POST VISIT ACTIVITY - PRESCHOOL
Observation and Imagination: *Little Cloud* Collages

**Review:** Everything has a shape. Shape is one of the ways we describe and compare things. Circles, squares, rectangles, and triangles are examples of geometric shapes, while freeform shapes, such as those based on natural objects like rocks, clouds, animals and plants are called organic shapes. Teachers may want to cut out examples of such shapes for a felt or magnetic board for sorting, observation, and discussion.

**Objective:** To observe the presence of shape in our world and to consider the element of shape in the arrangement of the pictorial space.

**Procedure:** Read *Little Cloud* by Eric Carle. If possible, conduct the reading outside so as to view clouds in the sky after reading. Encourage students to talk about what they see in the sky. How are the shapes of clouds different from the shapes of buildings, the classroom door, and windows? What do the cloud shapes remind them of? What colors do they see in the sky? How does the sky appear at different times of the day? When it rains? Teachers may want to show photographs of a variety of cloud shapes and sky colors after this discussion or at the conclusion of the activity.

**Exercise:** Students will engage in “forming” cloud shapes by finger painting with white paint on a variety of “sky” colors of 9”x12” (or other size) construction paper. The translucency of white finger paint allows the color of the paper to show through, therefore changing the “white” of the cloud. When painted clouds have dried, have students tear or cut out the cloud shapes and arrange them on a 12”x18” background paper of their color choice. Demonstrate experimenting with the placement of the shapes, verbalizing your thinking as you do this. After students have experimented with their composition, hand out glue sticks or sponge tipped dab and stick white glue bottles to adhere shapes. It may be helpful to demonstrate how papers fall off the background when only a small dab of glue is used. A white oil pastel or crayon may be offered when finished gluing to draw additional clouds or details.

**Further Questioning/ Discussion:**
What do your cloud shapes remind you of? Did you know that was what you were going to make when you started? Why did you choose this color background? What happened to the colored paper when we put the white paint on it?

**Variations/ Extensions:**
1.) Have students contribute clouds to a “Cloud Mural.” Just as when outside looking at the actual clouds, have the group talk about what they see in their mural of cloud shapes.

2.) Have students do a drawing of their cloud collage or mural with a variety of white drawing tools on a colored paper of similar proportions, encouraging them to use their imagination to draw what else they would see in the sky.

3.) Use a range of white and light papers, handmade papers, paper towels, tracing paper, etc., to rip cloud shapes for a shape collage.

**Suggested finger paint recipes:**
Mix equal parts white tempera paint and thick transparent art paste. If you don’t have a viscous transparent art paste, gloss laundry starch powder is also a good thickening agent for tempera paint. A good consistency for finger painting is a mixture that doesn’t drip off of fingers.