



Barron Park Preschool Presents

**Defending Your  
Play-Based  
Program**

**Play It Forward**

by  
**Making Learning Visible**

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Design Thinker . Educator

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



## When you leave . . .

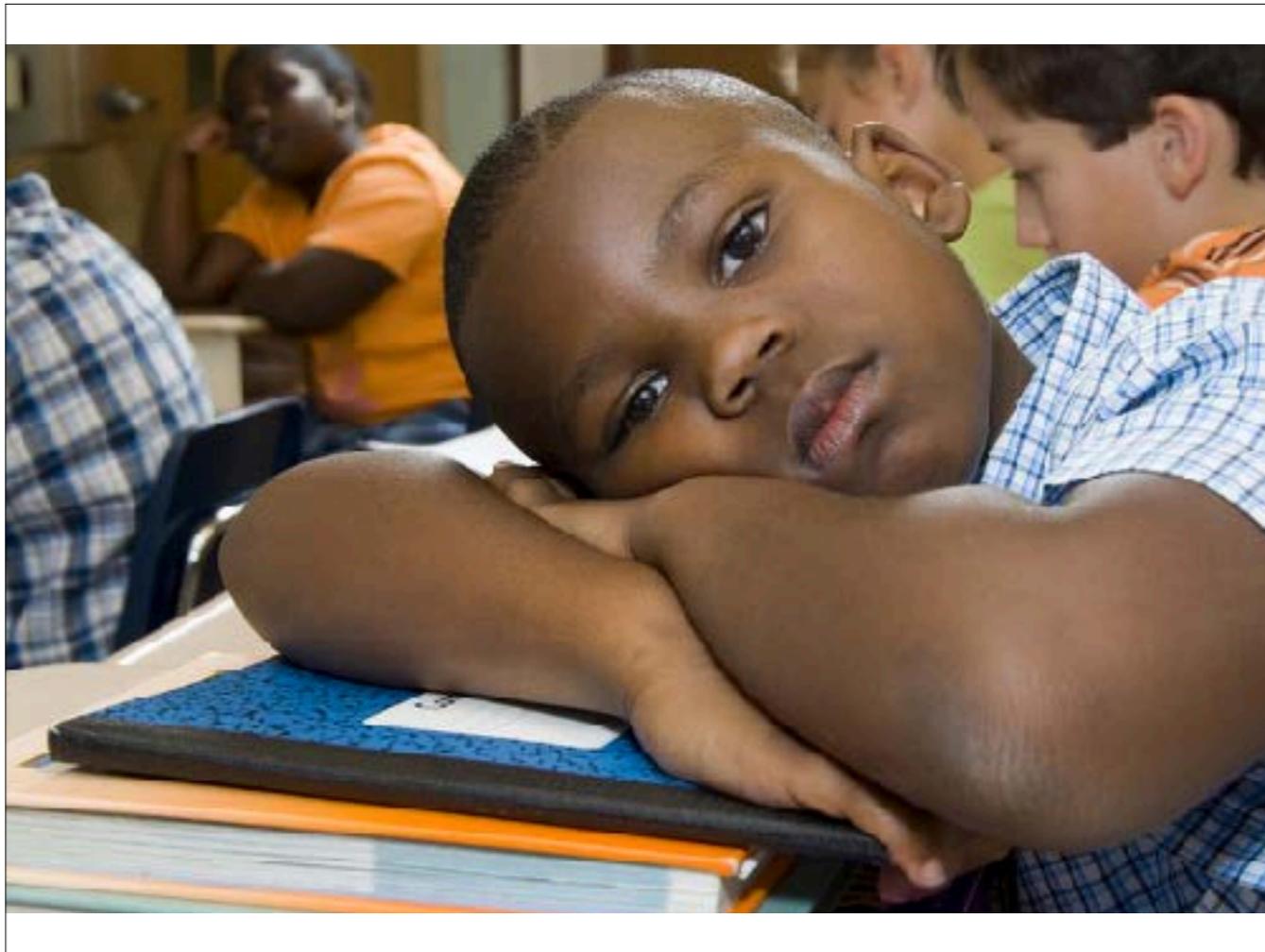
### You will have

- 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.



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



**WE ARE THE  
ANSWER!**



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# WHAT IS PLAY?

## Play memory:

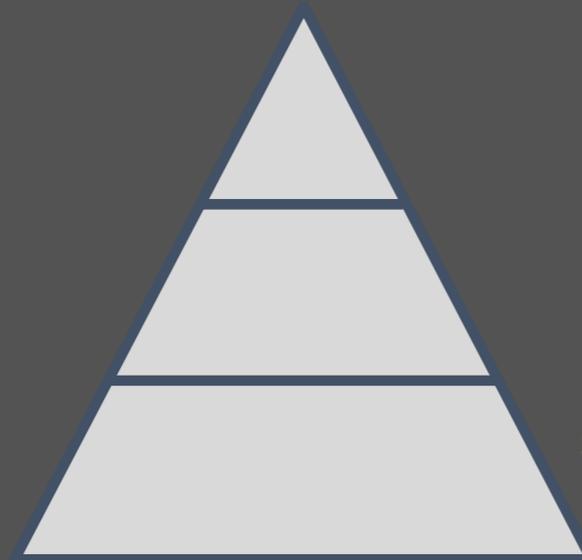
- What were you doing?
- Who were you with?
- How old were you?
- What time of day was it?
- What season was it?
- Can you identify what you were feeling? smelling? touching?

## 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



**Social Emotional Learning,  
Creativity, Creative Expression,  
Critical Thinking**

**Enriched Environment for  
Exploration and Learning**

**Safe Environment; Loving, Trusting,  
and Supportive Relationships**

# 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

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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?

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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

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- 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 fill 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?**



15

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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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

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- 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!

The logo for Brightwheel, featuring a colorful circular icon with dots in red, orange, yellow, green, and blue, followed by the word "brightwheel" in a lowercase, sans-serif font.

