



# Cameras

Owl - Lincoln Road: Toddler

## Background

**Start Date:** November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016

**End Date:** January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2017

**Ages of Children involved:** 1 ½ - 2 ½ years old

**Staff Involved:** Nidya Gamboa RECE, Nancy Lazo RECE and Sarah Simpson RECE

## Phase 1: Beginning the Project

Ana Cecilia was observed sitting with Bea on the mattress across the room. “Cheese,” said Ana Cecilia to Bea, as she pretended to take a picture. She was holding a “toy camera” (but it is actually a wireless radio gadget) and was aiming it at Bea. Ana Cecilia continued to walk around the classroom and take pictures, saying, “cheese,” over and over again.

The next day in the morning, Valens discovered a toy that looked like a camera. He walked towards the children at the table saying, “cheese,” and pretended to take a picture. He did it again to another group of children playing at the kitchen centre and to Nidya and Nancy. After each shot, Valens said, “I took a picture.”

From our observations, the children have demonstrated what they know about cameras. They know to say, “cheese” when a camera is present, they need to press buttons to make it work, they realize there will be an image on the screen (with new cameras) once a teacher is done taking a photo and they know to be careful with cameras.

Also from our observations, we also gathered questions about what the children want to know about cameras. Why do we take pictures? What happens if I press this button, or this one? How do I take a picture of myself, or others? How do I look at the picture of my friends? Where do photos come from? What is inside a camera?

We decided we needed some expert help to find out a little more about cameras, an expert that we asked is Dave (Cooper’s dad). He is a photographer and works for Henry’s, (A camera/ photo lab specialist store). We talked to him about our new project and he was more than happy to help. The next day, he brought 3 real cameras for our toddlers to explore. We also sent out an initial letter to inform parents the start of the project and if they had photo albums or cameras, they were willing to let us use for the children to explore.



## Phase 2: Developing the Project

After the initial investigation, we explored pictures. Pictures come from cameras, we told the toddlers. We asked parents to bring in photo albums of pictures they may have. The toddlers LOVED IT! We spent large amounts of time flipping through the books and focused on what we saw in the pictures. We noticed a lot of babies, (baby pictures of our toddlers), Mommies, Daddies, Grandmas, Grandpas, etc. We also enjoyed labelling other items that we recognized or relate to in our everyday lives. For example: flower, bottle, toys, pets, and even the little decorations of stars in the scrapbooks. Not only did we observe what we saw. We even focused on what was happening in the pictures. “Baby, sleeping” or “baby eating”.

Looking at their own albums the toddlers demonstrated self-pride. They smiled and sometimes labelled when they recognized a person in the picture. They especially enjoyed looking at pictures of themselves and their friends. “That’s me,” they would say or when asked, “who’s that?” they would shyly smile and name their friend.



Nancy brought a piece of paper, a marker, and camera over to the table. She asked a small group of toddlers what they wanted her to take a picture of. Linden started by labeling James, and some other friends. “How about we also take a picture of other things too?” Nancy asked.

Linden thought about this and with help from Valens and Henry, we came up with our Scavenger hunt list.

Together Isaac, Bea, Henry, James, Cooper, Hailey and Chloe all helped find the items we needed.

Here are some of the pictures our toddlers took:



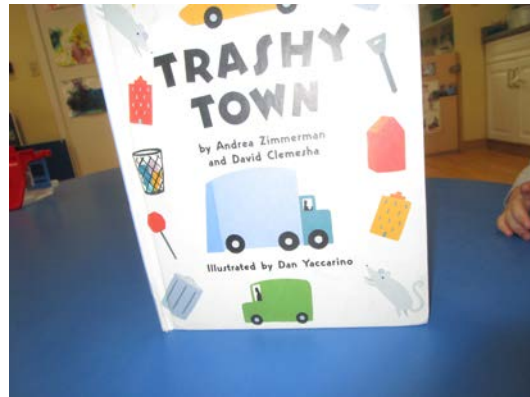
HENRY'S WATER CUP



THE RED CAR



THE MONKEY



OUR FAVOURITE BOOK

We also wanted to know where do pictures come from? Most of the time we see pictures on our phones, laptops, TVs etc. We wanted to show the toddlers that sometimes pictures come from the camera itself or from a photo printer.

