Three focus books were selected for the Extended Morning’s study of the Ocean. The first book in the Ocean Unit was the story of Swimmy by Leo Lionni. One day while Swimmy was swimming with his brothers and sisters, a tuna fish came and ate all of them. Swimmy managed to get away, kept swimming in the deep ocean, and came in contact with many different creatures of all shapes and sizes. He came in contact with another school of fish who were all afraid to come out and play for fear of being eaten by the bigger fish.

Swimmy thought of a plan for them to all swim together in formation to appear as the biggest fish in the sea, with Swimmy being the eye. When they finally started swimming together, they swam after the big fish and chased them all away. The activities included: creating jellyfish by painting on the body shape and folding it in half to make a mirror image with colorful strips of tissue paper for the tentacles. We made fish rubbings with tracing paper and netting underneath the fish to create their gills. We mixed shades of blue and green paint to create the ocean background for a large mural. The cooks cut, breaded, and pan-fried Cod to make fish nuggets for everyone to taste. On the playground we played “Shark Attack” with our friends and teachers.

Our next book was Big Al by Andrew Clements. In the deep blue sea swam a big hearted fish who was as lovable as he was scary-looking. While other fish swam together in schools, Big Al swam alone - nothing but him and the sea weed. Of course he would rather swim with the others, but his size, his great big fish eyes, and his mouth full of sharp teeth frighten away any fish that see him. Big Al seemed destined to swim alone, until a fisherman’s net dropped silently around all the fish, and Big Al had the chance to put his teeth to good use. He bit a hole in the net and made it possible for the fish to escape and then welcomed Big Al as their new friend and hero.
The story *The Snail and the Whale* by Julia Donaldson and Alex Scheffler was a wonderful rhyming story about a sea snail that is eager to travel the world. The rest of the group were not so enthusiastic about the idea. The snail met a whale and invited her to join him to travel the world. Together they went on an amazing journey, past icebergs and volcanoes, sharks and penguins, the little snail felt so small in the vastness of the world. Then the whale lost his way and the story became an environmental cautionary tale as whale was upset by speed boaters and ended up beached. The little snail had a chance to do something BIG and save her friend. The activities for the week were: playing the Snails Pace Race game, making colorful slime using Bioputty solution, measuring the length of the humpback whale and comparing it to other whales, and shaping bread dough to form snails (which we baked and ate for snack).
Good times with headbands!

Popcorn Fish!

Catch those fish!

Fun with boats

Forming the dough