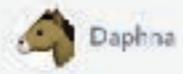
Instagram

The logo for Seesaw, featuring a circular icon with a stylized bow or ribbon in yellow and green, followed by the word "Seesaw" in a lowercase, sans-serif font.The logo for Facebook, consisting of the word "facebook" in a lowercase, sans-serif font, enclosed in a dark blue rectangular box.The logo for Kaymbu, featuring the word "Kaymbu" in a teal, lowercase, sans-serif font.

others?

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

Wed, April 10, 2019



A very busy morning on the phones and keyb...

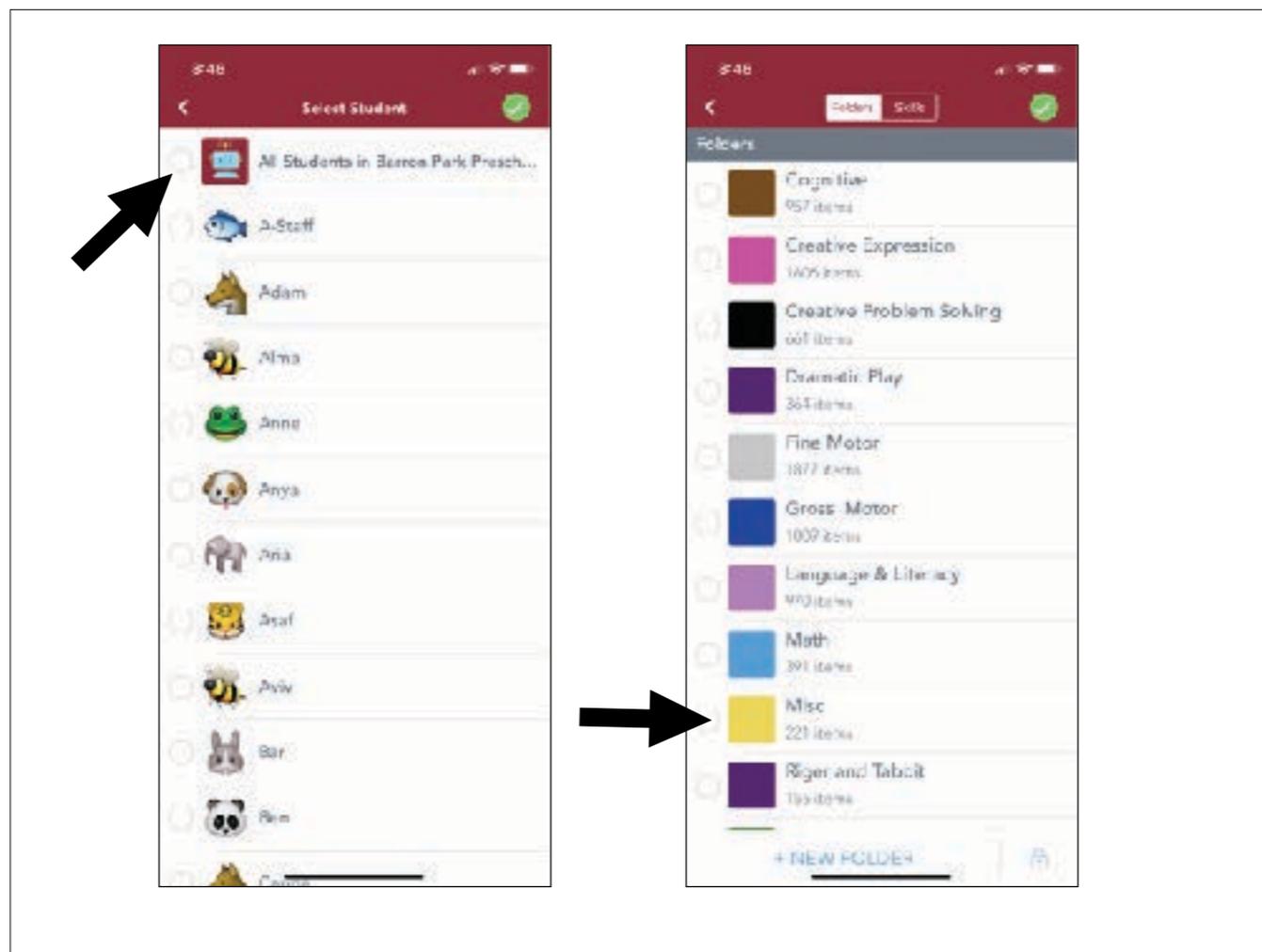
Seen by: Anner Kujhne and 2 others



Dramatic Play

Social-Emotional

