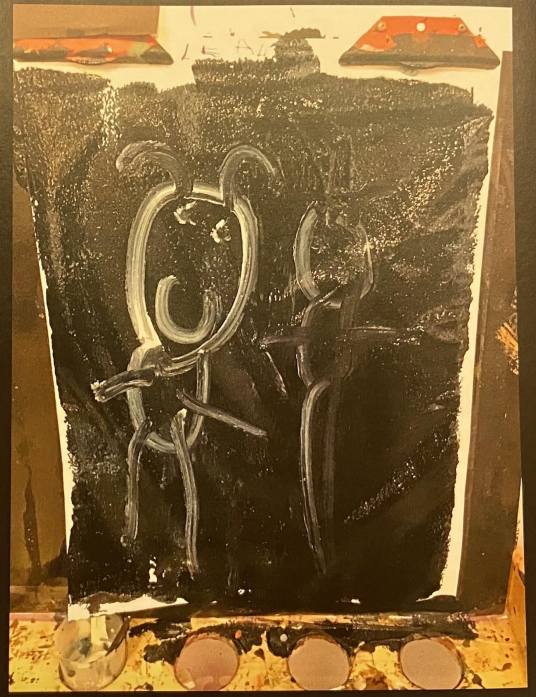
HOW IT BEGAN...

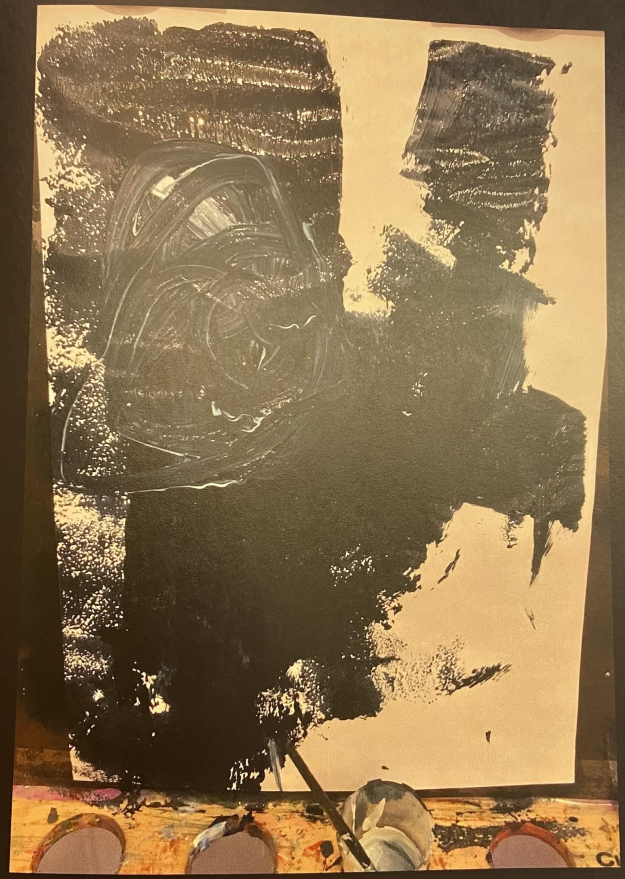
The Purple Room children noticed the moon several times while we were in the garden. This led to some questions and conversations about space. The teachers decided to put out some materials to see if this further provoked the topic.

One of these provocations was paint rollers at the art easel with paint that was the color of the night sky (black with gold glitter). The students commented on these new materials:

"It looks like outer space." -Svetlana

"It's my friend and me - happy night. I like when there's glitter in the paint. It kinda looks like night time." -Leah





During library we read a big book about the Sun and the Moon. After reading, we brainstormed a list of questions we have about the Sun and the Moon.

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What we are wondering about the MOON:

Why are the moon and the sun best friends? Maybe they are twins

Why do we see the moon sometimes in the daytime?

Why are the sun and the moon different?

Are the moon and sun boys are girls? Are they siblings?

Is the moon hot or cold?

How big is the moon?

Which is bigger, the sun or the moon?

