



In the classroom this week...

We began taking a closer look at shapes and patterns this week. Beyond the basic circle, square, rectangle, and triangle, we looked at the distinctive characteristics of the oval, ellipse, pentagon, hexagon, octagon, trapazoid, and parallelogram. We were impressed with the number of shapes that the children



already knew. Children enjoyed the challenge of creating and re-creating with the shapes presented at group time, and we provided a basket full of multiples of each shape for children to arrange and glue on to

paper. Many simply explored the placement of one of each shape on their paper while several worked to create a themed piece with shapes representing some element such as a house or person. We also talked about contrast and camouflage, and children were asked to choose contrasting or camouflaging colors as the background for their work. Along with



the discussion of shapes, we also looked more closely at the concept of patterning; an important precursor to early cognitive processes governing early math and reading skills development. It was enlightening for many children to think of patterns involving color, shape, texture, and even gender. We created examples of many types of patterns



using a variety of materials. Children were very good at being able to 'continue the pattern'. This is a very fun and useful game to play with your children while driving or passing time at home. We went from very easy patterns such as 'red-blue-red-blue-red...' to more complex such as "red-red-green-yellow-red-red-blue, red-red-green-yellow-red-red-blue". They loved the challenge, and they



had great fun being part of a living pattern of "girl-girl-boy-boy, etc." During our work time later in the week, children worked to create patterns and forms with a vast array of materials. One of toddlers, while exploring wooden patterning materials developed a chair using "stick-square-stick. The teachers also



created patterns using materials. This allowed us to work side-by-side; modeling various techniques and innovative ways to explore patterns with the children. Near week's end, we intro-

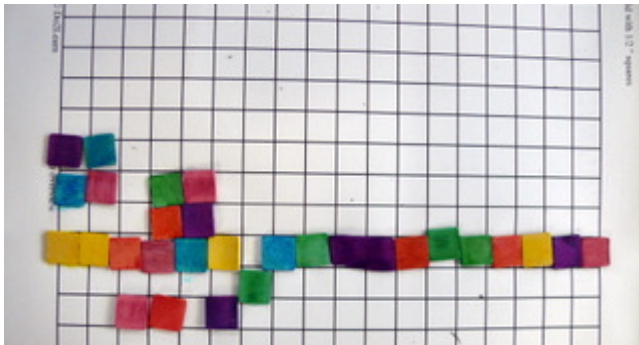


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duced grid paper and $\frac{1}{2}$ in. colored squares with which to create patterns, pictures, and designs. This was a wonderful way to re-



visit careful, controlled use of liquid glue. This review was useful for all of our children, and we saw a much more conservative and deliberate use of adhesive, following the demo. Food preparation and serving remains a very popular dramatic play theme. Early this week,

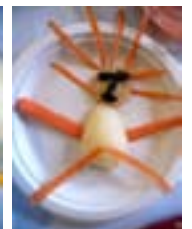


children served up great bowls of blocks as fruit, pasta, salads, candy, and many other

delectable items. On Wednesday, Marlena Hodgdon structured a cooking project for the afternoon group. With bagels as the base, children created edible art using olives, cheese, nuts, peppers, and other colorful and textural ingredients on a base of cream cheese. On



Friday morning, it was 'Cooking with Claudia!' She brought the ingredients to make 'salad people' with the children. Needless to say, this was well received and readily devoured.



Geoff Coble made a donation of a laser printer as an object for take-apart on Thursday morning.



He joined children as they thoughtfully 'ripped' into the equipment to expose its inner workings. The circuit boards and other parts will, no doubt, have a future in some invention yet to



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be concocted by a KKELC creator. Finally, thank you to Josh Weston who joined our group on Friday afternoon to explore materials in the classroom.

Volunteering is Living

by Geoff Coble

For those readers who have not yet experienced volunteering at a preschool, it might seem at first that it would be somewhat like an extension of play dates or parenting in general. After several months of volunteering as the Thursday morning aide, I can vouch that while there is the cross-over with parenting, I have also found the experience to be deeply rewarding in other ways.

