



2026 Bimonthly Notes & Chronicle

July & August 2026

A few articles have come up in my social media scrolling recently – all pointing to the importance of active engagement. It is always exciting to see research supporting one of the RIE® Principles. In fact, several principles and ideas from the work of both Magda Gerber and Maria Montessori come to mind in this reflection:

Prepare the environment to encourage engagement:

rather than toys with bells and whistles (literally), provide **open ended “passive” toys**. Consider the hand operated train, rather than the electric one.

Sometimes it seems like nothing is played with or all you ever hear is “I want” or “I need XYZ” or “I’m SO bored.”

It can be hard to say no to more or new things.

Hopefully it is reassuring to know that [simplicity](#), a sense of [order](#) and [boredom](#) are good things...

And you might be surprised!

It is amazing what children do with simple materials, using them in ways we never imagined... (that’s part of the fun of observing!).

At WHE, a strawberry stone becomes a phone, a wooden block becomes a camera or a video game controller. Babies are wrapped in floppy disks

bathed in wooden bowls and carried in metal lunch boxes.

Sticks, stones, acorns and leaves become everything we’re missing... Even the pieces of a “closed-ended” material like a puzzle can be used as play figures.

Why does it seem we never have enough?

When we let go of our own expectations of how things *should* be used, discoveries are made – isn’t that what it’s all about?



July & August Dates

- 7/3 CLOSED
- 7/10 Shiloh’s 4th Birthday
- 8/10 Viv starts
- 8/13 Sammy’s 3rd Birthday
- 8/29

Summer/Fall Family Picnic

Saturday, August 29th

10am-12 noon

Ithaca Children’s Garden

Bring a dish to share!

July				
M	T	W	Th	F
			1	2
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15	16	17
20	21	22	23	24
27	28	29	30	31

August				
M	T	W	Th	F
3	4	5	6	7
10	11	12	13	14
17	18	19	20	21
24	25	26	27	28
31				



We Will Miss You, Norie and family!

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Eleanora (Norie) Balog-Way has been with us at WHE since January of 2023, turning 16 months-old shortly thereafter. After 3 years and 8 months with us, in September, she will turn 5 and be in Kindergarten at Cayuga Heights Elementary.

Norie has always loved:

- art; all kinds, in her own words, *in her own way*
- gardening; not afraid to get dirty, likes exploring it all
- being active; biking, long jumping, running, playing ball
- books
- singing
- facts – and fun!

Norie has recently learned:

- how to wink
- all the things pictured below!

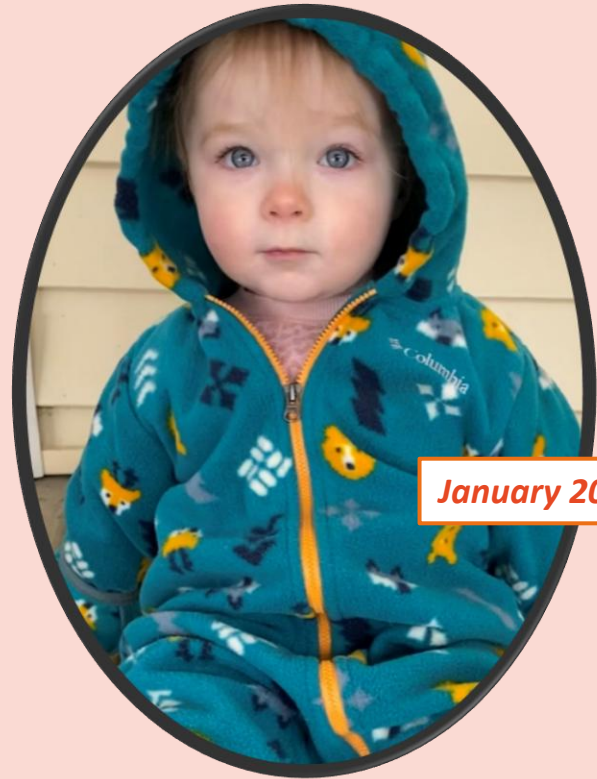
Craziest WHE story

- Seeing the cecropian caterpillar with KC



Simone, helped to develop the strong community we enjoy here through coordination of our bimonthly family gatherings. She has also been an invaluable contributor to our parent text group, sharing community activities as spontaneous opportunities to get together as well.