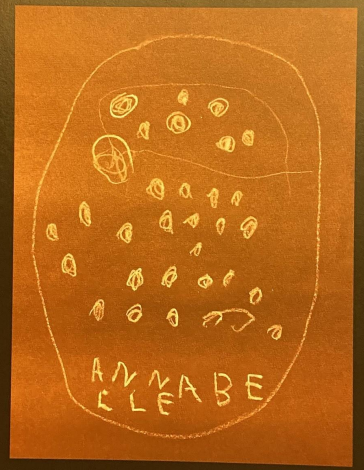
Why does the moon stay out in the morning time?

Why are there triangles around the sun?

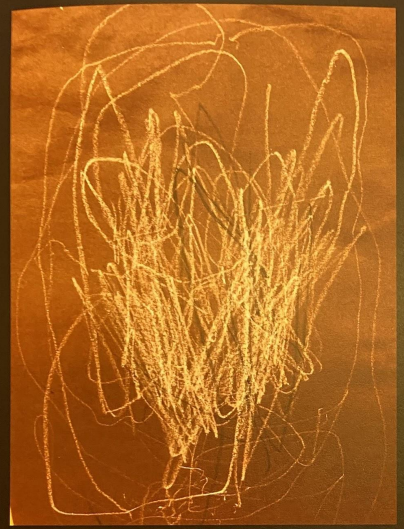
Why is the moon sometimes different shapes?

Where do the sun and the moon go when we can't see them?

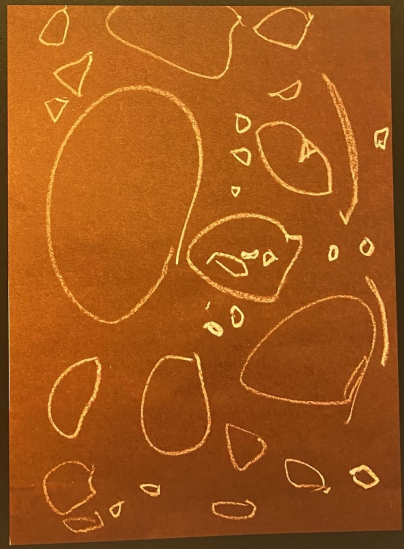
WHAT DOES THE MOON LOOK LIKE?



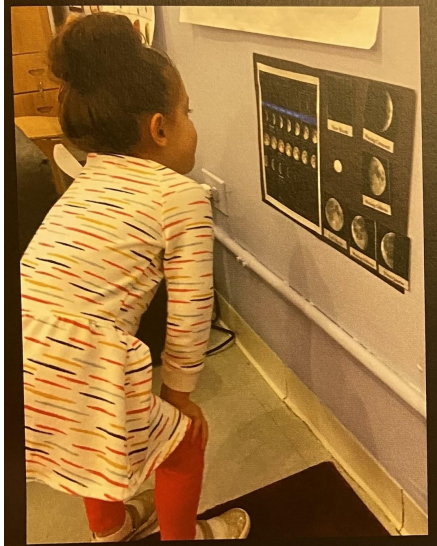
At the Art Easel, students were provided with white craypas and black construction paper to make drawings of the moon.

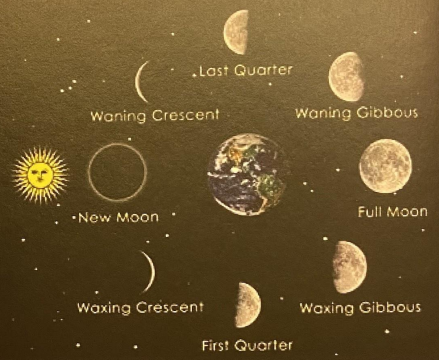


"Big holes! There's big holes inside the moon and big holes outside. Those are craters cause they fall. I saw that on a type of movie." - Theo



WHY IS THE MOON SOMETIMES DIFFERENT SHAPES?