Something as simple as playing blocks with these children and my son Ben in the mix has allowed me to notice just how much some of these kids have not seen, from making cranes, bridges and new ways to make car ramps. We used to spend hours on end playing with blocks, and it might be that some of this parent volunteering can help bridge a gap into the 'video age'. Today, we took apart an old laser printer, and they learned all sorts of stuff. John calls it 'take-apart', but we used to do this at their age as well, only now it seems like kids may not do this otherwise. The interest level is amazing, and deeply gratifying.

The experience is an exchange, where you get to see things from the group's perspective, but transfer your experiences to the children in small groups as well. These kids need to know how to solve simple problems from as many angles as possible, and the more parent volunteers there are the better. I feel that any parent will find some of these experiences as deeply gratifying as I do. While it is a sacrifice when it comes to the work needed to

support everything, including Kachemak Kids, when it comes down to it, this is what that work is for anyway.

We Need Your Feedback!

The KKELC Board is having a retreat on March 1st and 2nd to develop a Strategic Plan with major goals for the next 3 years and Action Plans for the next year. The Board would greatly appreciate your feedback on the direction you would like KKELC to take. Please send your comments to Board Chair, Jenny Martin at: homerjlme@yahoo.com or call her at: 235-9727 (h). Thank you!

Parent Co-Op Time! A few important updates:

6 hours per family of parent time is required as part of the Kachemak Kids co-op program (in the Parent Handbook). As stated in a letter home, starting this month: **if you're unable to fulfill your 6 hour co-op commitment, you may "buy out" any unfulfilled hours at the rate of \$20 per hour** to be added to your next bill. Families are encouraged to participate in the program. Be sure to log your time in the sign-in book by the door. Sierra is helping keep track, and if hours are not logged, you will be billed. Or, families may just choose to "buy out" their parent time hours. Your participation in the program, or buying out hours is necessary to keep Kachemak Kids operating.

Immediate Needs: Someone to create new Parent Time visual Bulletin Board sign up system contact Shannon McBride-Morin for details at 235-2604 or cmorin1111@aol.com.



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Classroom aides for AM & PM, mid week cleaning, toy sanitizing, pet cage cleaning, snack, etc (check the sign in book).

Work Party March 15 & 16th at Kachemak Kids! Mark your calendar, and join us for a few hours or 1/2 a day on Saturday or Sunday if you can. We will be moving things to a new storage unit, finishing some inside carpentry and fix-it projects, organizing and deep cleaning Kachemak Kids. This is a great way to earn a couple or even all your parent time hours in one shot! More to come on this later. Thank You - Shannon McBride-Morin (Parent Time Co-Coordinator)

IMPORTANT - YOUR IDEAS ARE NEEDED!!!

As many of you have realized our current location is quite cramped, so the KKELC Board of Directors is actively looking into options for a new home for the center. At this time we feel that we need a minimum of 1700 sq. ft. with two toilet rooms, outdoor play space and frontage that can accommodate at least four cars - all within the bounds of "downtown Homer". If any family members have any ideas on how we can procure adequate space, or have leads on a good space, please contact the BOD Secretary Caroline Storm @ 235-0580 or caroline34@acsalaska.net

KKELC Community Service...

An important part of the 'social lesson' for children is talking about the ways that we can give to the communities in which we live. Over the next week KKELC children are asked to bring in items needed for the Homer Animal Shelter. The lists of needed items are:

- Baby/big blankets/towels
- Cat litter
- Toilet seat covers (for cat beds)
- Pet food (no brand specified)
- Treats

Please bring these to KKELC and **we will be taking a field trip to the shelter on Wed., Feb. 27th, at 10AM** to drop off our donation. Donations can be placed in the basket on the table in the art studio.

WE NEED WOOD SCRAPS AND MORE

We are in need of some items that you may have:

- Small wood scraps (thin plywood, and multi-shaped pieces such as dowels, rods, square stock, etc.
- Colored Cellophane/Mylar
- Wires of all gauges

SAVE THE DATE:

On **Mon., Feb. 25th**, Paula Kulhanek will lead a book discussion on Dr. Gordon Neufeld's book "Holding On to Your Kids". We look forward to you **joining us at KKELC at 6:30PM**. Please email director@kachemakkids.org or call 2205 if you would like to have child care provided.