Each day I have the privilege of observing the children’s discoveries through their shared experiences with each other. Mini stories often unfold during the day that are packed full of co-construction, empathy, and critical thinking. I would like to share some of the discoveries and mini-stories from the past couple weeks.

Connections - shared symbols

On this day in the studio M tells MA that she is drawing a picture for her! She then carefully adds her name to make sure others know that it is hers. She realizes she does not know how to spell her friend’s name. She suggests, “You have to write your name here because the picture is for you.” M offers MA a marker, and she eagerly obliges.
M watches as her friend writes her name. The two discover that they have shared letters “I have a M and a E and a A in my name too!” In this simple moment the children discover that when letters are connected in certain ways - they have meaning.
In this wonderful moment, the girls go one step further by adding a symbol - a circle. Why? Through the children’s work with symbols, they know that symbols are indeed readable. In circling the marks, this now encases or connects all the marks so that others will now read the letters together.
It is important that children are offered the affordance of time when they are offered new or different materials. This allows the child time in coming to understand the medium. The children begin to make discoveries about the materials. This moment with B in the studio was a wonderful example of that. B notices the sound that happens when the pastels move across the surface of the corrugated cardboard. B (#2) discovers that the tracing paper captures the imprint of the cardboard. Notice how carefully he lifts up the paper to see if the print is also on the other side. Later (#3) he tests the aluminum foil to see if it will have the same effect. Soon he begins to blend or combine with new colors (#4). A wonderful moment as B discovers a new understanding of the media.
Notice how she angles the pastels in her hands, so she can see the results of her strategy!

The power of learning from one’s peer’s

After observing her friend’s use of the pastels and how the pastels could blend together A begins to use both pastels at the same time causing a change in the colors. However, she seems to have another strategy (different from her friends). She begins blending or combining her marks simultaneously — instantly. She sees the effect of how the colors blend!
We notice M uses a strategy that allowed her to compare how the marker reacts on different papers. She began by laying out the different types of paper that she wanted to test. She meticulously moves from one paper to the next using the same marker on each paper. She then begins to feel each paper and the marks, noticing how the paper changed the feeling or texture of the marks.
The children are amazed when they discover that when they make marks with the sharpies, on the foil that the marks could be combined together to create new colors! Notice that instead of working separately they work together — the three children co-discover the magic of the transformation at the same time!
Connecting memories with new ideas

L remembered from their work with paper and clay that the foil could be squeezed together — “It’s like the clay!” meaning that the medium is malleable and transformative in its qualities.
R is delighted when he discovers that when he layers his papers by placing the white drawing paper on the bottom and the lighter tracing paper on top his marks from underneath on the white paper shows through the tracing paper. His thinking processes become visible as he creates a road on the first layer (bottom) and then creates a car on the tracing paper. He places the tracing paper on top and then begins to move the tracing paper with the car testing the effect and relationship of the car to the road.

The Discovery of Transparent Paper
E begins to use the materials as she experiments with their relationship one to another. She connects the lines and marks together, “My ideas are connecting.”
A is intrigued by some paper with images on it. She begins to carefully insert her own delicate drawings with the printed images on the paper, creating a dance between the printed designs and her own interpretations or drawings.
P discovers that when he uses the same marker on different papers, he creates different looks for the marks. P explains that the marker looks “really wet” on the foil, yet on the plain white paper the marks soak into the paper.
C makes a similar discovery. He uses the paint pen and notices that it looks wet. Later while he uses the gel pen although the marks are wet, the gel pen marks are a lot smaller.

“When I push it down, it gets more wet.”
Sometimes the shape of the material can evoke ideas. The round paper reminded T of the shape of one’s face, as she begins to add details to the faces. The teacher wondered what materials could she use if the face was sad or happy. T carefully looked at different drawing materials. She settled using different colors of markers to symbolize the emotions of each face - yellow for happy, blue for sad.

Although the paper used isn’t round, R also has a strong interest in people and faces. Notice how faces have distinguishing features to differentiate people. R uses the materials to make her different ideas visible. Notice the details that she adds to the face on the left is that of her Mom complete with eyelashes and defined lips, while the face on the right is that of her brother as she adds lots of teeth to express her idea that he is talking; she adds details to the pupils to accentuate that he is looking.