

+ Nurturing Knowledge in Early Childhood

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Sub-theme

- Reclaiming Early Childhood: Finding our way in the new policy environment



+ About Early Childhood Education

- Early childhood has never been strictly about education or nurturance
- Instead, early childhood has always been in the policy arena
 - “you can’t do early education without thinking about policy”



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The changing landscape--Pre-K

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- Old views about pre-K
- New evidence
 - Pre-k matters (Weiland & Yoshikawa; Reynolds, et al...)



+ Preschool Matters



■ Harvard
bound.....



+ The costs of the changing policy environment

- Developmentally appropriate practice?
- The whole child?
- Play?
- Active learning?
- ABC's
- Screening assessments
- Cost/benefit analysis
- Doing school



+ Other costs....

- CBO's
- Family day care
- Lack of attention to infant/toddler care
- Parent involvement



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Reasons for this attention...

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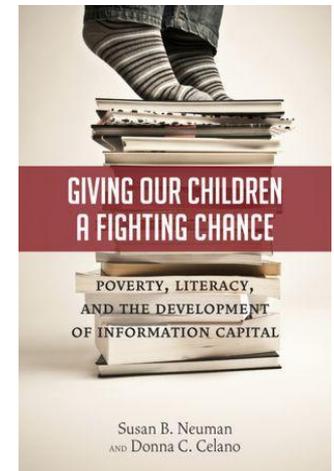
- Social justice perspective
- Political perspective
- Realization of failure of other policies





| Accumulated | Exposure to words | Exposure to print |
|---------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Middle-income | 45- million words | 2,435 words/per hour |
| Lower-income | 15- million words | 180 words/per hour |

The challenge
and the
consequence.....



+ Reclaiming early childhood education...

- From developmentally appropriate ec instruction to developmentally effective ec instruction
- Nurturing cognitive, social, emotional, physical development



+ Nurturing knowledge...

- Engaging Children's Minds





About knowledge....

- Unique features of learning
 - Children are eager to learn; want to develop an 'island of expertise'
 - Driven by meaningful activity (may look like play)
 - Less tolerant of nonsensical instruction
 - Learning is integrated, not domain specific



+ How do we build it?

- Direct experiences: see it, feel it, touch it, smell it
 - At a young age, children lack symbolic representation
 - Video studies



+ Rationale for play....

- Rather than, “Play is children’s work”
- Play is about:
 - Developing language, articulation, social pragmatics
 - Developing representational thinking





Nurturing knowledge...

- Indirect experiences
 - Books are the most powerful sources of knowledge
 - However, how adults engage in book reading makes an enormous difference in children's development.



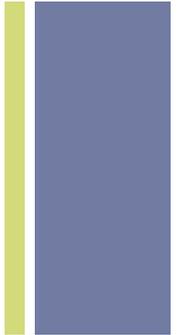
+ A knowledge-rich environment: What might it look like?

- Depth over breadth
- Language-rich, filled with vocabulary words that children will need in their investigations
- Gradual release of control, moving from teacher-managed to child-focused
- Lots of opportunities to explore



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Marine Mammals: Decorating the Classroom



Serena's Classroom – Decorated with an ocean bulletin board and ocean animals hanging from the ceiling





