



2009 Summer Sessions
Amazing Architecture, Creative Construction
 June 22–26



First-Plymouth Early Education Programs
 Dimensions Research Classrooms
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Amazing Architecture, Creative Construction

Katie B. swings in the hammock she made using various materials and trees in the Nature Explore Classroom.



Ms. Murdoch uses visual notes to document the process Katie used to build her swing.



It's been a week of fun and exciting building using materials like mini-bricks, tree blocks, large pieces of fabric and more. Construction took place inside and on the Nature Explore Classroom. Interesting architectural tidbits were shared, explored and sketched right here in our own building and around the neighborhood.

The best way to help a child learn is to connect the home-school experience. Take time some time to sketch your home. Walk outside with your child and a pencil and paper (a clipboard, book or cardboard will give stability for your drawing). Look at your home and sketch what you see...you don't have to be an artist, just look closely.

Andrew P. asked if they could just lie in the grass and look at the Bell Tower after they sketched. (photo by Kris Van Laningham)



Children create "The Grand Canyon" in the Sand Area by scooping channels and filling them with water.

Side Notes:

- Don't forget to wear socks and closed toe shoes that fit properly. No flip flops or Crocs—these are dangerous when children are running and using the climbing equipment.
- Please apply sunscreen to your child/ren before coming to summer sessions.

Saturday (June 27)...

- Pioneers Park Nature Center, 10:30-Noon. Bring your Great Park Pursuit page for Pioneers Park: lots of water, binoculars and camera (optional)!

Summer Sessions Bookshelf

Amazing Buildings by Kate Hayden
Architecture Shapes by Michael J. Crosbriet & Steve Rosenthal
Changes, Changes by Pat Hutchins
Houses and Homes by Ann Morris
Iggy Peck, Architect by Andrea Beaty
Into the Sky by Ryan Ann Hunter

Variety of recyclables used to build creatively

By Katie Logan

"Hey guys, you can't put that piece there!"

"No, it's too little!"

"Not that one, it's too big."

"Half of these don't go with the other!"

These were just some of the problem-solving comments heard on the first day of K-1's "Amazing Architecture" week.

After a tour of the tallest parts of the church building, students returned to the North room for group activities. They had to use negotiating and communication skills to work together to create the tallest structures with the most stable foundations.

During the next day of building, this group worked especially hard on communicating with each other. They talked about how to put all of the different items together to make a house, and because they listened to each other, they were successful!



Atticus W., Katie F., Owen H. and Emily P. communicated and worked together.

Friends had the opportunity to build with lots of large and small hands-on materials. Thanks to donations of the most unusual items, friends had the time of their lives with: large, spongy Styrofoam, round wooden and plastic disks, foam squares, thread spools, wine corks, plastic pizza tables, plastic tubs, cardboard

boxes and tubes.

Children naturally fell into groups of two or three builders to build while others built their own individual creations. You

could feel the excitement in the room as the ideas sparked, the communication flowed and creative forces came together with tremendous celebration through invention.

Some comments overheard were:

Daniel B.: "Hey, there's 16 boxes here!"

Louis A.: "I'm putting sticks in my building, so it can stay up! What you really need is a strong base. Look! It's like a ship. Yeah, but it's a skyscraper, right? It's a skyscraper ship... it's a spaceship skyscraper including telescopes!"



Cardboard protectors from new furniture made great building materials.



"The other side is the real part that the things slide down," noted Amir T., as he experimented with cylinders rolling. "It's a ramp, like it's a restaurant."

text and photo by Joyce White

K-1 Group looks closely and uses knowledge to build amazing architecture

by Kris Van Laningham

Children looked closely at architectural details this week. During a walk around our school neighborhood we looked for dentil molding (think teeth on a house), cat slide roofs, lattice, finials, domes, etc. Children saw things that I had never noticed before this week! Atticus W. noticed a dome on each fire hydrant.

Kennedee H. spotted a cat slide roof on a house close to the school (a house I saw many times without noticing the cat slide). Andrew P. spotted a dome on a garbage truck exhaust tube. They were close observers!

