Dear Families:

What started out with a comment about my wild hair turned into a lesson on static electricity today! Static electricity results from the build-up of an electrical charge when two objects are rubbed together. This morning, those two things must have been my hair and my brush, or my hair and my wool hat. Experiments with static electricity are a safe way to give children hands-on experiences with science and electricity.

For today’s investigation, each child tore a sheet of paper into little pieces. Then I passed out balloons for the children to blow up. We then rubbed the balloons in our hair and tried to pick up the pieces of paper with the static electricity on the balloon. Through brainstorming and investigation, we also discovered that we could create static electricity by rubbing our balloons on sweaters and the carpet, but not on jeans or shoes.

Children who engage in active investigations like these are engaging in the work of real scientists. By asking questions, investigating and testing out their ideas, they arrive at conclusions. When children use their imagination to design experiments, they are beginning to inquire, observe, compare and theorize. Science happens when children ask questions, solve problems and draw conclusions. We are beginning to understand cause and effect and data analysis as the children test out new ideas. What looks like simple play is actually early science skills and knowledge in the making!

You can create your own static electricity science experiment at home with a balloon and any small item that it could pick up, such as a facial tissue, tissue paper, cardboard or aluminum foil.

Have fun investigating static electricity!