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

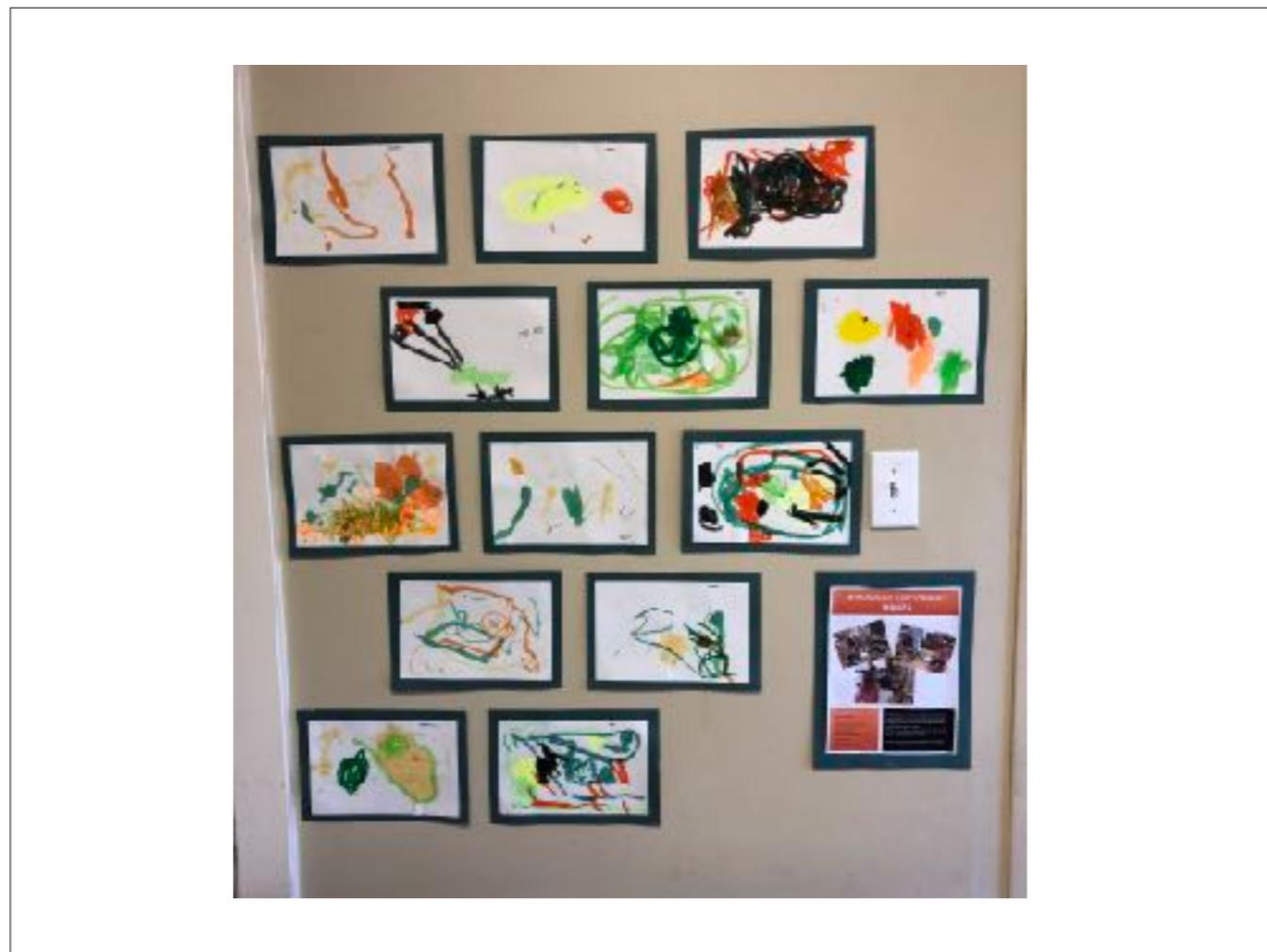
use Displays



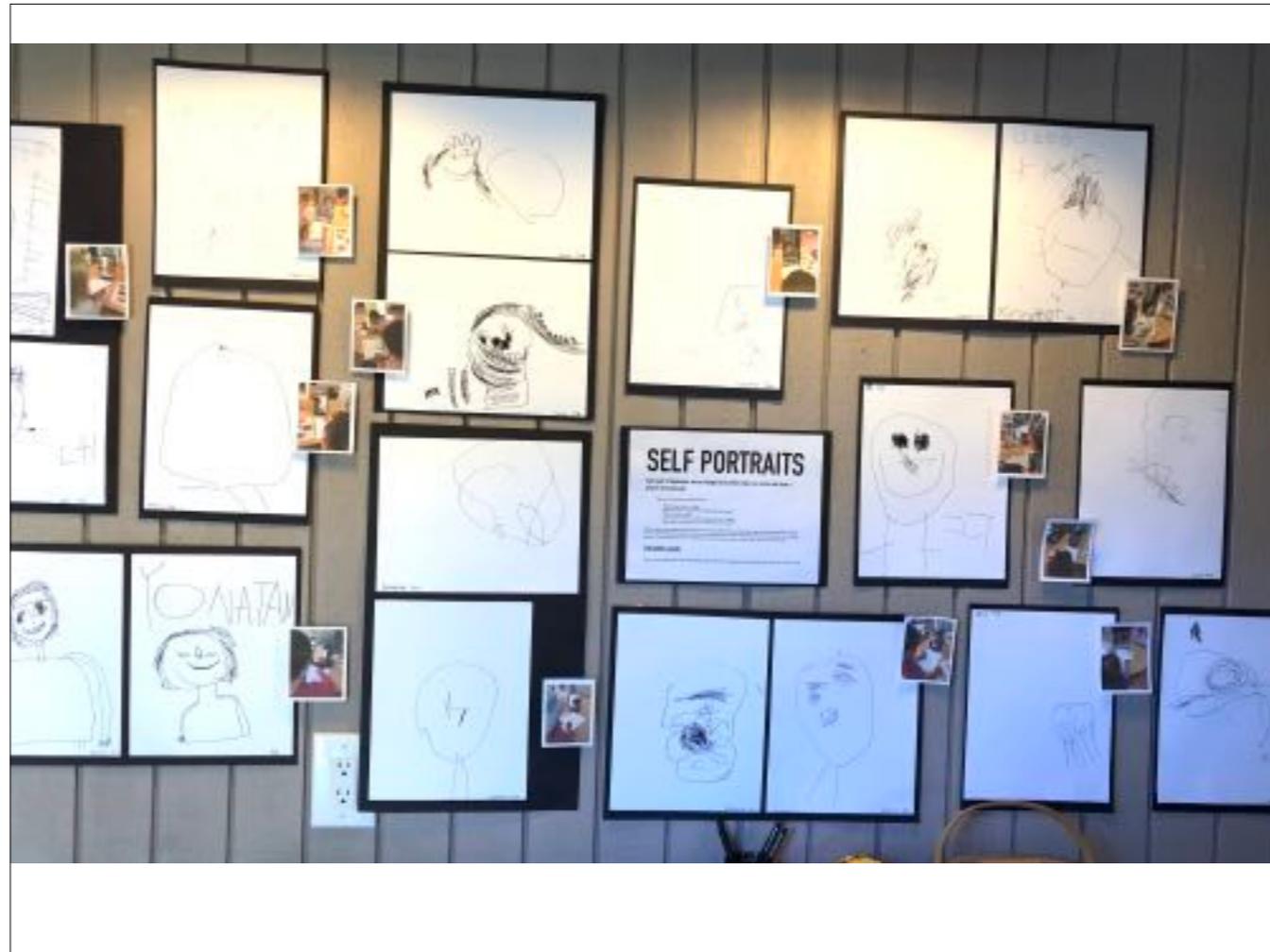
Highlight a single child's work



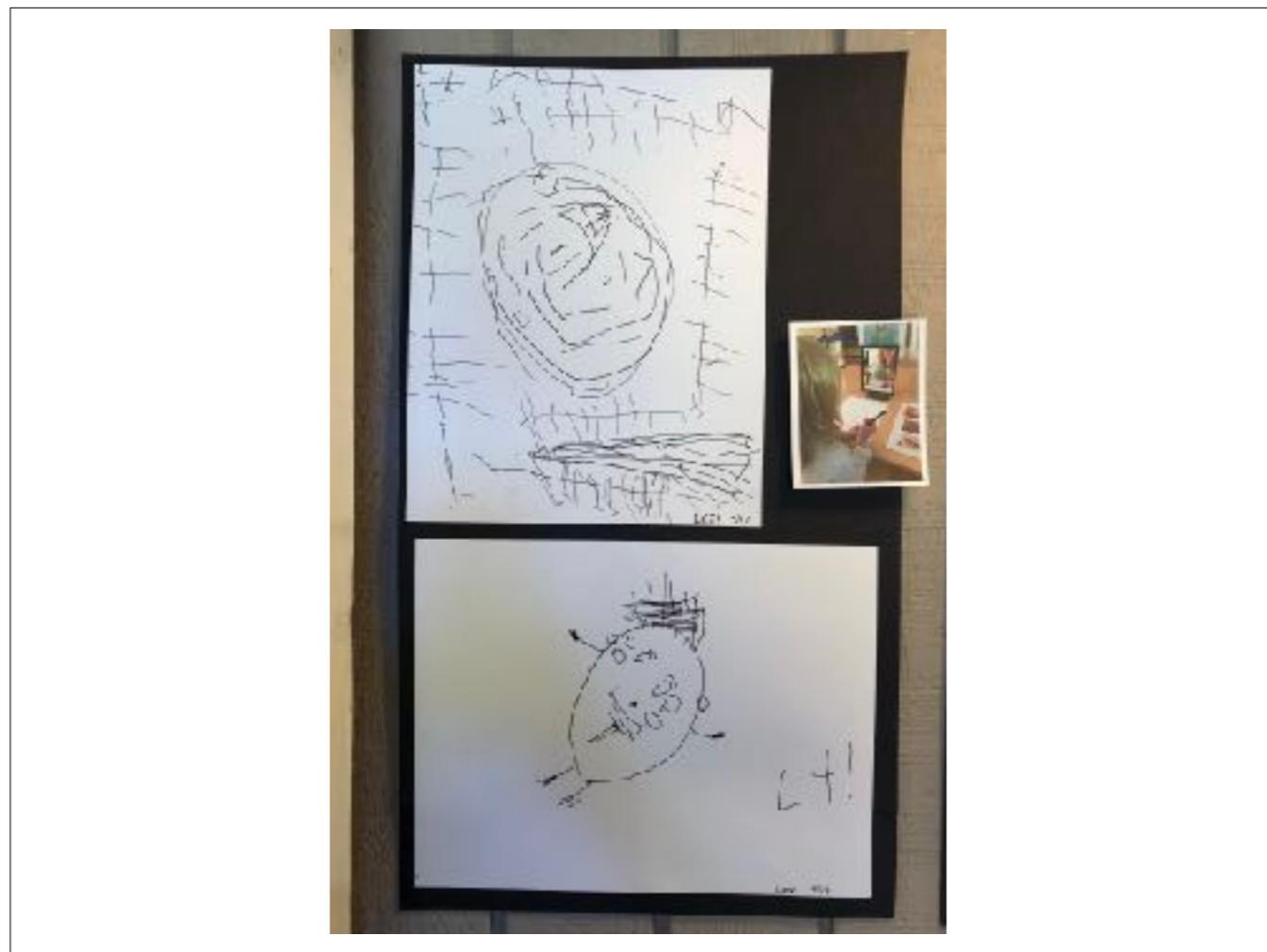
Document a design challenge (keep the animals safe from the crocodile. Using the book Crocodile Beat)



