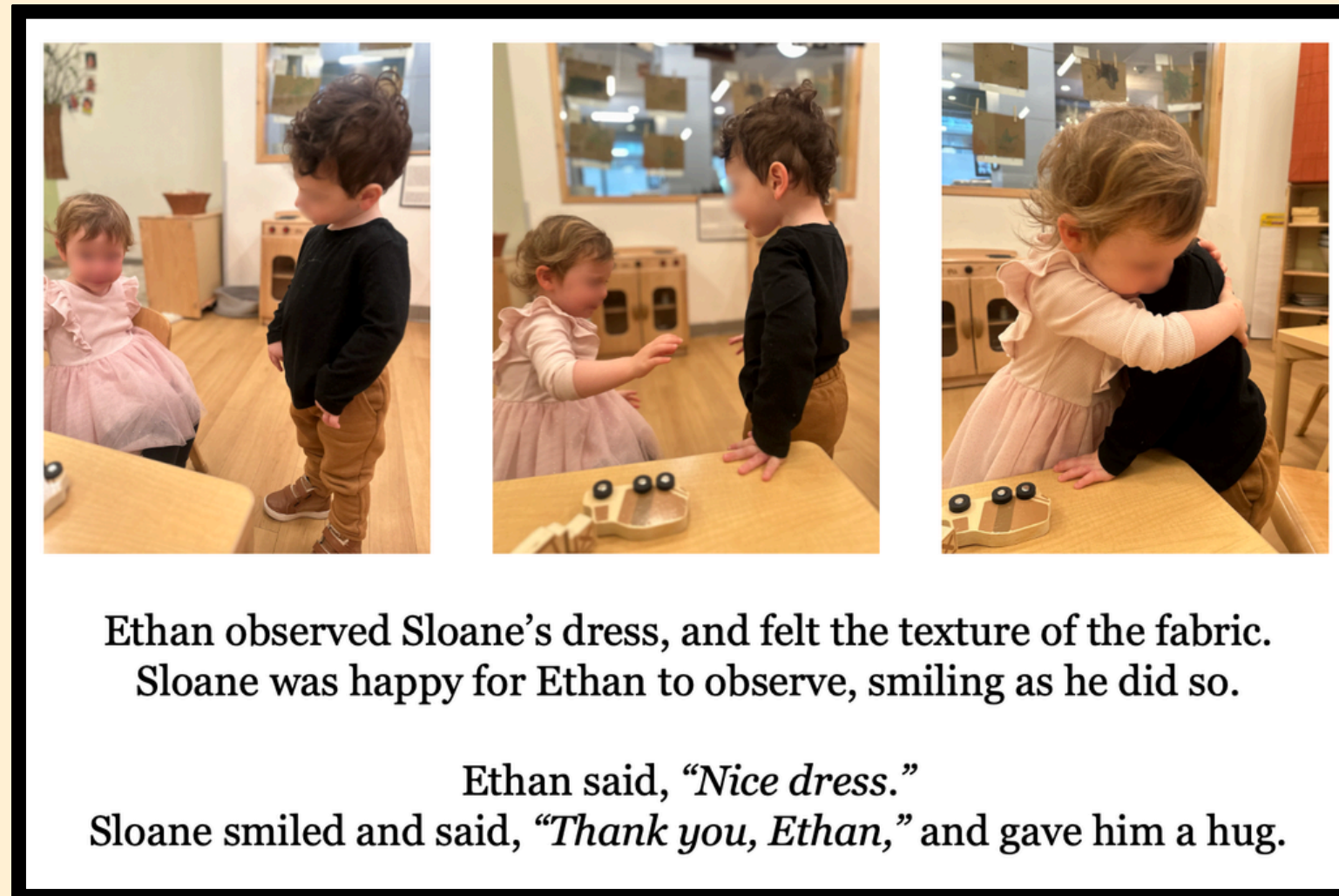
# Document and Display an Event



# Why We Make the Child Visible

## For the child:

When the child's experiences and learning are documented and make visible within their environment, we promote the child's deeper thinking, reinforce their learning, and validate and encourage their engagement and participation.



## For the Educator:

The process of documentation prompts **reflection**, which leads to more **intentional planning**.

Documentation **illuminates** the **learning** and **development** that is unfolding in each child.

**Reviewing** the documentation of our colleagues can **inspire each other**.



## For the Families:

Documentation **informs** the families of their child's work and progress, and offers a window into their child's daily experiences and learning journey.

Documentation **educates** the families on development, and on your pedagogical approach and developmentally appropriate practices.

Documentation **prompts involvement**: parents and family members can be engaged and involved with documentation in a number of ways.



# Documentation and Advocacy

We aim to make the child and the learning **visible** to the community, as it helps **educate**, and furthermore, **embolden appreciation** and **support** for Early Childhood Education, and for the work that we do.

We see education as a **right** of children, as **citizens**.

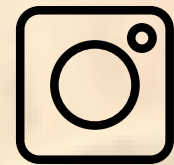




# Questions? Let's Hear Them!



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## NEXT WEBINAR!

**Working with Families in Partnership**  
Wednesday, May 28th, 12pm EST