We used a Fujifilm Instax-Camera to take pictures and watched the picture print out. Nancy asked, "Who wants to take a picture?" "Me," shouted a lot of her friends. "Let's all take a picture," Sarah said. Sarah and Nidya sat the toddlers together in one area. Some looked around a little confused, others smiled as they looked at Nancy (they knew what to do). "Ok everyone say 'cheese,'" Nancy said. Nancy took the picture, since these are instant pictures, you can't retake! Our first shot James moved, stood up and pretended to take a picture of Nancy!! (He had a play camera in his hands) Nancy explained "I'm trying to take a picture of you! If you sit with your friends then you can be in the picture with them." The second time he sat and smiled with his friends.

Other friends also wanted pictures! Aston and Chase took a picture hugging Bea. Valens and Henry both gave Nancy a "cheese" face for their pictures. Other friends were interested in the pictures coming out of camera. "I see", said Linden. He wanted to see the picture, "it's not ready yet." Nancy told him. "We have to wait for the picture to 'develop' for you see it. If you hold it by the corner, you can wait for the picture to appear." Together they held the picture and slowly the picture appeared. Linden carried it around with him to look at. As Nancy took more, she would hold up the pictures and Max along with other friends would peek at it to watch it develop.



Another way, we discovered, of where pictures come from is the centers photo printer! Nancy was printing pictures and had to use the photo printer. As soon as Nancy brought it into the room, the toddlers wanted to see what it was and what she was doing. She let them see the screen where the pictures showed up, and when she picked her picture, she asked Aston, "can you press this button, so the picture can come out?" She demonstrated and guided Aston to the right button. He pressed the button and the machine started working. It made all the usual printer sounds and the picture came out at the front. Isaac had also been watching and wanted to grab it right away. "Not yet," Nancy said. "We need to let the picture go in and out." When it was done, Nancy let Henry hold and look at the picture. "Let's do more" Nancy said. As Nancy printed more out, her friends went to play with other toys. Henry

stayed and watched intently, he knew the routine and as the picture would go in and out, he would look at Nancy and very seriously say, “don’t touch.” He knew we both had to wait for the picture to finish developing!

Nidya brought in some National Geographic magazines for the toddlers to explore. These magazines were perfect for our project since they contained different styles of pictures/ photography. We compared the colours on the pictures and we learned that some pictures are full coloured while others can be just black and white. We especially liked the ones that covered a full page. Isaac found a picture of a dinosaur and this sparked the idea of looking for other animals. We liked the books so much, that they became part of our book basket for us to read every day.



Nidya brought in a few toy cameras for the toddlers to explore how the **shutter button** works. Previous to this activity, we had added five real cameras for the toddlers to explore, but since they didn’t actually work, it was difficult to push down some of the buttons. With the toy cameras the toddlers were able to push the shutter button and hear the “click” sound it made. The instinct of most of them was to take the camera close to their eyes and say “cheese” before pushing the button. Nidya talked about the name of the button and how, every time it was pushed, a picture could be taken.

Aston and Linden noticed the small “hole” in the cameras and attempted to look through it. Nidya explained that the little window was called the **view finder** and its function was to help us to see where the objects were before taking a picture. Nidya helped the toddlers to cover one eye in order for them to see through the view finder with the other eye. **Aston, Linden, Henry, and Valens** worked very hard until they were able to see the pictures of the animals displayed in the little cameras.





Since we started the project, the toddlers have manipulated the cameras for not only taking pictures, but also trying to open them up. Henry and Isaac were the first ones to venture over, as soon as they saw Nidya sitting on the carpet with the screwdriver. Patiently, they took turns twisting the screwdriver around to loosen the screws. After a few minutes, the first screw came out.

