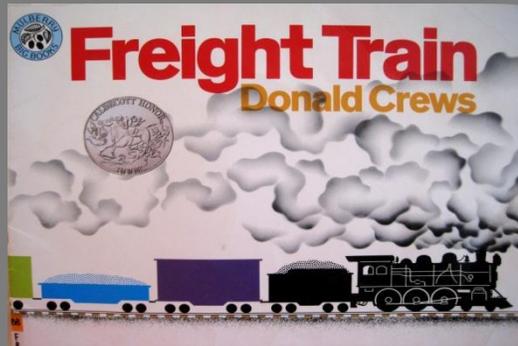


ASI Children's Center - Room 2/3

Train



Winter 2011

A train runs across this track

The children's interest in construction led us to bring in literature that included many different kinds of vehicles. Freight Train was among the books we put on the book shelves for the children to access. It is also a book we have in a large book format that we can use with the children at group time. When reading the book at group time the children were extremely interested. While we expected them to talk about the different colors of the train cars, they noticed intricate details in different pictures: the rocks under the tracks, a whistle and bell on the engine, the smoke coming out of the smoke stack, and that the trestle is not a bridge. The children's interest let us know that further investigation was needed to help the children gain the knowledge they were seeking. We started by putting out the wooden trains for the children to explore.

The Children's Experiences with Trains:

February 15, 2011

TRAIN TRACKS IN THE CLASSROOM



Mini Motors (small rubber molded vehicles of different colors)



February 24, 2011

Walk to train tracks to see the rocks, rails, and ties.

We brought the Freight Train book with us to read so the children could make the relationship between the drawing of the tracks and the real tracks.



The children looked at the rocks and the tracks. We gave them clip boards and pencils to draw what they saw.





March 3, 2011.

Laminated pictures from the Freight Train book to use on a felt board.



March 7, 2011

Painting with colors that match those of rocks, rails, and ties.



Teacher Reflection

The children's interest in the details of the Freight Train book intrigued us. This is not the first group of children who have been so interested in this book. What about this simple, straightforward book captures the children's attention? What about this particular group of children made them interested in the details? We really thought about Piaget's second stage of development. Piaget calls this the pre-operational stage and believed that it developed between the ages of 2 - 7. This stage "bears witness to the elaboration of symbolic function, those abilities which have to do with representing things." (Elkind, Children and Adolescents). While Piaget was talking about a child's ability to move from something "real" (a cup) in play to something symbolic (a block used as a cup), we wanted to help the children move from the symbolic (illustrations in the book) to the "real" (actual trains and tracks).

We decided to start with the first page of the book "A train runs across this track". While the children would name the rocks we were not sure if they really were putting together how the rocks, ties, and rails looked "for real". We took a small group on a walk to see the tracks close to campus. We read the book first and then sat near the tracks. Lori pointed out the rocks and brought some over for the children to hold and examine more closely. We also gave them clipboards with paper and pencils so that they could make their own drawings of the tracks. While we did not expect any of the children to make representational drawings that would be instantly recognizable, we did want to see how they would use this medium to express their thoughts. To our surprise several children drew intentional straight lines on their papers. As an extension of this idea we brought in close up pictures of rocks, rails and ties. We had the children help mix colors of paint to match these items and then use the paint on and around the pictures. Again we were surprised at intentionality of the children's painting. They made marks that looked like rocks and they made lines on the rails with the matching paint color. The children have made it apparent that the connection between the real and the symbolic is something they are working on. Their interest is spurring us to continue.