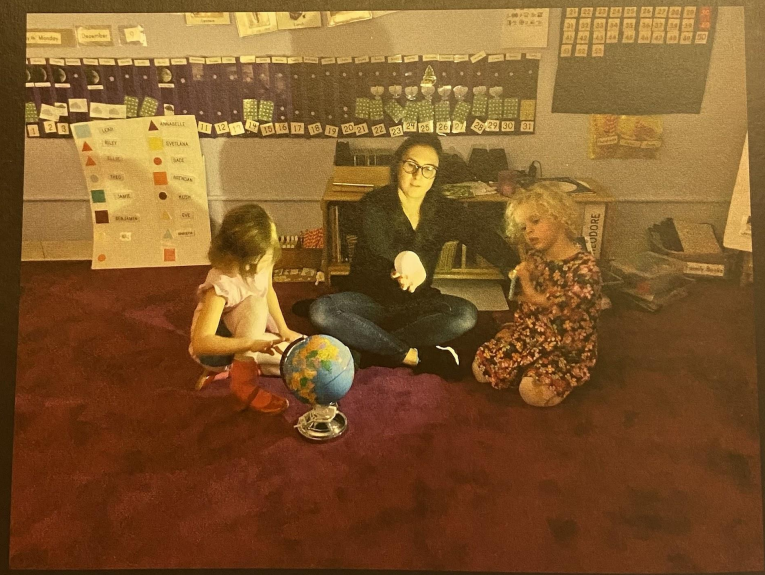


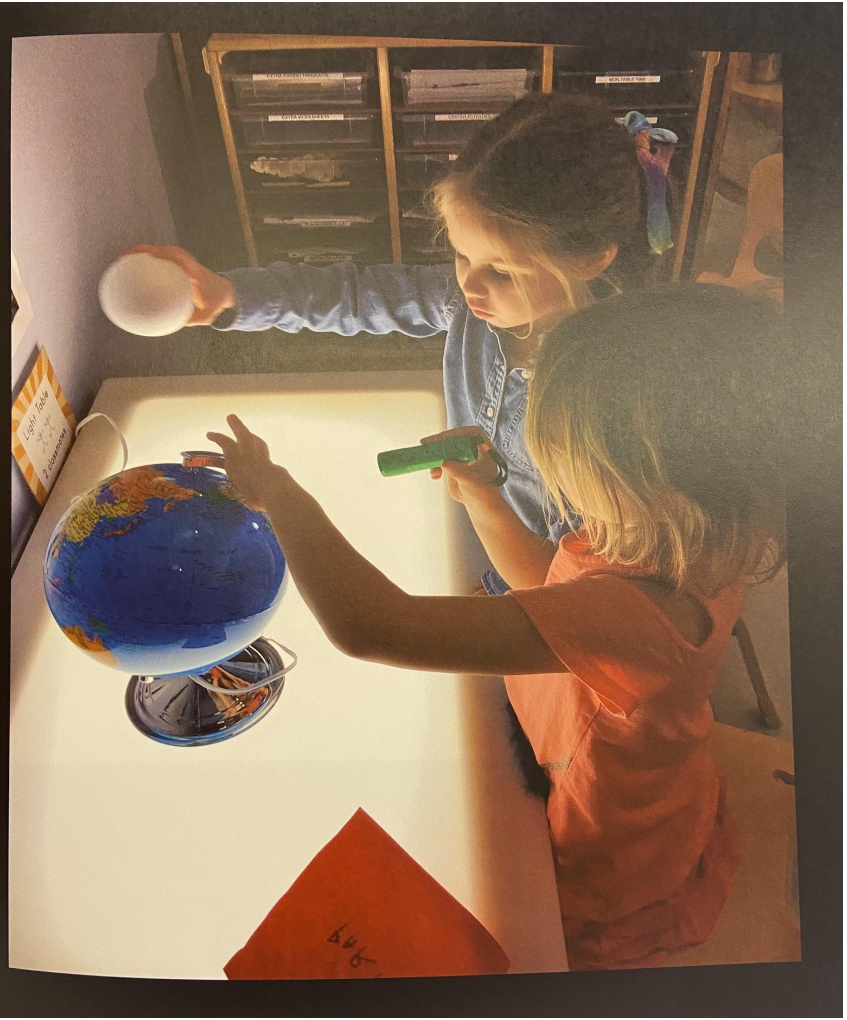


We began tracking the phases of the moon on our calendar.. Each morning the Pattern Maker would follow several steps to do this: find out today's date, look at the moon calendar for that day (matching the number) and see what the moon phase is, hen pick out the correct pattern card.

