Recycling

Four focus books were selected for the Extended Morning’s study of recycling. Through a mixture of fiction and non-fiction, the story lines and content led to exploration of how to care for our Planet Earth. The concepts studied included what children specifically can do to help the Earth, the processes of recycling aluminum and plastic, and what a good relationship with the Earth looks like.

In the book “Michael Recycle” by Ellie Bethel, the town of Abberdoo-Rimey is overrun with garbage until Michael Recycle swoops in and teaches the townspeople how to reduce their waste by recycling. Throughout the week, the children joined the Michael Recycle Team as they participated in activities that brought this book to life! We glued and glittered name rhymes and made a superhero medallion out of used plastic lids (writing or tracing the first name initial and R for recycle to be like Michael’s medallion). Children worked together to build different recycling machines out of the No-Ends construction toy. We identified recycling and compost containers throughout the school, learned to play a Recycling and Sorting card game, created art using recycled materials, colored the recycle symbol and practiced writing the word “recycle”. The children used the water table to clean the chairs and toys in the Discovery Area. The friends prepared several different fruits to put into the dehydrator during cooking time. Everyone had tastes of the dehydrated fruits during lunch time.

Frank Asch, the author/illustrator of “The Earth and I”, beautifully and simply describes a healthy relationship between the earth and a child. The soft, watercolor-like illustrations further enhance the page by page depictions of nature as children and adults alike might experience it interactively. The first and last lines of the story read, "The Earth and I are friends." The children practiced fine motor skills in many ways this week: pressing green and blue play dough onto a round piece of cardboard to create a 2D model of the earth, painting with watercolors on leaf shapes using small brushes and spray bottles, painting rainbows with large brushes on the easels, and sorting a variety of seeds using children's tweezers. Large motor games using the parachute, dancing ribbons, and lots of good music helped to
“The Adventures of an Aluminum Can” by Alison Inches is a story about recycling. It takes the readers through the process of creating aluminum from little pieces of alumina trapped in rock far underground, to using an aluminum can to store fruit, to melting and recasting the can into a brand new aluminum baseball bat. We created sculptures and costumes out of aluminum foil, and painted on foil. The friends rolled up sheets of aluminum foil into balls and played a game of throwing the aluminum balls into a recycle truck. We used large plastic bowling balls to bowl over stacks of tin cans, and used aluminum and wood baseball bats to push baseballs into baseball gloves. Some friends decorated tin cans using glitter, tissue paper, and an assortment of foam shapes, and then made paper flowers to go in them. The children who cooked with Ms. McMichael made cheese, turkey or ham quesadillas using whole wheat tortillas.

The second in an series of stories about recycling, “The Adventures of a Plastic Bottle” by Alison Inches, takes the readers and listeners along on the travels of a plastic water bottle from its beginning as crude oil under the ocean to becoming a toy made from the recycled plastic of the bottle. Along the way, the bottle gets created, filled with water, emptied into a thirsty boy, used as a flower vase, and then finally recycled, shredded, melted, extruded and formed into new things! We used recycled plastic bottles for a variety of activities such as: experimenting with mixing oil and colored water in bottles; filling bottles with pasta shells, sea shells, and glitter to make shakers; bowling over the bottles; and playing with bottles in the water table. We re-used caps from plastic bottles and made a mosaic art by gluing them on a piece of mat board. We used play dough extruders to imitate the giant extruders that squeeze out melted plastic, hunted for recyclable materials hidden in the school, played a catch game with recycled milk jugs, and explored Floam. The cooks this week made roasted applesauce. They cored and filled the apples with a cinnamon and nutmeg spice mix, baked them, then used the food mill to squeeze out the delicious applesauce - YUM!
Michael Recycle

The Adventures of a Plastic Bottle
The Adventures of an Aluminum Can

The Earth and I