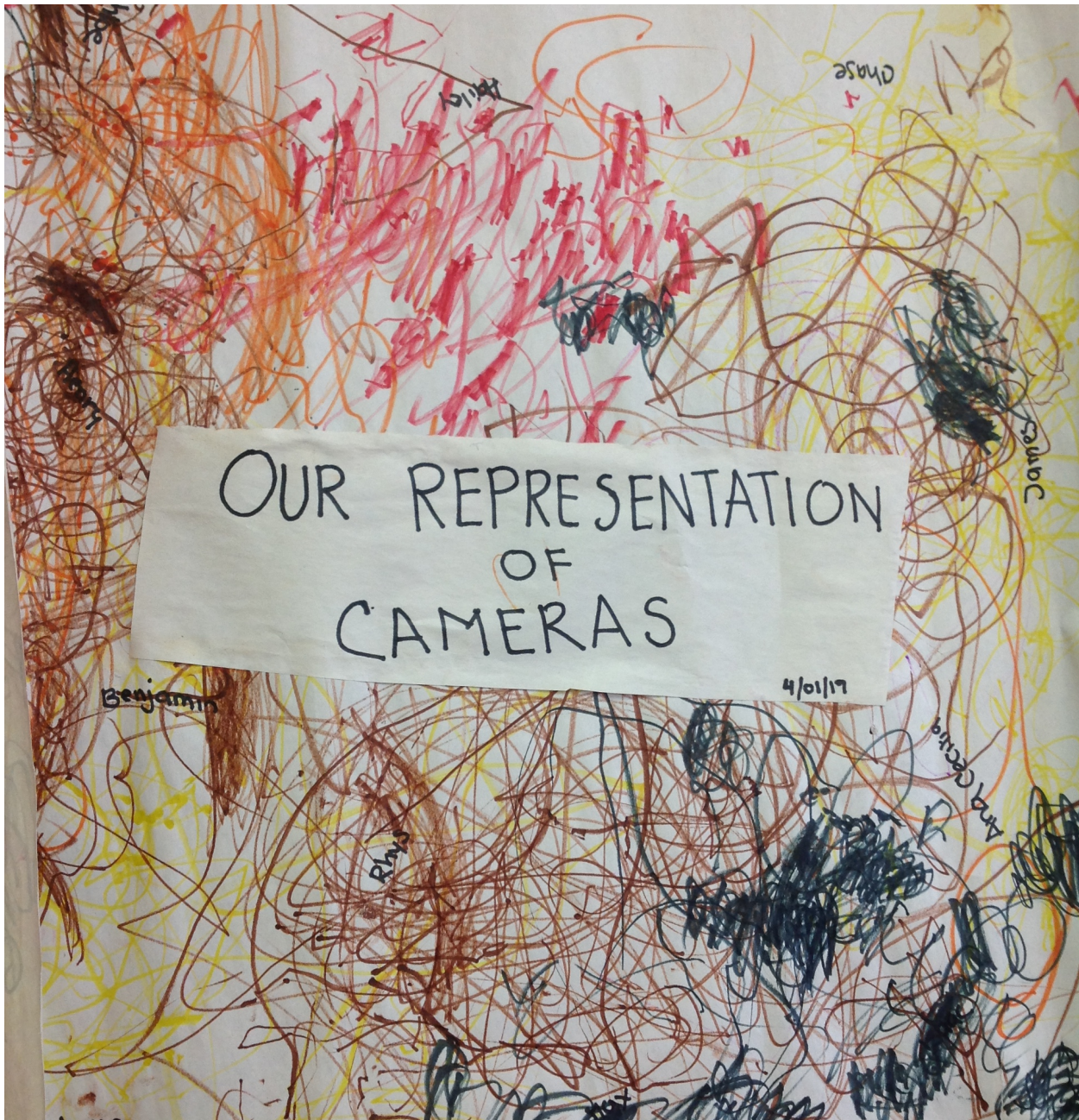
We discovered some cable cords inside the camera. Isaac named the colours of each cord. He also tried to pull them out, but they were somehow attached inside.

More screws came out and we were able to take the whole cover off. Benjamin had his mind set on pulling the flash off, but sadly, it did not have screws near for as to unscrew.

