During the month of the Ocean Unit, we first focused on the what and where of the oceans. We learned the names of our five world oceans and looked at our world map and globe to identify each ocean location. We learned that the Pacific Ocean is our largest ocean, the Atlantic Ocean is the ocean closest to Pittsburgh, the Indian Ocean is the warmest Ocean, and the Arctic and Southern Oceans are cold and close to the poles. Next, we focused on the marine mammals that live in the ocean, like dolphins, whales, and seals. We compared ocean mammals to fish and learned that fish breathe using gills and lay eggs to reproduce. Marine Mammals, on the other hand, breathe air and give birth to live babies, just like humans. Our third week of ocean exploration was devoted to the coral reef and the living things that grow on the ocean floor. We learned that many living things that live in the ocean look like plants but are really animals. We took a closer look at the sea anemone, coral, and sponges, which surprised some friends to learn that they are classified as animals. Our final week in the ocean, we dove into learning about sharks and rays. Both members of the Chondrichthyes class of fish, sharks and rays were of great interest to the friends. We learned that both sharks and rays do not have bones. Their skeletons are made up of cartilage. We also used our final week to discuss the importance of doing our part to keep our oceans clean to protect all the amazing creatures that live in the ocean.
**Week 1: What and Where are the Oceans?**

A closer look at our activities about geography and properties of water.

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**Ocean Map**— Friends had the opportunity to make their own ocean map. Using a large world map as a reference, the friends were excited to find each ocean on their individual map. Each friend was given five, color coded fish stickers to place on their maps to identify each ocean. Then the friends used colored pencils to make the land green and the oceans blue. While coloring, friends noticed that we used more blue because water covers more of earth than land. Some friends extended the activity and wrote the name of each ocean on their map.

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**Properties of Water**— Starting in the first week of our ocean theme, and continuing throughout the theme, friends participated in a number of water exploration activities. We learned about absorption and how water reacts differently when paired with different objects. Friends used eye droppers to add a small amount of water to a variety of items. When a drop of water was added to a piece of felt, friends noticed the water was instantly absorbed. When a drop was added to a plastic bottle cap, the water beaded up and rolled off.
Week 2: A Focus on Marine Mammals
A closer look at the activities that gave us a better understanding of marine mammals.

**Whale Comparison** - Friends needed to use our long school hallway for this activity! Each friend was given a clipboard to record their findings as we compared the sizes of three well-known whale species - The Blue Whale, The Orca Whale, and the Narwhal. We used a rope that was measured and cut to reflect the size of each whale. Friends took turns holding the rope and stretching it down the hallway to learn that the Blue whale is not only the largest whale, but the largest mammal on the earth.

We used several games to help friends understand the wide variety of animals that live in the ocean and to build basic skills. In the game called Feed the Dolphin, friends chose a number card, identified the numeral and then counted that number of fish to feed the dolphin. Friends also played an ocean lotto game to help build the turn-taking skill and the matching skill.
Week 3: What Lives on the Ocean Floor?
Learning that coral and sponges are animals.

**Coral Reef**- Friends were excited to take a close look at coral and sponge artifacts. We used pictures from books and videos to explore the beauty, purpose, and make up of the coral reef.

**Animals/Plants/Nonliving**- It can be confusing when learning about ocean life to distinguish which creatures are animals and what is a plant growing on the ocean floor. Friends participated in sorting cards into either the plant, animal, or nonliving thing column. We made sure coral and sponges were in the animal column, that kelp and sea grass were in the plant column, and that a beach ball and sand were in the nonliving column.

Week 4: A focus on Sharks and Rays
A closer look at the our favorite shark and ray activities.

*National Geographic Kids’ First Big Book of the Ocean, by Catherine D. Hughes* was a great resource for this entire unit. During the sharks and rays week, we used the book to answer all of our shark and ray questions. We learned that a shark’s skin is like sandpaper, so when painting a large shark, we mixed sand into our paint. We also played a feed the shark game in which we tossed fish (bean bags) at a shark to feed him. We learned that there are many different kinds of rays. Stingrays will often hide in the sand to hunt their prey. During activity time, friends participated in a stingray search in the sand table.
Make Shop Experiences
A closer look at the fine motor activity focus in the make shop.

Yerick is building with the robotic blocks.
Aya, Jack and Caleb are looking for small treasures in the theraputty.
Addison is using a stylus to poke tiny holes to make a picture.

Daily Work
Added to our daily routine, friends have been excited to learn what their new challenge will be each day.

Here, the friends are painting numbers as daily work.
This tasty daily work asks friends to complete a pattern using goldfish crackers.

A favorite daily work challenge is the guessing jar. Here, Isaiah is writing down his guess for how many cars are in the jar.
John is sending his parents a picture of a blowfish using the message from me program for daily work.
Birthdays and Special Guests

Alisa’s parents joined us for a delicious ice cream treat to celebrate her birthday.

Adler’s Mom shared one of Adler’s favorite stories to celebrate his birthday.

Lillian’s grandmother visited the school and shared a story with Lillian’s friends.

Yerick’s family helped the friends celebrate his birthday with music.

Jack wanted to celebrate his birthday with his family and blue popsicles.

The friends enjoyed the crab hokey pokey when Miss Debbie visited to share some Ocean stories.

The afternoon friends are dancing to ocean songs as Mrs. Hraber sings.
Ocean
A reflection of our theme in pictures.

Julia and Avi are eye dropper painting coral.
Lillian is measuring objects with unifix cubes.
Max and Aubri are observing our classroom caterpillars.

Connor and Elijah are playing with the boats in the water table.
Colby is sketching tulips.
Henry is sketching the trees in the reflection garden.

Eli, Josie, and Aubri are working on ocean puzzles.
Sydnee is proud of her ocean map.
Aya has arranged her loose parts.

Elijah, Syndee, and Maya are painting the yellow submarine.
Alisa and Caleb are experimenting with fizzes in the experimentation station.
Addison and Maya are playing with the sea foam in the experimentation station.