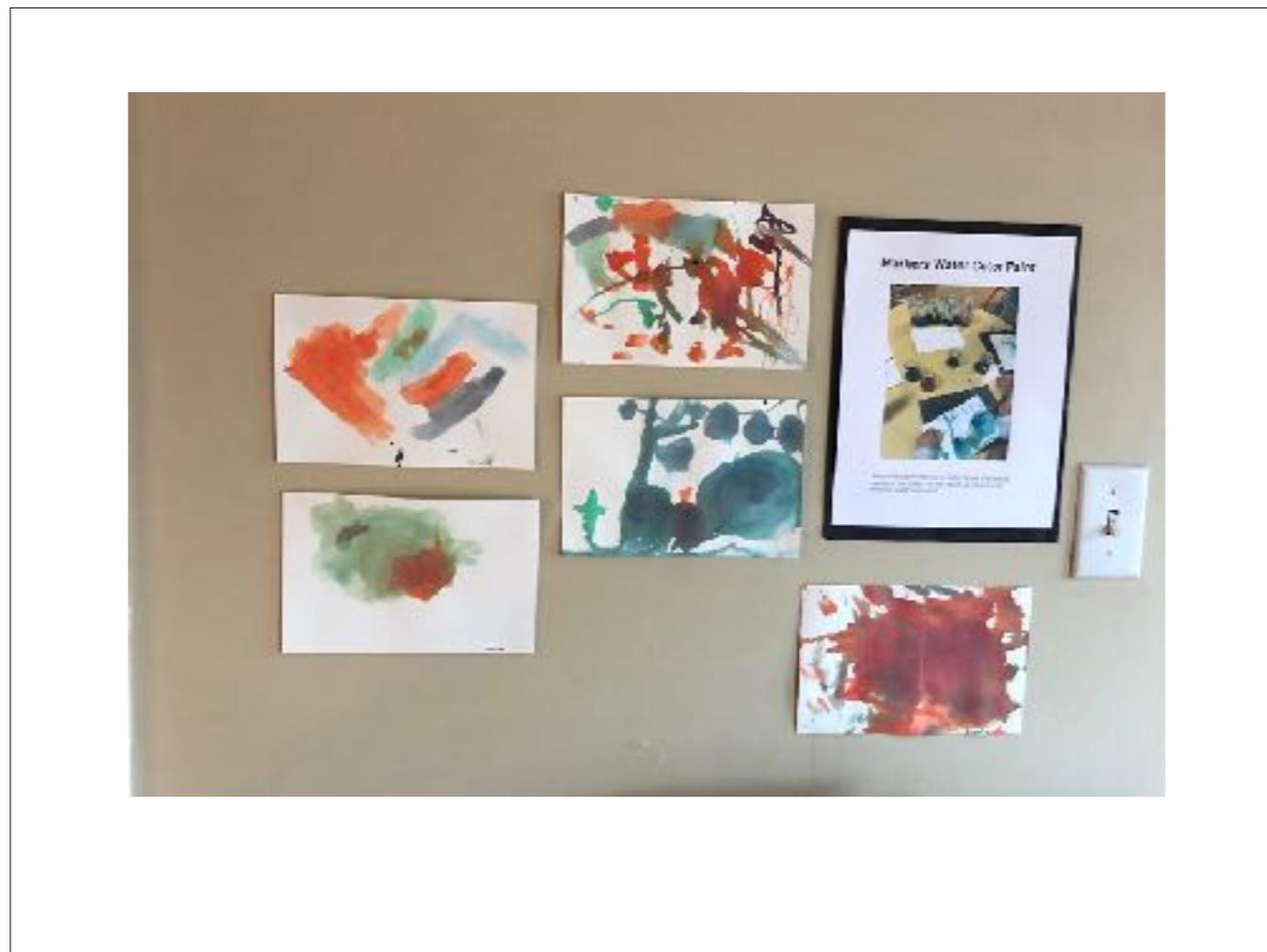
Document children's responses to a provocation (Anne's bird)



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.

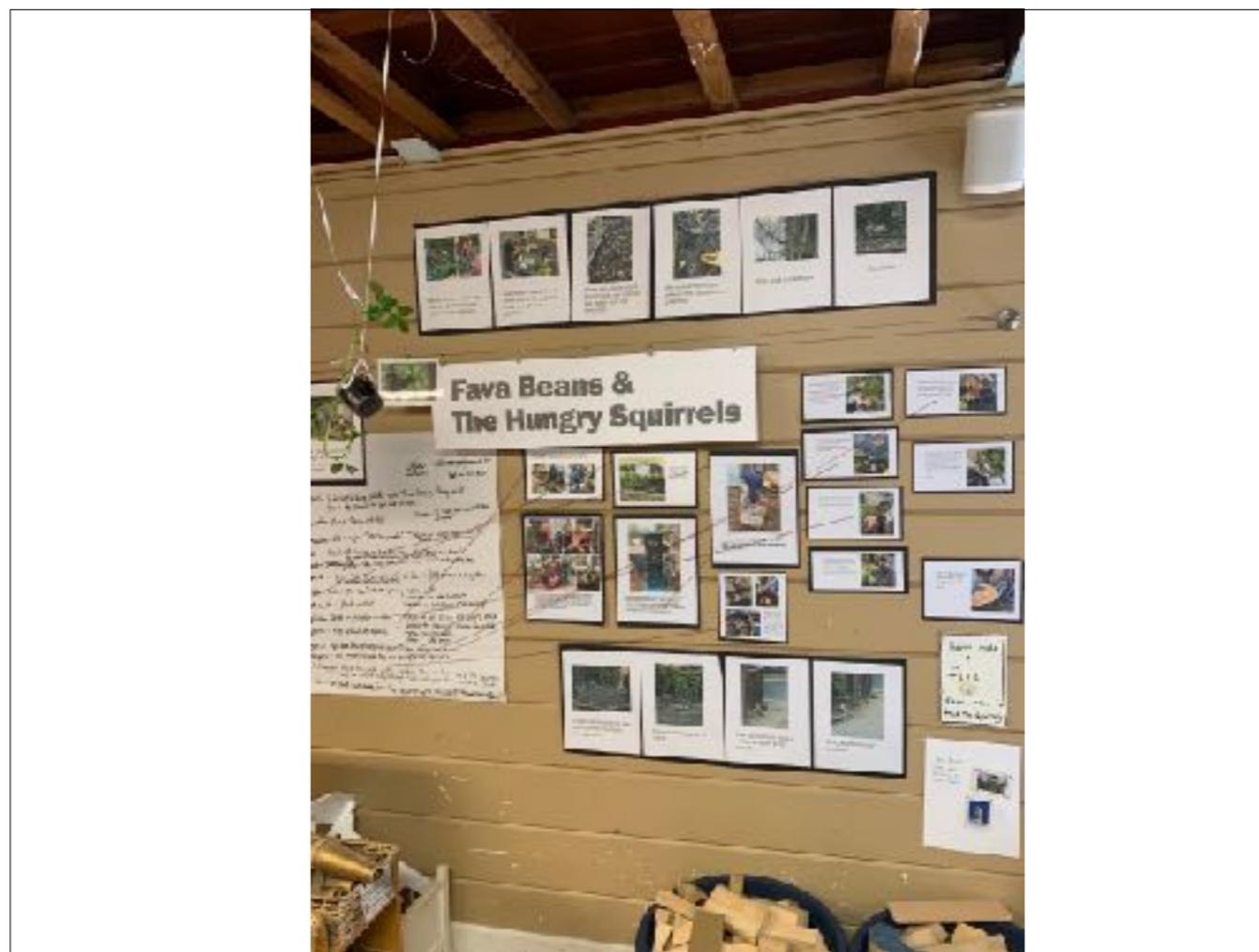


Displays can be teachers work (Love letters to the kids)



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.