The film that was inside was stuck and it took us a while until we were able to release it. We looked at it through the light, but did not see any images. We discovered that the camera had an internal battery attached to the flashlight; Chloe took it out and opened to see inside. Valens found a small spring inside and found out that it made a sound every time he touched it. Bea on the other hand was very concerned of the broken camera; she took all the pieces and tried to put it back together.



For our camera drawings we decided to do it as a group. While working on it children talked about their drawings. “Daddy takes a picture” “cheese” “a dinosaur,” were some of their comments. Here is a picture of the result.







## Project Vocabulary

Camera  
Smile  
I took a picture  
Photo  
Develop  
Gentle  
Screen

Cheese  
Click  
Family  
Let me see  
Shutter button  
Find viewer  
Tripod

### **CAMERA**

#### **Informal Definition:**

An object we use to take pictures of ourselves and others

#### **Formal Definition:**

Noun

- A device for recording visual images in the form of photographs, film, or video signals:

*'She faced the cameras'*

*'A press photographer's camera flashed'*

*'A video camera'*

## Phase 3: Concluding the Project



To start the wrap up of our camera project, we had one of our very own Dads, who has his own production company come in to teach us how to use a Cinema Camera. This gave the children a chance to explore a camera that shows all aspects of how a camera works. They were able to manipulate a recording screen, which was big enough for multiple children to see. Benjamin, Isaac, Ana Cecilia, and Henry enjoyed maneuvering the camera around on its base, which we learned is called the tripod, where they recorded many friends who were playing around the room. This allowed the children to see what the camera lens was actually recording at that exact moment. They observed their surroundings of the classroom through the screen and enjoyed being able to watch as their friends moved on the screen, which was actually them moving around the classroom in real life time. This helped the children connect that wherever the lens was pointed, it would portray as a standing or moving image on the recording screen in front of them. They were also able to push the red recording button which stopped, play, rewind, or fast forwarded whatever was showing on the screen. Hailey found it amusing to stop and start the recording, she observed that the video would stop when she pushed the red button. They all enjoyed pushing the button and observing how the images would change. Each child had a chance to turn the focusing lens which brought the picture into focus on the screen. Chloe and Autumn liked manning this part of the camera and Henry thought it was funny when his face was blurry on the screen and we had to fix it so he could see his eyes.



Once we had seen multiple cameras and manipulated and played with many different types of cameras throughout our investigation, we were finally ready to make our own replicas. Each child had a chance to take part in creating two paper maché cameras. We all ripped up shreds of paper and smothered the paper in lots of glue. With some help, the paper was then attached to a Kleenex box which was shaped as a camera. It had the recording box and also the lens and focuser. We then chose two colours, one for each camera. The first camera we chose to be red and the second one blue. While we painted the cameras, many of us would say “camera” pointing to our creation that was slowly starting to resemble the cameras we had come to know. Valens enjoyed saying “cheese!” as he carefully turned the camera to face him. Benjamin and James took extra time and caution as they painted around the lens and inside the lens to make sure the whole camera was coloured, so they couldn’t see any more newspaper.



Three days later, Nidya brought to a table the paper maché cameras and a real camera. Together with the children, Nidya reviewed the names of some of the parts such as lens, shutter button, view finder, LCD display, power switch button, and flash. For this last one, Nidya showed the children how it lights up when a picture is taken. Children were fascinated pushing the shutter button and observing the flash going off.

After they were done exploring the flash, they observed where some of the parts go on the real camera and used paper and glue to paste on each part. They used black paper for the LCD display, some other buttons, and yellow for the flash.

Days later, Henry was playing with a camera and he pointed at the flash saying “flash”, showing to Nidya where it was.



## Teacher Reflections

**Nancy-** This was a great project that I feel the children enjoyed thoroughly. My main observation from the beginning of this project was that it was our independent children and the children that tend to shy away from big group activities that began this project. It was something they seemed interested in learning more about. It was great to find an inclusive project that worked for all the children.

