Storytelling

Our imaginations were alive this month as we listened to various stories. Each story offered additional stories in the series which allowed us to further explore variations on the original story.

Our first book was Strega Nona, an original tale written and illustrated by Tomie dePaola. Once long ago, Strega Nona (Grandma Witch) helped the townspeople of Calabria with their troubles such as warts and headaches. As she got older, she needed to hire Big Anthony to help take care of her house. Her one rule for Big Anthony was “Don't touch the pasta pot!” Of course, when Big Anthony discovered that the pot was magic and, with just a song, could produce as much pasta as needed, he stole it and gave it a try. Alas, he did not pay close enough attention as to how to make the pot stop. He neglected to blow three kisses after singing to the pot, and it kept making pasta until the town was almost covered. Luckily, Strega Nona arrived in time to blow the three kisses. The pasta pot stopped, but Big Anthony had to clean up by eating his way through the pasta. Throughout the week, the children explored pasta in many different forms. They made predictions and used balance scales to weigh and compare cooked and uncooked pasta. The children used pasta to create shapes and wrote their name using pasta. The friends strengthened their hands and arms by squeezing playdoh through an extruder to make HUGE piles of pasta noodles. We discovered Italy by locating it on the map and globe and tracing the boot-shaped outline of Italy. In the kitchen, the friends were busy chopping vegetables to add to our delicious vegetable soup which we served to our Open House visitors. During the week, we also read, Strega Nona Meets Her Match and Strega Nona Takes a Vacation.
The Tortoise and the Hare, adapted and illustrated by Janet Stevens, is one of the most famous of AESOP’S fables. In the story, the hare is very boastful about his speed, and he challenges any other animal to a race. He has a good laugh when the tortoise volunteers. The hare speeds ahead as the race begins, but soon thinks he can just stop and take a little nap because the tortoise is so far behind. He awakes just as the tortoise is crossing the finish line. The moral of the fable is, "Slow and steady often wins the race." Non-fiction books helped us identify the actual characteristics of a tortoise and a hare. The children practiced tracing and cutting out each animal. Using the shadow screen and their props, the friends acted out the story for an audience. The children experimented with ramps, cars and rocks to demonstrate slow and fast. Gross motor activities such as “Tortoise, Tortoise, Hare”, fast and slow dancing and Tortoise races/trails allowed us to move our bodies similar to the way the animals moved. In the kitchen, the friends shaped tortoises using bread dough, baked them and took them home to taste. Additional extension stories this week included, The Groovy Story of the Tortoise and the Hare by Kristyn Crow and Hurry Up and Slow Down by Layn Marlow.

In The Gingerbread Man by Karen Schmidt, a gingerbread cookie escapes from the oven and runs from various characters in the story. He is chased by farmers, a bear, and a wolf. Faster than everyone, the gingerbread man chants, “Run, run as fast as you can. You can’t catch me I’m the gingerbread man.” The gingerbread man meets his match when he encounters a fox who tricks him and gobbles him up! The children used craypas to create paper gingerbread boys and girls. They practiced their counting skills when they went on a gingerbread man hunt and found numbered gingerbread men. Once they found the numbered gingerbread men, they worked together to put them in order from 1 to 10. Throughout the week, everyone had an opportunity to make gingerbread cookies in the kitchen. During the week, we also read, The Gingerbread Girl by Lisa Campbell Ernst and The Gingerbread Baby by Jan Brett.
Extended Day Open House