The hungry squirrels ate our fava beans



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

we talked about how  
 (left) we keep food  
 away from the  
 squirrels

print results

AMY - Put some kites over the bears. They will  
 make it's hard to get food on them

Forest - Plant them inside Daphni - "I think the squirrel  
 outside"

Emmalee - Put a sign "NO Squirrels" in front of every tree they'll  
 accept them their same bears

Carl - Plant the bears and put a sign "No bears here"  
 they won't eat it because they don't like it

Mages - Sprinkle yellow beads, make "hickory nuts" with water to make yellow egg.

Donal - sign "No squirrels allowed here" (Put them in a garden)

Eugene - cover a pot sign "we are growing pickles here"  
 instead the seed is growing

Ethan H - put water instead, all could pick the seeds

Sara - cover a blanket + logs Make us not bring the seeds in  
 because the squirrels always see us

Nami - Put a bowl of acorns Cover the seeds  
 Ethan T. Put away

Sam - Put feet in plants to scare them use a sandy person

DeeDee - use orange cones they are in a garden squirrels

Elitha - Use biscuits with bricks. They are hard and the squirrels  
 will go around and go away. Put a sign on them that says "No  
 squirrels"

Yara - at wall run away from the squirrels with the seeds. Make sure





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

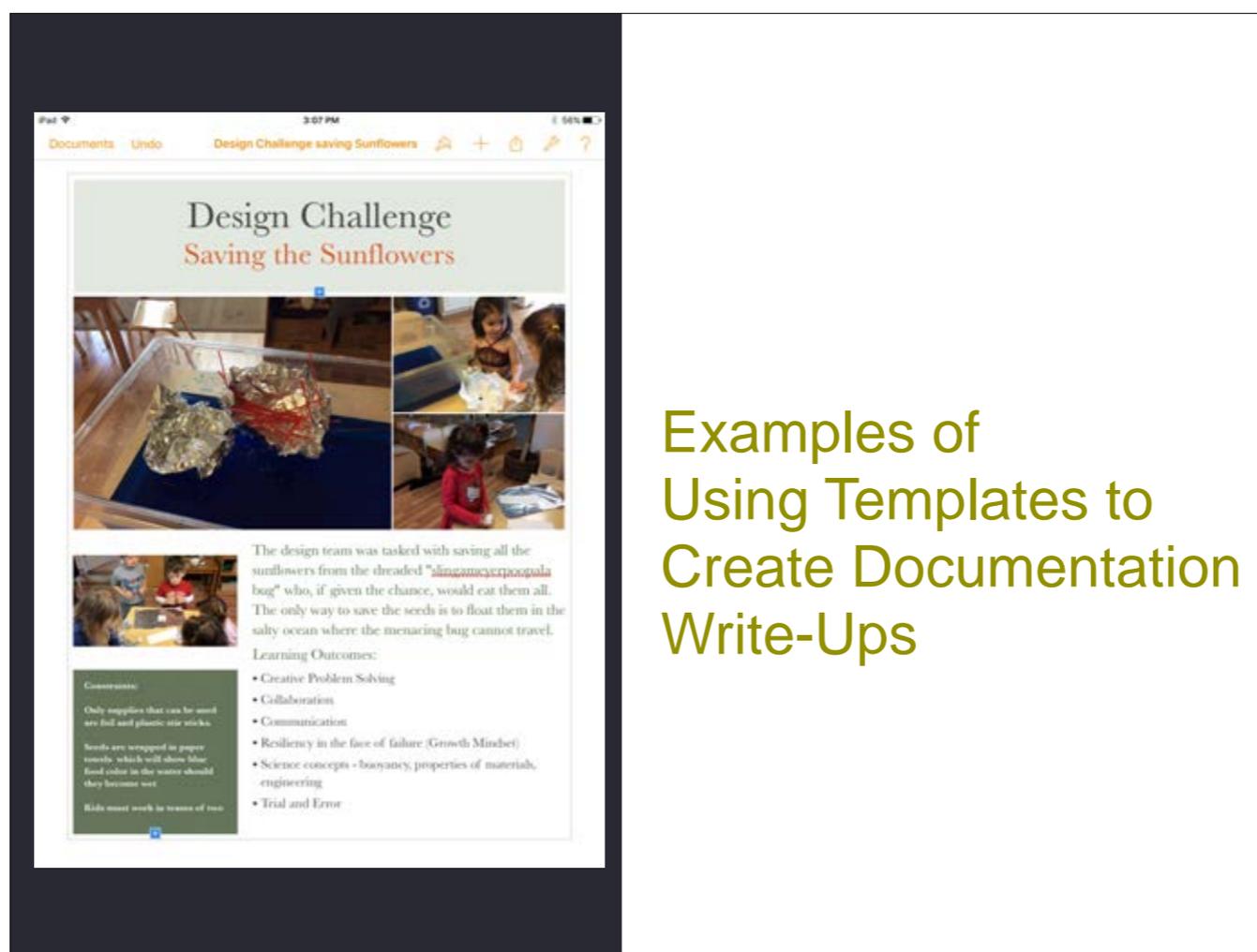
Clothespins, Binder Clips

Butcher Paper

Good Quality Scissors



String or wire  
Clear packaging tape  
Cardboard  
Clothes pins and Binder clips  
Butcher paper



