We enjoyed the remainder of the undergrads’ curriculum projects in week 8: Simone’s big balls and blocks, Zulema’s water play project, Belen’s tin cans, Olivia’s bubble wrap, and Micah’s firetruck/firefighter experience.

Weeks nine and ten are bittersweet in the Toddler Room. The children are more relaxed and engaged than ever before, but we know they will soon say goodbye to the students who worked so hard to help them get used to the classroom. This transition can be hard for some toddlers, and it is also hard for the caregivers. We are thankful that Simone and Lauren will be back next quarter as floating interns!

What did we do in the classroom?

The Cognitive Area: In the Cognitive Area the children revisited lock boxes. They continued to label and sort magnet tiles on the light box. Belen’s project, cans with lids, was exciting — matching, volume, problem solving — a lot can be learned from just a few paper and tin cylinders with lids.
The Gross Motor Area: The toddlers discovered a new physical challenge — bridges across our mattress. One was a ladder, the other, the slide (as a bridge). The toddlers needed to practice taking turns, walking across, and problem solving when two people set out across the structures from opposite directions.

Music Area: We continued to see toddler interest in tambourines and concertinas. One toddler led the song “Baby Shark,” using a finger-puppet book of a shark. At first circle we practiced songs that invite gesturing such as “Tick-tock I’m a clock,” and “Zoom Zoom Zoom.” We enjoyed basic puppetry with “A spider” song.
The Art & Sensory Area: We invited the toddlers to paint a mural, mixing orange-red and purple-white. They tried feathers in playdough, smeared shaving cream, and used dot markers. Olivia organized a bubble wrap corridor in this area, and children (and adults too) were astonished and excited by the big noises it made.

Social Studies: After observing toddlers’ interest in fire stations, firetrucks and firefighter costumes, caregiver Micah delivered a special project: She arranged a fire truck field trip in which the firetruck came to CCFS. The infants and toddlers (and preschoolers too) met Caregiver Micah’s EMS/Fire-station team and admired their shiny red truck.

The firefighters told the toddlers that even when a firefighter’s face is covered by a mask, and their body by a big bulky suit, firefighters are still community helpers.

One of toddlers’ greatest fears during fires (and in the hospital too) is that they can’t see the expressions on the mouths of their helpers, and want to run away rather than be helped, so this is an important safety message for children of this age. We followed Micah’s project with another “firefighter” of a fluffier nature, a firedog puppet. We talked about the firetruck again and the firefighter’s message about being helpers, and we sang “Hurry Hurry Drive the Firetruck.” The following week we had a real fire drill! Molly gave the alarm, and we practiced lining up and getting counted.
The Dramatic Play Area:

We shifted the focus from home routines to shopping. Providing toddlers with “real” props such as cash registers and opportunities to fill shopping baskets allowed them to imitate the routine they see when they go shopping. The most exciting thing was the felt money which toddlers collected, handed out, and counted.
Block Area: We moved the firefighting dress up props into this area with the toy firetrucks, plastic people, tree blocks, plastic pets and large cardboard blocks. Brenda’s ramps and vehicles continued to be popular in this area. Children showed interest in both unit blocks and single Duplo style blocks, connecting them.

The Nature & Science Area:

The toddlers continued to enjoy the fish and the toads. They handled pumpkins and painted on leaves.

The Quiet Area:

The toddlers are enjoying our homemade books. You can make one too: [http://families.naeyc.org/learning-and-development/reading-writing/eight-tips-creating-homemade-books](http://families.naeyc.org/learning-and-development/reading-writing/eight-tips-creating-homemade-books)
Social and Emotional Development: We notice a shift in how the children play and engage in the classroom as we move into the tenth week of the classroom as a community. More toddlers are choosing to play together in interactive ways. They are more aware of being a part of a group, more capable of following classroom routines and observing the rules, and more likely to help adults clean up just before transitions. They also have begun to offer each other toys, make way for each other on the climber, and try to hug each other when someone is sad.
What did we do outside?

Art & Sensory Areas: The toddlers enjoyed watering with various curriculum projects.

Gross Motor/Block Area:
Toddlers enjoyed Simone's big balls and blocks. They climbed the climber and splashed in puddles. We did an experiment with tricycles and discovered that the toddlers are not tall enough yet to ride them. We also played a lot of ball games.

Cognitive Area:
Caregiver Cassie made a fantastic funnel holder which the toddlers used as they experimented with sand flow and pouring. Toddlers also continued their research about how the game peek-a-boo works with friends and caregivers.

The Dramatic Play Area: Play in this area still centers around cooking and driving the bus.
The Music Area: The children tested the sounds of a range of instruments.

Nature & Science:
The toddlers are enjoying the large mulberry leaves in the yard.

This is a great activity to expand at home — leaves are free and plentiful sensory toys. Be careful not to let your toddlers play with toxic leaves, though. Leaf play is a great open-ended activity — there is no right answer about how to use them and the infants can explore whatever properties of leaves that spark their interest.

We also experienced torrential rain. The caregivers were good sports as the children learned about rain, that it comes from the sky and makes very big puddles. Some enjoyed splashing in the rain, while others were less inclined to have a total-body experience. This reaction has a great deal to do with the children’s temperaments.

https://www.zerotothree.org/espanol/temperament as well as home culture.

More activities:
What kinds of activities can you do to parallel the ones in our program? Here are some fun resources for you:

http://families.naerc.org/content/top-10-no-cost-toys-infants-toddlers-and-preschoolers
Final Circle: My daughter joined us to play the ukulele and lead circle time. Giving toddlers access to performing arts and listening to music, even by seven year olds, benefits them very much. If you have a song you want to share or play an instrument, please let us know — we’d love to hear your music too, especially if you are an adult!

On our last day of class, the caregivers got to choose their favorite songs and we sang them. Thank you to everyone for your hard work this quarter.

Have a great vacation!