We will miss these guys but know they're staying put in Ithaca with Dominic's solid faculty position at Cornell, their new home purchase and a "little one" on the way!



January 2023

June 2026



Buttoning! ...



Sewing a pillow! ...



Balancing
an acrobat!

We Will Miss You, Austin and family!

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Austin Gaige has been with us at WHE since June of 2023, turning 16 months-old shortly thereafter. In September, he will begin attending the PreK program at Trumansburg Elementary.

Austin loves:

- being outdoors: playing ball, running, jumping, biking, acrobatics oh and looking for worms
- gardening; being the one to get the wheelbarrow, help with the broom, the rake, the shovel
- playing ball – and what a great aim he has!
- maps, the globe, space, astronauts, blocks.

Austin is observant and reliable. He has recently learned

- how to whistle

Craziest WHE story

- Austin stopped himself from sliding down the slide any further and calling for help when he saw an unusual insect – a white faced wasp! PHEW!



Austin's whole family has given their hearts to our community. Their infamous farm party with the corn pit, their drive in the BIG tractor in the Trumansburg parade and the sharing of their delicious, and seemingly endless bounty, have already made WHE history.

*We even painted with
feed corn from the farm!*



June 2023



June 2026

We Will Miss You, Zeffie and family!

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Zeffie McCasey has been with us at WHE since April of 2024, at the age of 2 years and 3 months. In September, they will begin attending the PreK program at Beverly J. Marin Elementary.

Zeffie loves:

- exploring; Zeffie is very creative with materials and loves to figure out what they can do with things and how things work
- reading; Zeffie has introduced us to many fun and silly books - they enjoy silly books, rhyming and tongue twisters... oh and some of the informational stuff too!
- friends; Zeffie is playful and always up for a game with a ball

Zeffie enjoys all kinds of work. They have recently been practicing

- sewing

Craziest WHE story

- When a bird pooped on their head!
We all laughed it off as good luck!

We will miss the spunk of the whole Dolch/McCasey family. We know it's their parents who read so much with Zeffie and bring in such great books to share... Zeffie's family came to us by way of Lauretta's high school English teacher whose son was one of our first WHEers back in 2017 and have become inspirational, foundational members of our community!



April 2024



June 2026



Learning to recognize numbers...
(We always start with "1")

The Nook at Family Reading Partnership Has Moved!

Grand Reopening

Thursday, July 9th 5-7pm

This fabulous community resource has just gotten better.

In their new location there are expanded opportunities for inside play, crafts, reading and more! Leave with your own new book!

Suite B07 @ Shops at Ithaca Mall

[Learn more about FRP & The Nook!](#)



Ansel has figured out creating geometric shapes!

What Does It Mean to Be Ready for Kindergarten?

Kindergarten readiness is always a hot topic. Fortunately, everything a person needs to know for Kindergarten, is gathered through play-based early care and education!

SO - what does it mean to be ready for Kindergarten?

What are the most important skills to learn before landing there?

- **Social-emotional skills**

are some of the most important skills for a new Kindergartener to come equipped with:

- knowing how to ask for help
- having confidence to enter into /engage in play with others
- managing emotions and demonstrating self control

- **Executive Function Skills**

- ability to follow basic procedures and complete tasks
- planning skills;
- making decisions, managing tasks , emotions and transitions
- problem solving and critical thinking, collaborating with others

- **Academic Skills**

- Academic skills are not first on the list...
it is helpful for children to recognize numbers, letters and shapes;
they should recognize/distinguish basic sounds
* being familiar with lower case letters is a big help
– AVOID ALL CAPS! They are easier to write, but harder to read

- **Physical Development**

- Fine motor skills; holding a pencil, cutting with scissors art!
- Participation in self care: blowing nose, toileting, dressing oneself

Sammy seriated the tower and then began counting...



The Finger Lakes Toy Library had a birthday cake for Shiloh!