## 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



## 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 squishy” -Noam

“It almost feel 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

# Exploring Color



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



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

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



## How?



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

# MAKING TRACKS



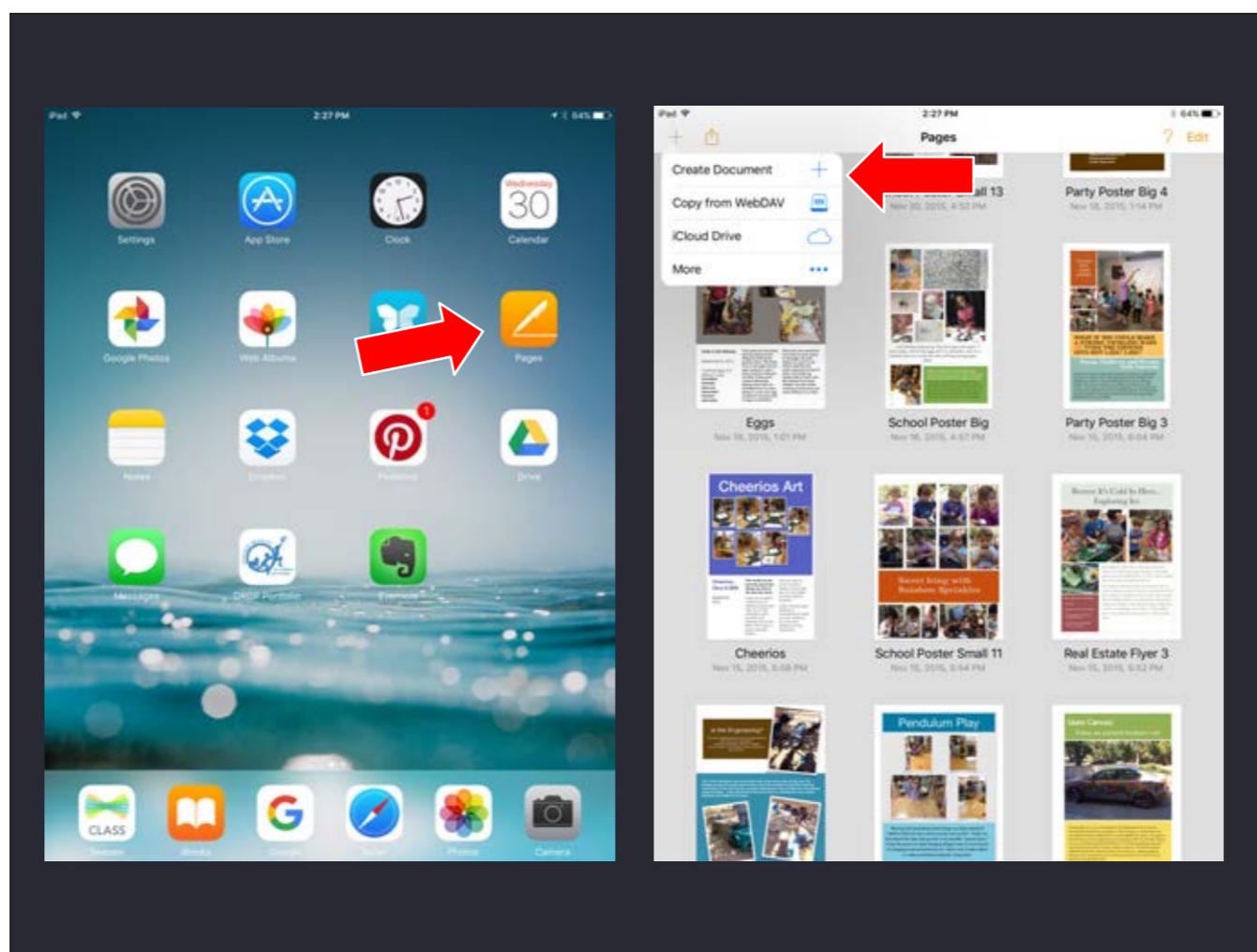
**Gross Motor**  
**Determination**  
**Coordination**  
**Cause and effect**  
**Creative expression**