Marine Mammals: WOW Lesson



Serena's Class –
Learning about
marine mammals



Marine Mammals: WOW Video

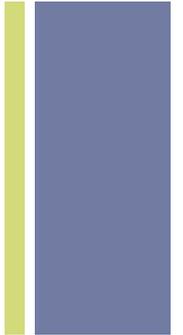


Serena's Class – Watching the WOW content video clip about whales





Marine Mammals: Picture Cards



Martha's Class – Using picture cards for a small group lesson

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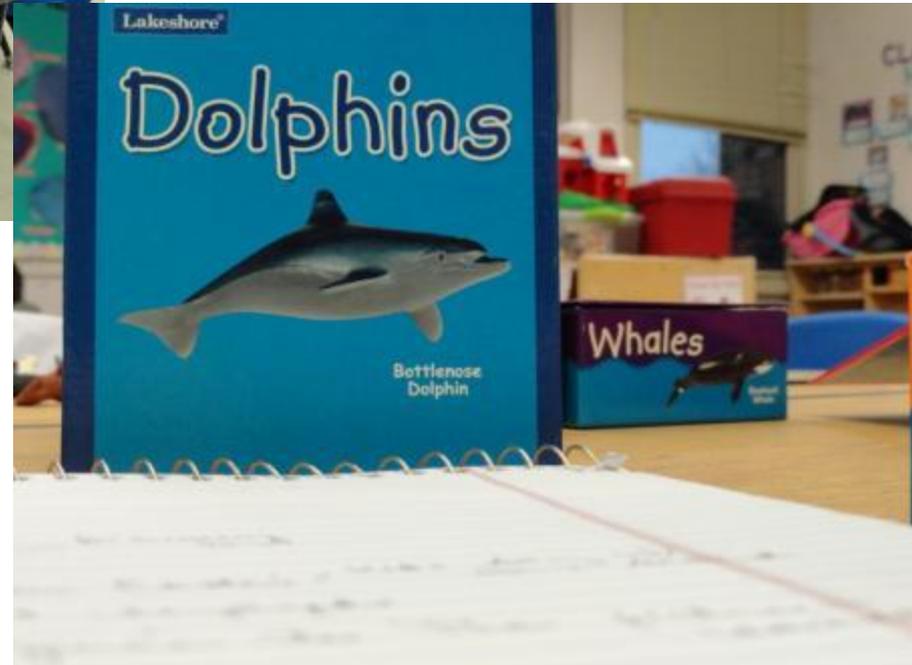
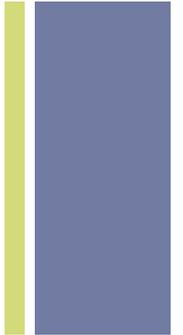
Greater attention on conceptual learning



Pam's Class – Pocket chart with WOW picture cards

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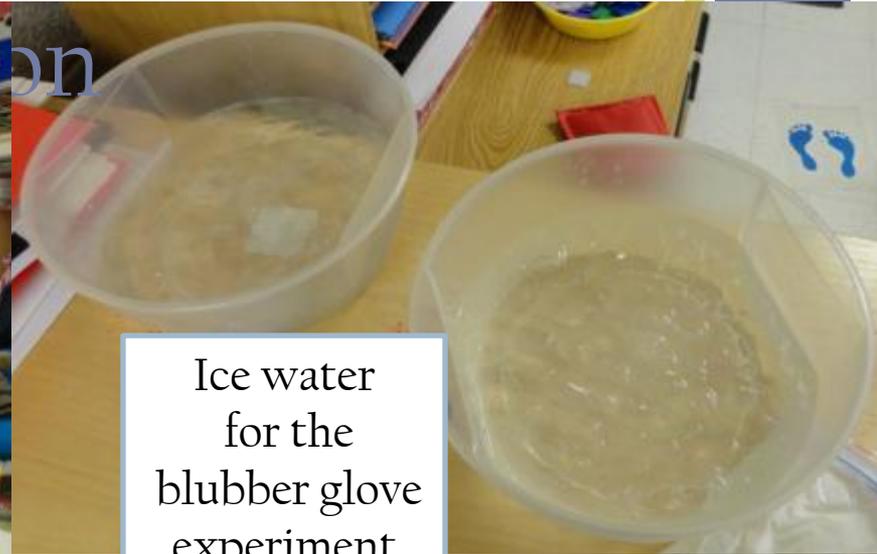
Greater focus on content



Pam's Class –
Marine Mammal Activities



Marine Mammals: Small Group



Ice water for the blubber glove experiment

Martha's Class – Learning about blubber





Marine Mammals: Small Group



Martha's Class –
Blubber Glove Experiment





Marine Mammals: Discovery Centers



Martha's Class – Marine Mammals have backbones; investigating bones



Serena's Class – Sorting, feeling, & learning about camouflage

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Student-centered learning



Jen's student explaining what is and isn't a marine mammal.



