

CAR PROJECT AT PALLISER

Location: Palliser

Classroom: Ladybug Bilingual Class

Age Group: 3yrs to 5yrs.

Context:

In early October, a shared interest in cars, garages, ramps, and parking lots emerged among the children during free play with Magna-Tiles and wooden blocks. As the Reggio Emilia philosophy emphasizes child-led inquiry, we chose to embark on a car-themed project for the semester.

Beginning of Inquiry:



To spark dialogue and build on the children's existing knowledge, we held a knowledge-building circle and posed two guiding questions:

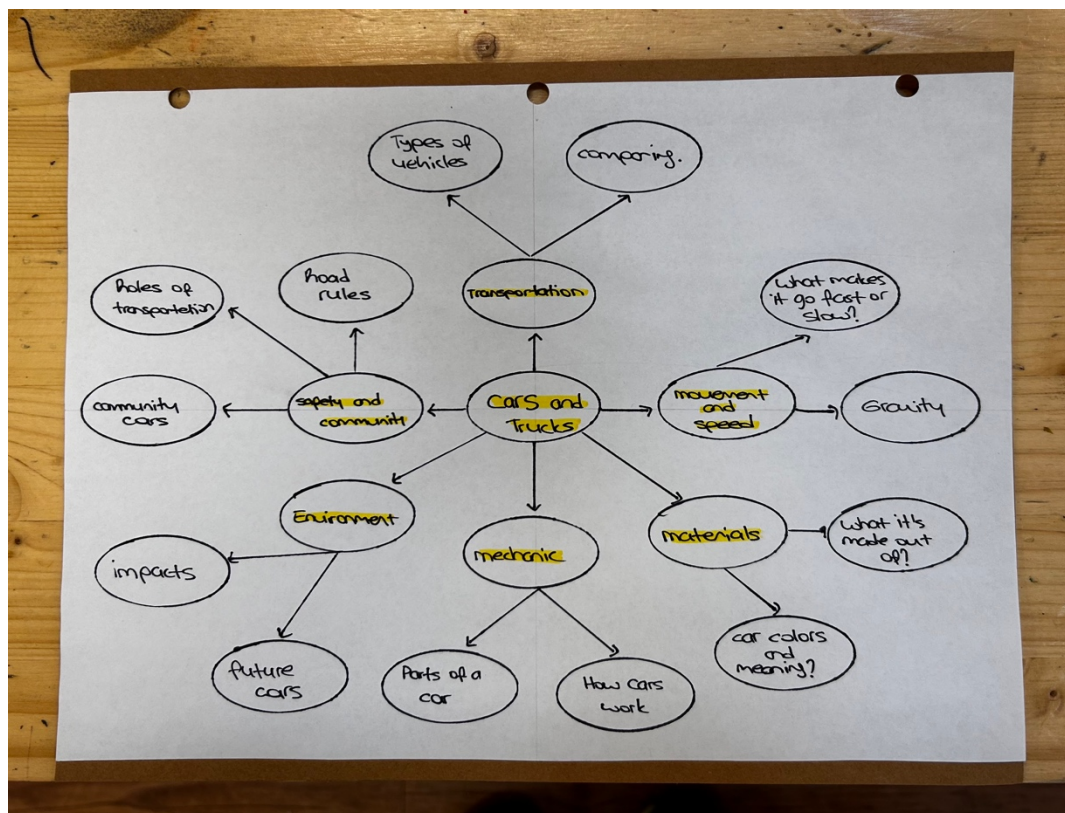
What do you know about cars?

- "The car has buttons!"
- "The car moves with the pedals."
- "They have wheels, engine, steering wheel, and with the engine, it moves."

What do you want to know about cars?

- "How to fix a car?"
- "How to build a car?"
- "How to drive?"

From these responses, we created a project web that included key areas of focus such as literacy, art, sensory experiences, construction, and dramatic play. Each of these areas offered unique opportunities and learning experiences as we moved forward in our inquiry process.



Learning Through Play:
Sensory Experience:

Car Wash



The children engaged in a sensory car wash experience using water and toy cars. They explored textures, temperature, imaginative roles through play and developed an early understanding of hygiene by relating the car wash to their own self-care practices.