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

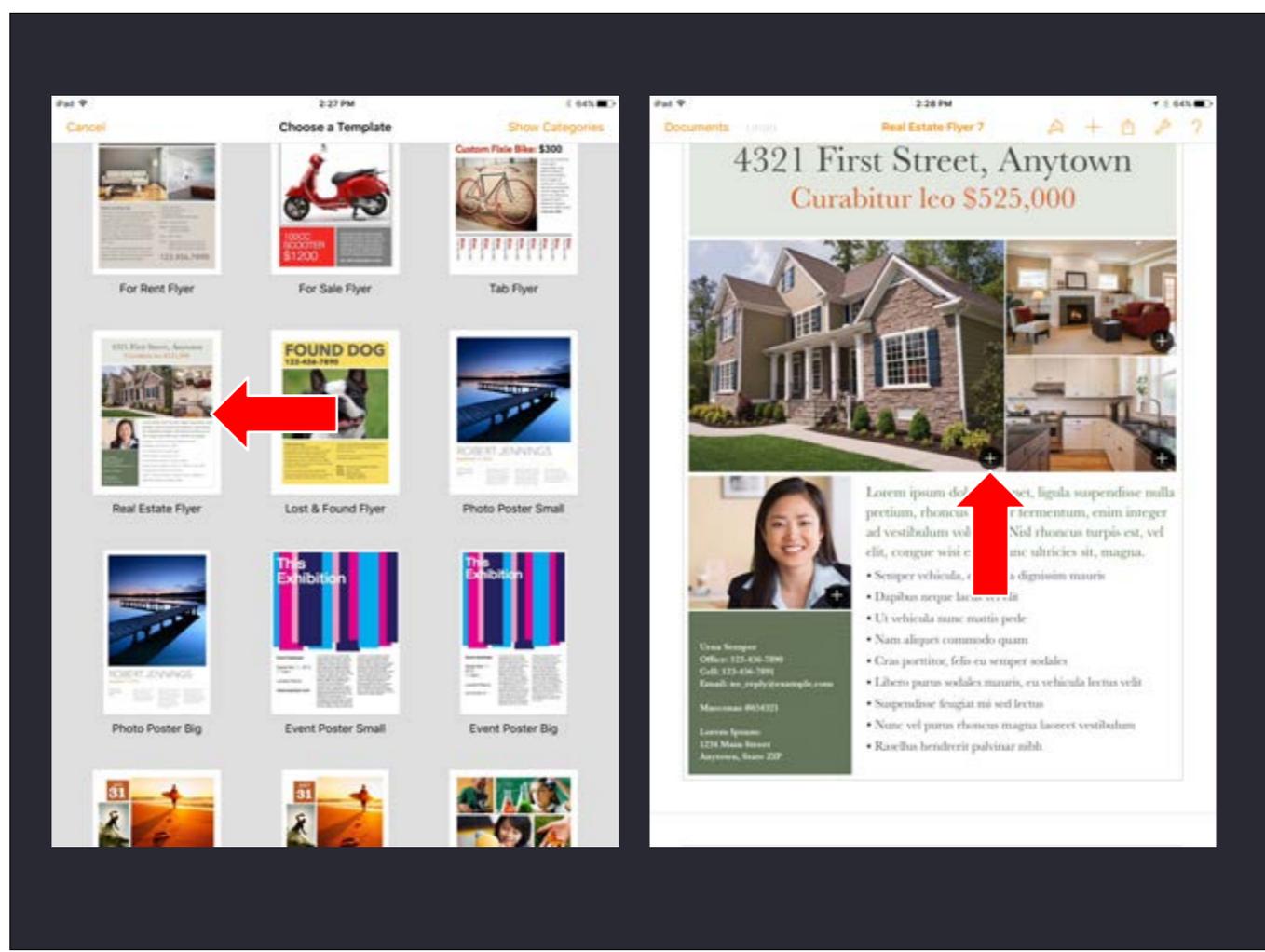
Gross motor  
determination  
coordination  
cause and effect  
creative expression



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

open the app

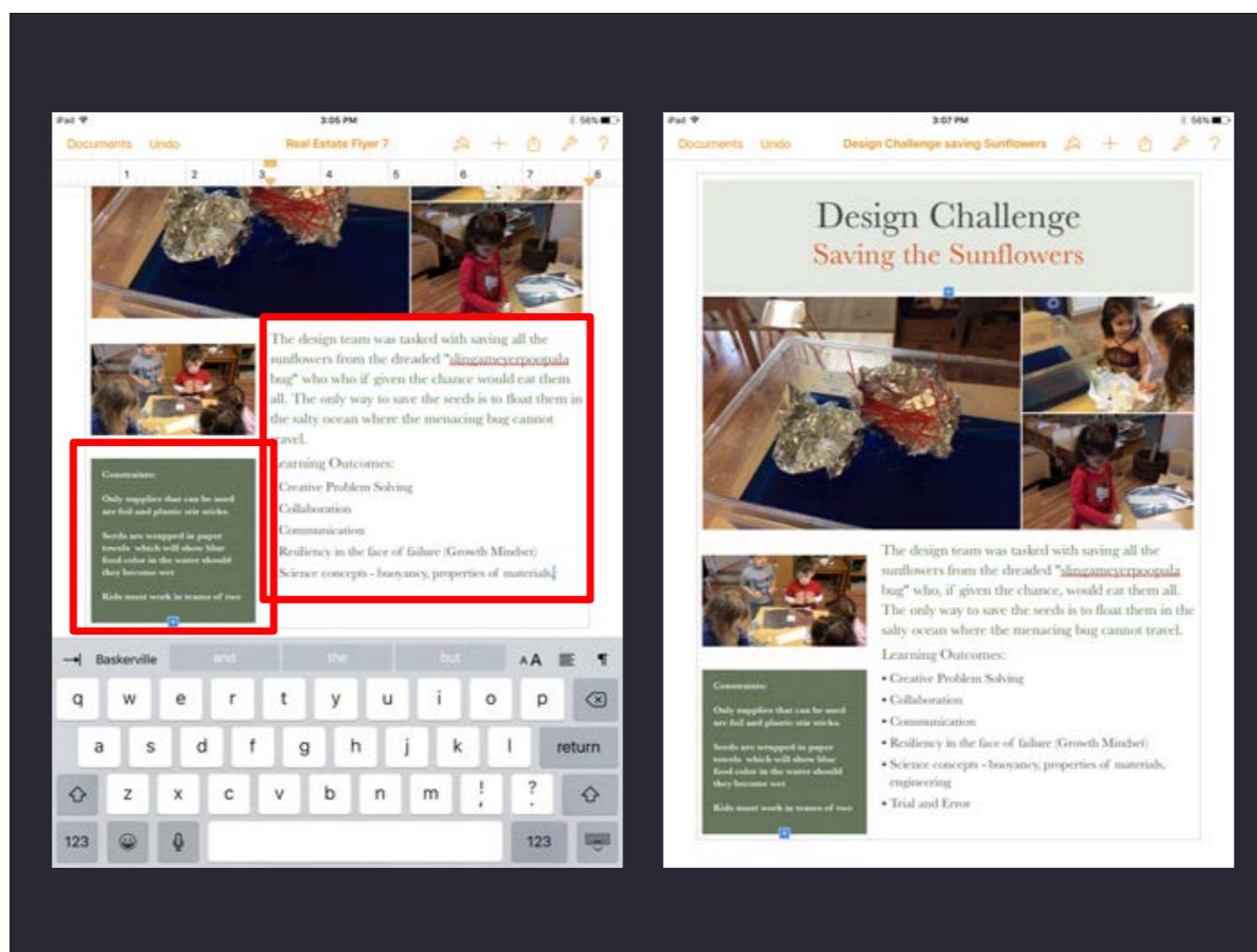
tap the plus sign and select "create document"



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**

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# INVITATION

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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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