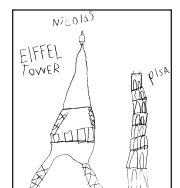
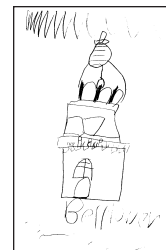
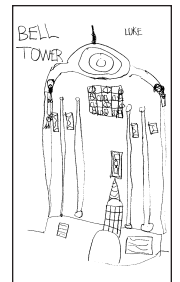
We are also building "sandcastles" out of reusable containers. Children chose a container, glued it to a base and added details to make



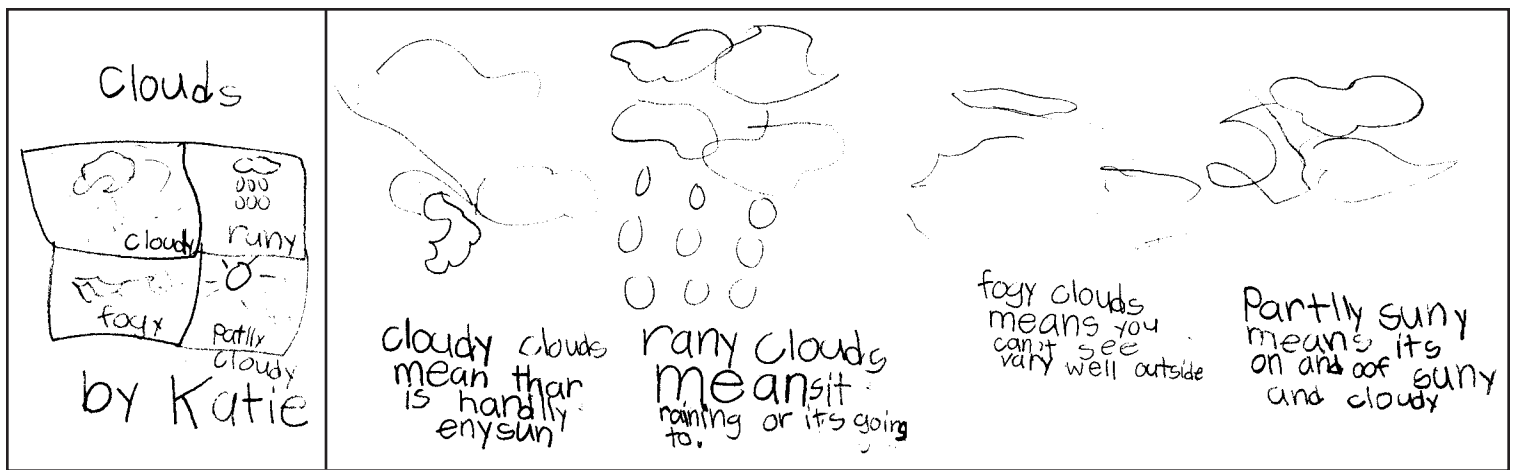
Andrew P. and Lewis R. display their "castles."

it look like a castle. They also used wood scraps to create small structures.

Sketching has also been a focus. Children looked closely at the Church's Bell Tower and at replica buildings and then sketched the details. Children gathered many new images to store in their minds as they finished out the week!



Left to right, clockwise: Sara P., Lewis R., Luke M., Nicolas H. and Kennedee H.



During Work Time, Katie F. made a book which recorded her knowledge of clouds (independent of any help). Her book illustrates four types of clouds. She also recorded what she knows about clouds. Then she read it to her friends at the end of day. *text by Kathy Marshall*

Scientific observation begins in the Digging Area

text & photos by Holly Murdoch

Henry G.-H. made a discovery in the soil while working in the Digging Area with a long handled shovel. He took it to a table where Charlie K. and Magda M. were sitting in the shade.

Henry: "Look, I found something!" Madga: "It's a worm... look at it turn." Madga let Henry put the worm on the palm of her hand.



The children began looking at the creature with magnifying glasses. Ms. Murdoch: "What does it look like when you look at it closely?"

Magda: "It looks like it has dots on the side of it. I see swirly lines on its body." Madga moved her pointer finger left and right to indicate a pattern of lines.

Lucas B.: "It's squashy."

Ms. Murdoch: "Do you think it has bones?" Henry thought it did but Madga disagreed.

Lucas: "A worm doesn't have a neck." Magda: "Ew, it's yucky."