As the project progressed, I enjoyed watching the children learn how to hold the camera, look into the viewfinder and aim it at what they were taking a picture of. They went from just holding up the camera to holding down buttons. They used their gross and fine motor skills to figure out how to manipulate the cameras. Having our quieter children engaged and using their words in relation to the project was a great learning experience. “cheese” and “camera” were words they all were able to say confidently and excitedly! Seeing their sense of self-esteem rise was a focal point as well. When we would take picture, we had many children immediately smile or pose for us! They also tried to hold the camera on their own and take their own pictures. Which they would look at afterwards and smile proudly. When they would see pictures of themselves or their friends, they would point happily and say “Me” or their friends’ names.

For myself, the biggest learning from this project was seeing the inside of the camera and what small bits and pieces go into making it and putting it all together. Watching the kids taking the camera apart and some of them trying to place pieces together made me realize what intricate work it is. Also, realizing how much the children took in from each activity, really made me learn and scaffold more activities to increase their knowledge as well as mine.

**Nidya-** I loved working on the Camera Project. As adults sometimes, we think that there is not much to learn about the daily and common things we have access to; we are so used to them that we don’t even stop to analyze how they work or if we are using the proper names. I feel that this project was completely a co-learning experience between the toddlers and me. Every day, while manipulating the cameras with the children or looking at the pictures on the books I realized that there was not much I really knew about this instrument; because that is what it is, “an instrument to capture images”. Like a toddler that learns every day, I as well was learning knew vocabulary to name properly the parts of the camera. I went from saying “push the button”, and “look through the window” to say “push the shutter button, what can you see through the view finder?” And the best part was hearing the children also using the real names during their play.

It was amazing to see how the project gave the opportunity for the children to explore their own interest. Some were into taking pictures and walking around the classroom holding the cameras saying “cheese” to their friends, others were just sitting on the carpet trying to figure out how to open the cameras and



finding all the buttons they could push, while others found creative ways to use the cameras, like Henry who used them to decorate the Christmas Tree!

**Sarah-**Before we started our camera project, I was very interested in seeing how much the toddlers already knew about cameras from their everyday lives. Technology has such an impact on our lives, day to day, and knowing that the children in our room are surrounded by it every day made me excited to teach them more about it. We all use or see cameras probably every day, either on our phones, pictures in our homes and through ads everywhere in the community.

Through this camera project, I learned a lot about technology myself. I learned how much cameras have evolved even from when my parents were first introduced to cameras. They used to be large hand held devices that needed lots of film and expensive production costs just to see the final picture results. Back in the day you were not able to see what you were taking a picture of, nor could you have the editing options or picture displayed right on a screen in front of you to show you exactly what you were shooting. It was very fun and interesting to learn how to use the older versions of cameras, right along side with the children. Even though the children may have never seen an older camera, they were able to identify exactly what they were. It was amazing to explore how they worked. I must say it is much easier to use a camera nowadays then it was back then. There are so many more options, and experiences you can take, save and use for memories in this age. It is very amazing and nice to have such an option to be able to quickly take a picture and have it forever. I have to admit though, I miss the idea of having a hand held option, pictures you can put into albums and keep forever, instead of relying on saved photos online or on your computer. It is so nice as an adult now to be able to go through my albums that my parents made for us, and see photos of my family and us kids through the ages. I loved that our parents were so willing to bring in albums for their children to share with us, it was such a neat experience to sit down with the kids and look through their baby photos with them.

Having one of our fathers come in and teach the kids on how to use a video camera was an amazing experience and showed all of us how much work goes into using equipment like that. I absolutely have learned so much more about cameras and the new technology that has come out in this day in age. Children are so quick to learn just from their surroundings. Most of our children already knew how to use a phone without us having to show them, and so quickly adapted to understanding how every camera worked that we brought in. Even the cameras from the early 80's, were easily learned. They



enjoyed role playing with every single new camera we brought in and it really made a sense of community when they were able to take pictures of their friends in the room. They would point out their friends in pictures and even knew some of the other children's parents and siblings. In all it was a great experience, one in which we all learned something new, from the old. We all felt very connected when the process was through.