Quotes from the Experience:

- P: “It is a mud truck, that’s why it’s so dirty!” (Cause and Effect)
- S: “There are so many bubbles!” (Observation Skills)
- N: “I need to clean inside of the tires!” (Attention)

Art Experiences:

Car Ramp Painting



Children dipped toy cars into paint and rolled them down ramps, watching how the patterns and colors changed with the car's movement just like the muddy tire tracks they sometimes see in real life.

Quotes from the Experience:

- A: "Look! My car goes so far!" (Distance and Motion)
- B: "Let's switch cars because some have bigger wheels!" (Comparison)

My Dream Car



For this activity, we extended our project by combining art and technology. First, the children drew their own imaginative dream cars, and then, with the help of AI technology, we transformed their drawings into realistic car images. Each child had different ideas, such as a "flower ice cream truck," an "Oilers-themed car," and "a car that shoots fireworks," among others.

Drawing With Cars



The children are drawing using markers attached to toy cars. As they move the cars around, they observe the lines and patterns the markers create. Rather than drawing with a specific intention, they scribble playfully.

Construction and Engineering:

Ramp Building



S, B, A, and L collaborating on building ramps, working together to design and test how far their cars could travel. They experimented with different angles and ramp heights, observing how each change affected the distance and speed of the cars.

Quotes from the Experience:

- S: “Is it high enough? I am letting the car go!” (Critical Thinking)
- A: “Let’s add the cardboard pieces so it can go more!” (Experimentation)

Cardboard Car

After watching how cars are built and learning about the steps involved in the process, the children were ready to create their own classroom car. They discussed both interior and exterior designs and shared ideas about what kind of car they wanted to build.

Part 1: Coloring and Building



The children worked together to color a large box to create their car. Some painted the body of the car, while others focused on painting the tires and adding details, contributing their creativity to bring the classroom car to life.

Part 2: Decorating & Test Drive



Once the paint was dry, the children began assembling the car's structure, adding elements like wheels, seats, a license plate, and a steering wheel. When the car was complete, they eagerly hopped in and tried to push each other around but quickly realized it was harder than they expected. That's when we had an idea: we placed a skateboard underneath the car and just like that, it was rolling! Excitement filled the room as the children took turns going for a test drive.

Dramatic Play:

Mechanic Shop



With activity as the children transformed their play area into a busy mechanic shop. Each child is focused on their task, working together to keep the mechanic shop busy and organized.

Quotes from the Experience:

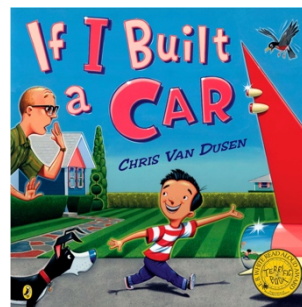
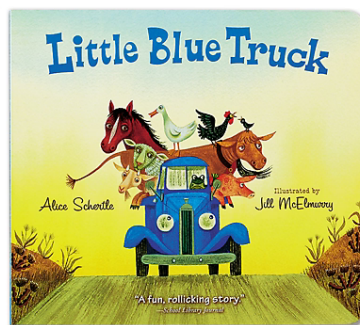
- B: “Let’s look at the sheet to see what needs fixing!” (Planning)
 - H: “I’ll fix the tire!” (Initiative and responsibility)
 - A: “I’ll wash the car!” (Initiative and responsibility)
- P and L managing the front desk (collaboration and communication)
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Literacy:

Some of Books:

During our project, the children explored books related to cars and transportation. As they listen to the stories, they are introduced to new vocabulary and concepts related to the car and car parts.

- Little Blue Truck by Alice Schertle
- The wheels on the bus by Paul O. Zelinsky
- If I Built a Car by Chris Van Dusen



Holistic Play-Based Goals:

- ***Goal:*** Emotional and Social Development
- ***Focus:*** Collaboration and teamwork

The children demonstrated great collaboration and teamwork, especially when building the cardboard car. They helped each other, shared ideas, and used problem-solving skills.

Reflection:

What began as a simple interest in cars quickly grew into a rich and meaningful exploration. By the end of our project, it was clear that the children's understanding of cars extended far beyond just pedals, steering wheels, and wheels.

Through imaginative play, hands-on building, and collaborative problem-solving, the children explored concepts of design, motion, mechanics, and teamwork.