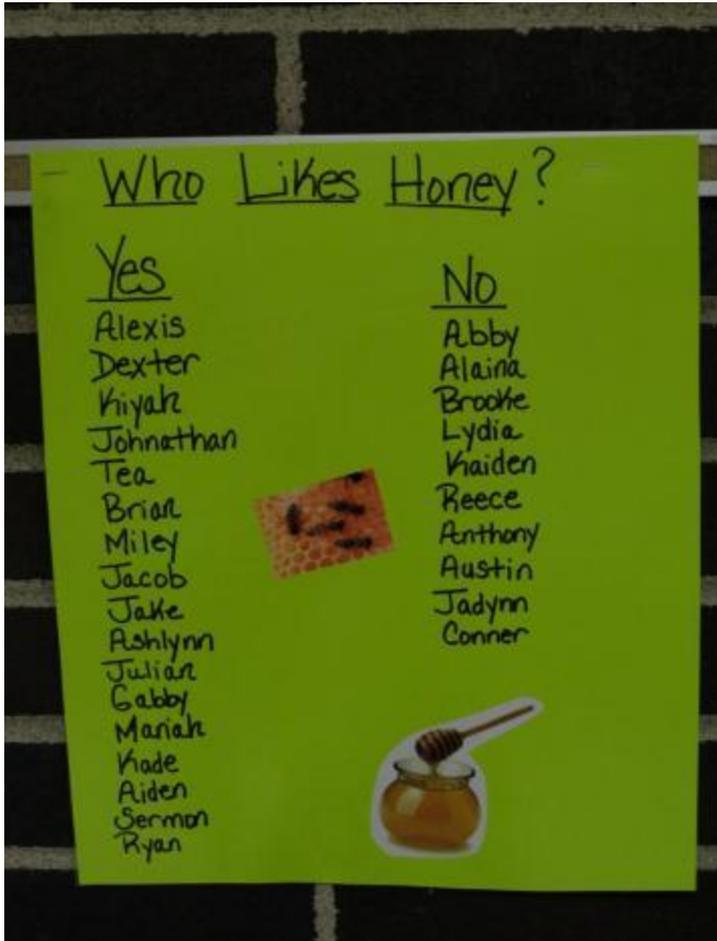
Serena's Class – Sorting marine and non-marine animals



Marine Mammals: Discovery
Center

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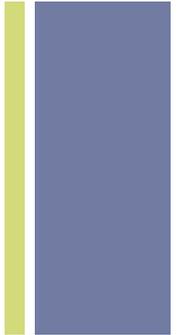
Academic Vocabulary



Molly's Class – Honey taste testing; insect puzzles

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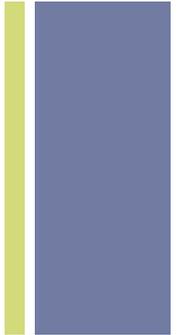
Marine Mammals: Discovery



Pam's Class – Sorting sea animals, exploring how marine mammals might look and feel, and learning about camouflage

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Marine Mammals: Discovery Center