Top: Charlie K. studies Henry G.-H.'s discovery. Bottom: Magda M. sketches while Charlie closely observes the movements of the insect.

Madga placed the worm on the table where the sun shone on it. Lucas was looking at the worm with the magnifying glass and a beam of light was concentrated on it.

Madga looked at it with a magnifying glass, moving it closer and farther. "It's getting smaller! It gets bigger! It gets smaller!"

Lucas: "How are we gonna figure out this?"

The group decided to get a bowl of soil from the Digging Area and put the worm into it. Madga "He's moving! He's eating up the dirt!"

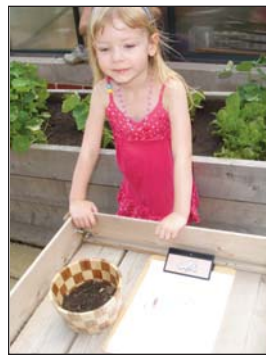
A centipede was in the bowl of soil. Madga: "It's a centipede. It's a friend."

Ms. Murdoch: "How is the centipede different than the worm?"

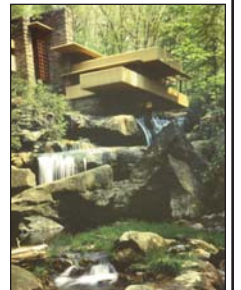
Lucas: "It's longer and littler."

Madga then accepted an invitation from Ms. Murdoch to sketch her observations.

Magda M. shows her sketch next to the grub. *photo by Joyce White*



Water, rock and rees were all important to Frank Lloyd Wright, according to the children in the 2-5 Amazing Architecture Week. Katie B. explained, "He really liked building things secretly—like in nature." She said a lot of math, money and time went into his designs and the construction of them.



text & photo by Holly Murdoch

Wright's Falling Water

Quotes overheard while preschoolers were building with large recyclable materials:

by Hannah Wike

Lucius G.: "I'm thinking about making... a boat."

Logan T.: "This is the row, both are rows, one falls into the water (green and pink ones)."

"I think I'll name it... a castle."

Eti D.: "You have to say a secret passage to get to the lake. You have to take this boat to get to the lake."

Signe M.: "I wanted to make a donut."

"This is a castle."

"I have a tunnel."

by Jamie Frey

Hannah C.: "We're going to make a big tower."

Keegan M.: "Yeah, cool! I'm making something cool. We're making a tall building!"

Marcus W.: "We're making a city. Everyone can make a big building."

Ethan K.: "The Eiffel tower fell down - help!?"

Everyone: "Can we build it? Yes, we can!"

by Cindy Heinzman

Mirabelle H.: "I'm making a tall, tall building where my daddy works."

Alexander V.: "It's a tower. I don't know what I'll call it yet."

Nathaniel V.: "Hey, that's kinda like the Leaning Tower of Pisa!" (He pointed to Ivy J.'s creation.)

Sam H.: "It's a boat. Here's where you drive it. There's the bathroom."

Toddlers engage in "amazing architecture, creative construction"

text & photos by Nicole Carl

Toddlers spent "Amazing Architecture" week developing construction and engineering skills.

They were introduced to colorful shaped blocks and miniature blocks. Throughout the week we looked at pictures of buildings, such as the Eiffel Tower and the Chrysler Building, and read the story, Changes, Changes.

While working with the colored blocks, the toddlers made representations of buildings,

towers and other land forms. Mia W. built a "tree," Levi P. made a "motorcycle," and Drew L. made a "house."

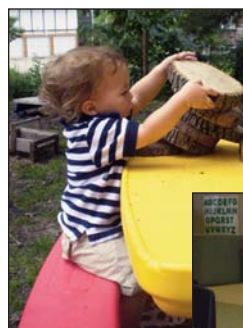
We also took a walk around the neighborhood



Teddie K., Allison H., and Miley G. build towers with tree blocks.



Jack B. builds a tall tower with cylinder blocks.



Right: Mia W. constructs her "tree."

and looked for different kinds of buildings. We saw houses, garages, the First-Plymouth Church, the Capitol Building, and apartment buildings. The children noticed that these buildings all made different shapes.

Left: Theo P. builds a leaning tower with tree blocks.

