

# “We Can Make Shadows!”

A new focus has emerged in our classroom! Both with and without prompting from teachers, the children constantly use their imaginations to fill in unknown details and create stories about the world around them. Clearly, there is a budding interest in dramatic play and storytelling. To build on this interest in a new way, the preschoolers were offered the projector and loose parts (like fabric, pinecones, rocks, etc) while teachers watched to see what they would do.

*“It’s moving!  
It jiggles!”  
Milla says,  
as she  
wiggles the  
jar full of  
water back  
and forth.*



The children began their exploration of shadows by experimenting with several materials, interested in how each one created or manipulated shadows.

*Kailey and Wyatt discuss observations about the materials on the projector.*



*Gianni holds the fabric over himself and turns to watch how his shadow changes. He moves the fabric up and down several times.*



*Kailey stands in front of the projector and opens and closes her hand several times. “We can make shadows!” She exclaims.*

In each of these examples, the children are **demonstrating curiosity, making predictions and checking them, and finally, forming generalizations based on the evidence of their experiences.** These are all aspects of **scientific observation and investigation.**

While the open-ended experience and materials gave the children a chance to practice scientific observation and investigation skills, the dark atmosphere of the room really opened up a whole world of imagination and dramatic play. Jax decided to read the shadows a story, while Milla and Gianni played hide and seek with them. At one point, the children built a tent. Inside the tent, Kailey saw her shadow moving on the wall. "My shadow! It's the monster!" She shook her head back and forth frantically, making her shadow move. "I've got you, Kailey!" Milla said, as she grabbed Kailey's arm, protecting her from leaving the safety of the tent and being captured by the monster. Milla and Kailey demonstrated an **understanding of simple plot in drama**.



*An example of one of the constructed "tents". Here, the children laid fabric down to sit on as they read to themselves.*



*"A monster!! Raawwrrr!!!!" - Alden*

*Several of the children decided to use the fabric to dress up as monsters. This is an example of **adding props and costumes to enhance dramatization and fantasy play**.*

Loris Malaguzzi, an Italian early education specialist, stated that, "The wider the range of possibilities we offer children, the more intense will be their motivations and the richer their experiences. We must widen the range of topics and goals, the types of situations we offer and their degree of structure, the kinds and combinations of resources and materials, and the possible interactions with things, peers, and adults." This is certainly our goal. To encourage more dramatic play and story creation, we will be building a cave for our classroom. We will also be offering more open-ended materials like fabric that can be utilized for costuming and set-building. This will give the preschoolers opportunities to **develop skills to create, invent and express through drama**.