Pam's
Discovery Center Areas

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Marine Mammals: Discovery



Jen's Class – Student enjoying a WOW book





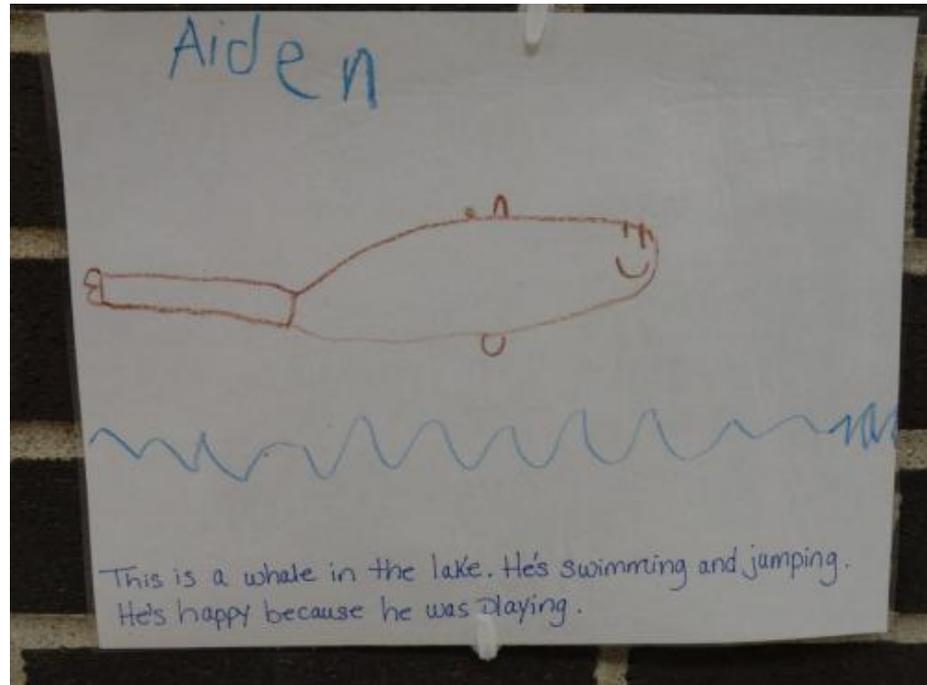
Marine Mammals: Arrival Work



Martha's Class –
Working in the
WOW Take-
Home Booklets



+ Writing for informational purposes



Molly's Classroom – Depiction of a whale drawn by a student and posted in the hallway for all to enjoy

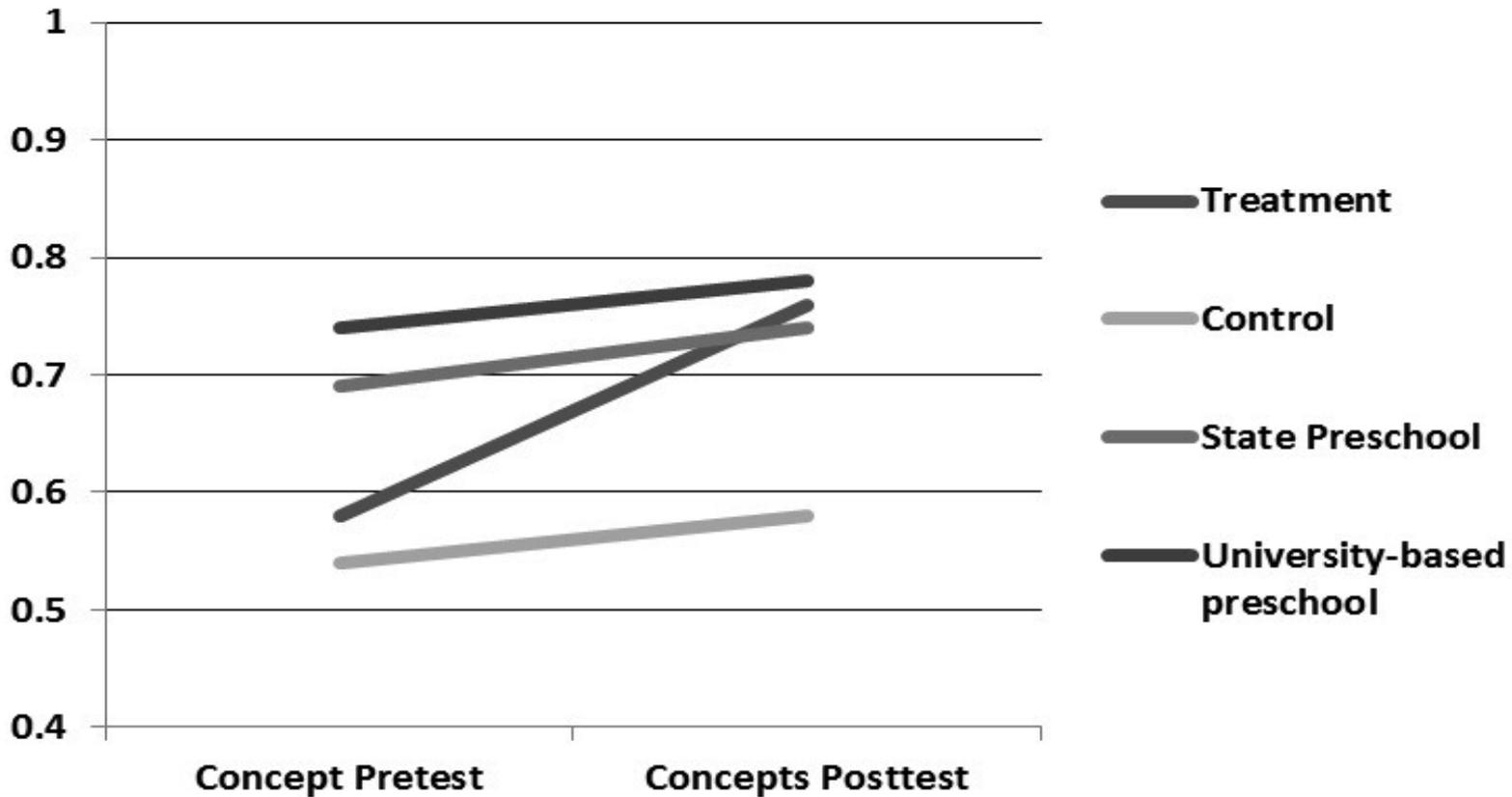
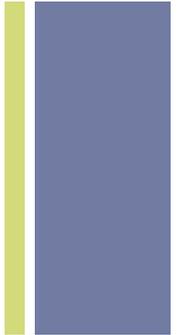
+ New conceptions of child as learner



