Five focus books were selected for the Extended Afternoon’s study of Birds and Flight. The first book in the Birds Unit was the story of *Life In The Air* by Maria Rius and J.M. Parramon. It tells the tale of a baby bird from hatching out of its egg, to learning how to fly, to discovering the world from up in the air. We made homemade suet to freeze and then hang on our playground. It was also placed outside the windows to feed the birds. We made butterflies out of clothespins, construction paper bird nests, and multi colored eggs.

*Without You* by Sarah Weeks is a heartfelt story-song about the relationships in an Emperor Penguin family. The father penguin carefully balances the egg on his feet and cares for it during the long, dark two months of Antarctic winter, while the mother goes out to sea to feed. After the egg hatches, the mother returns, and using her voice, finds her family. She cares for the chick while the father goes off to feed.

The animals of the Arctic and Antarctic circles spend their lives surviving subfreezing air temperatures and frigid water. Their secret is blubber, a thick layer of body fat that comprises up to 50% of some marine mammals. We experimented with the blubber glove experiment. The friends got to see, on a small scale, what it's like to take a dip in cold water without turning into a popsicle. Mrs. Loomis had the friends practice laying on their bellies using scooters. This is called belly sliding done by Penguins when they get too tired to walk any more.

*Stellaluna* by Janell Cannon, is about a baby bat and her mother who get separated during an owl attack. The baby bat lands in a bird’s nest and is taken in by the mother bird, but only if she changes her bat ways. She finds her bat mother later in the story and is reunited with her bat family, but remains in contact with her bird family.

"Stellaluna" activities included the making of bat wings to wear and making fruit kabobs in the kitchen. We played a sorting game and compared bird wings and bat wings.
The story *Chickens Aren’t The Only Ones* by Ruth Heller, begins with wonderful illustrations and descriptions of the different kinds of eggs which birds lay. It then outlines the other types of animals that lay eggs: reptiles, amphibians, fish, spiders, snails and insects. There are only two exceptions of mammals that lay eggs - the Spiny Anteater and the Duckbill Platypus who both live in Australia! Everyone who lays an egg is OVIPAROUS. The week’s activities included: racing with an egg on a spoon; practicing cutting out egg shapes; forming clay eggs; decorating bird houses. In the kitchen, the cooks sampled egg salad, made eggs in a nest, and dyed hard boiled eggs.

*BIRDSONG* is written by Audrey Wood, and illustrated by Robert Florczak. Each page of this dawn to dusk story details a different environment and a different bird with their distinct call or song. The activities that supported the book included: playing the Bird Match Game and Bird Sound Bingo; using our whole bodies to play Crows and Cranes and Bird Catcher; folding paper into airplanes; also decorating wooden airplanes using colored tape. In the kitchen, we tried rolling, cutting and baking bird shaped biscuits.
Cereal balls formed into egg shapes bring smiles to all.

One square pan plus one round pan equals one beautiful “HEART.”

Bat wings in the making!

Learning to tumble...