The students began to notice that the moon follows a pattern of getting bigger, becoming a full moon, and then getting smaller again. We learned new vocabulary to describe these shapes (gibbous and crescent), and further explored the pattern of the phases with a puzzle.

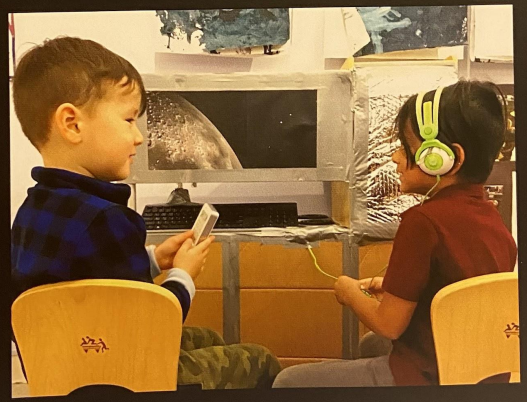
By diving deeper into learning about the orbits of the moon and Earth, we started to understand why the moon looks different to us sometimes. We experimented using a globe, a moon (styrofoam sphere), and sun (flashlight). We learned that the Earth is always turning, which is why we have day and night. The moon orbits the Earth and it can be in sunlight or in shadow, which is why it looks like different shapes to us even though it is actually always round!





HOW CAN WE GO TO THE MOON?

The students already knew that the only way to get to the moon would be in a spaceship. We wondered...how do you drive a spaceship? Can anyone take a spaceship? So, we started to invested astronauts and what types of training they need to prepare for a space mission. Our classroom became an astronaut training program as each child worked for days on completing their training checklist.

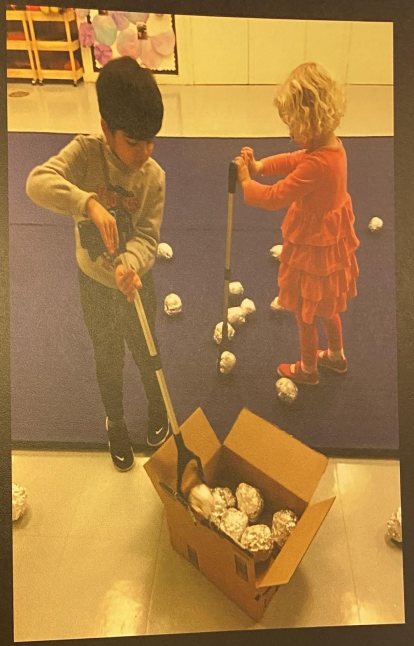


Astronaut Training Checklist

- ☐ Writing in Space 
- ☐ Putting on a Space Suit 
- ☐ Weighing Moon Rocks 
- ☐ Making a Spacecraft 
- ☐ Drawing Moon Rocks 
- ☐ Walking on the Moon 
- ☐ Flying the Spacecraft 
- ☐ Fixing the Space Station 
- ☐ Collecting Moon Rocks 

Making a spacecraft.

Collecting Moon rocks.



Fixing the Space Station.

Walking on the Moon.

Putting on a space suit.

Theo: Why do you need the helmet to breath?
Lyndsea: Because there's no air in space.

Leah: Why do you make the sunglasses go down?
Lyndsea: They need to protect their eyes because they're extremely close to the sun.

We were very lucky to have a class parent who grew up near the Space and Rocket Center in Alabama. She came in as a "space expert" to share her knowledge with us. She even brought a real space helmet for us to try on!

We used the space helmet as a model to create our own helmets out of recycled items.

As our Moon project neared it's end and the holiday season approached, we began to think about how celebrations all around the world connected to the Moon. We read books about the Winter Solstice, and learned that themes of light and dark were common amongst winter traditions. To reflect this, we added electric tea lights to our block play.

We spent the final week of the year decorating our classroom with paper chains, lanterns, and writing our own legends about the Moon. We concluded with a Winter Solstice party for our community, which allowed us to share the knowledge we had gained with our family and friends.