Jen's Classroom –
Science posters &
calendar with ladybug pattern

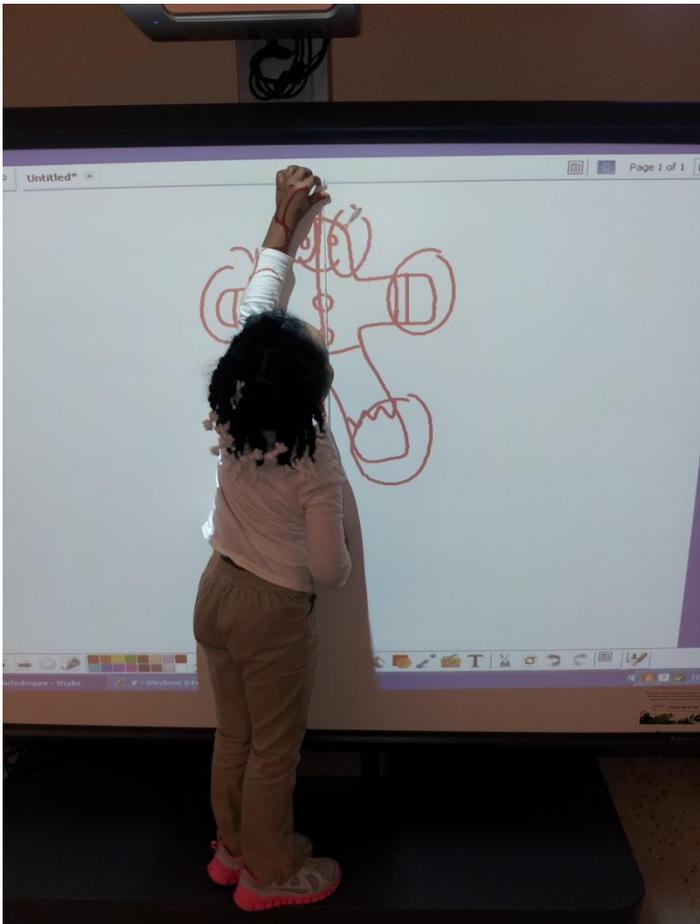


+ Evidence: The effects of a knowledge-rich environment



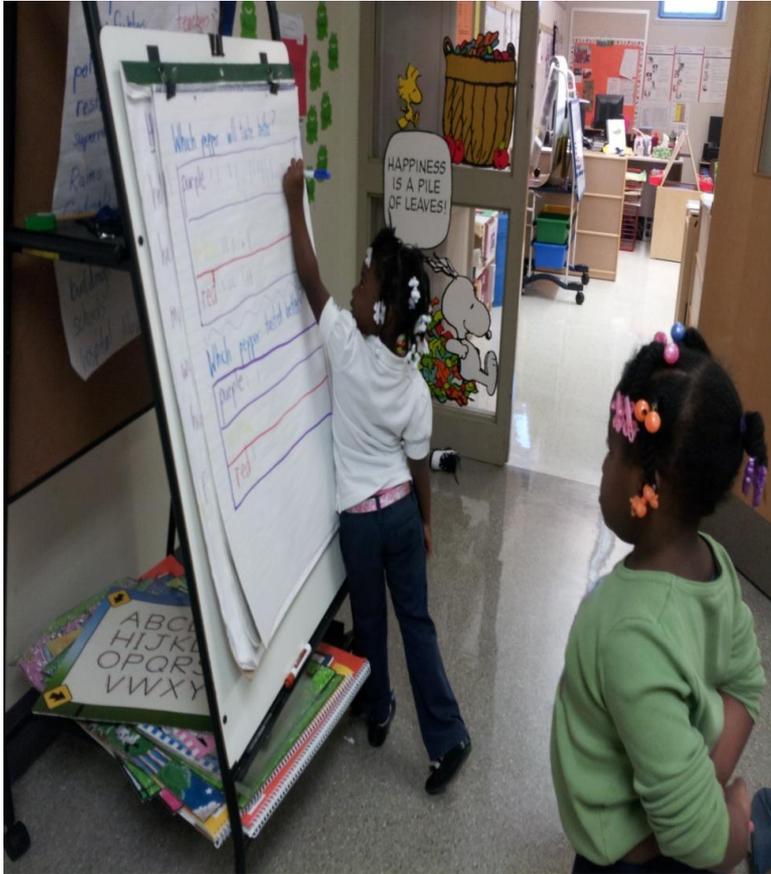


Investigation

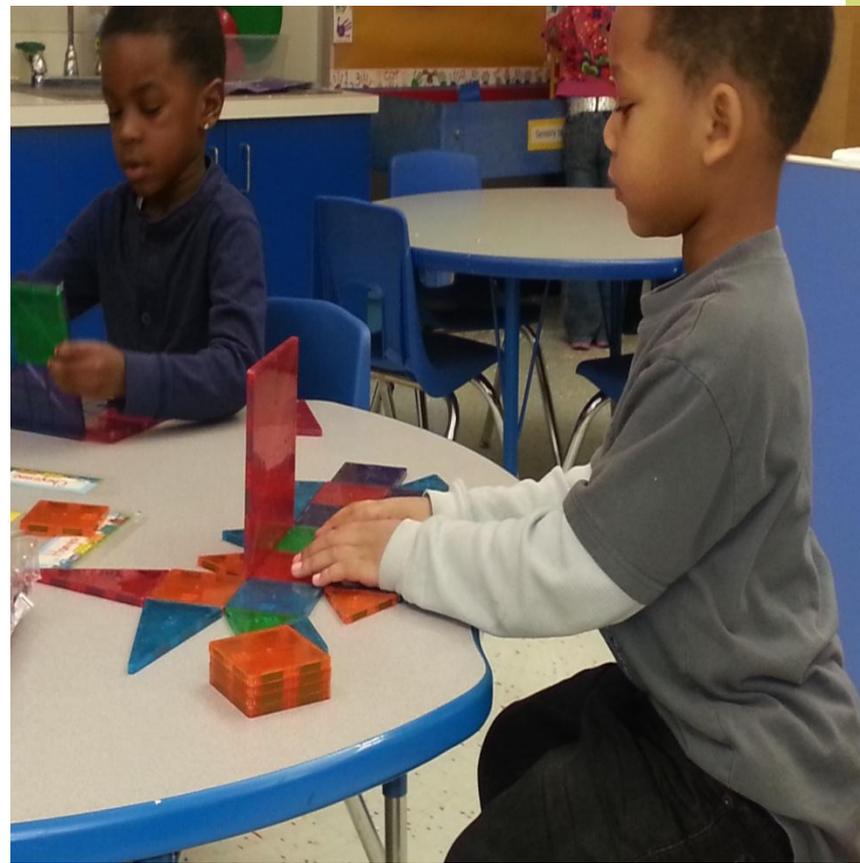




Prediction



+ Imagination





Reclaiming early childhood...

- A better understanding of how young children development
- A better understanding of instruction which is developmentally effective
- A focus on nurturing knowledge in ways that support children's social, emotional, physical and cognitive development.





Thank You

