“I believe that children are naturally creative and eager to learn,” says Eric Carle. “I want to show them that learning is really both fascinating and fun.” (Quote from Biographical notes for Eric Carle, www.eric-carle.com)

Eric Carle has always been a fascinated observer of nature, and he shares his enthusiasm with his readers in many of his beloved picture books. Our first selection was *Mister Seahorse*. In this story, Mr. Seahorse is an excellent father who floats through the sea finding several other kinds of fish fathers caring for their young. Mr. Tilapia keeps his eggs safe in his mouth while Mr. Kurtus keeps his safe on top of his head. On his way, Mr. Seahorse passes by a scary lionfish and other camouflaged creatures. But, before long, Mr. Seahorse meets a pipefish who carries his babies along his belly. Soon Mr. Seahorse births his own seahorse babies by wiggling and twisting this way and that. The babies tumble from Mr. Seahorse’s pouch and swim away. One baby turns around and tries to come back into the pouch. “Oh, no!” said Mr. Seahorse. “I do love you, but now you are ready to be on your own.”

During this week, we jumped into activities such as: sponge fish painting, gluing tissue paper pieces to create brightly colored sea horses, making bread dough seahorses in the kitchen, and playing a counting game with seahorses. In circle, the teachers introduced some fascinating, factual concepts about all the fish mentioned in our story.

Next, we enjoyed *From Head to Toe*. This book introduces children to an array of animals that move in different ways. The text includes a challenge to the reader to move in the same way as its characters, including: a penguin turning its head; a giraffe bending its neck; a buffalo raising its shoulders; and a monkey waving its arms. At the end of the book, a boy wiggles his toes and a lively parrot says, “I can do it! I can do it!” The activities for the week included: sewing animal puppets with Miss Furman, and gluing colorful pom poms for the features, made a giraffe with a bendy pipe cleaner neck, played the game Pet Hunt, and had fun pretending to be Pet Store owners.

Born in Syracuse, New York, Eric Carle received much of his education in Germany. He is a graduate of the Akademie der bilenden Kunste in Stuttgart, where he learned about Goethe’s color theory. His chief inspiration for *Hello, Red Fox* came from his talks with young children who were surprised and fascinated by his demonstrations of optical illusion color opposites. Some children believed this was magic. Eric Carle assured the children that it was not. There is actually something taking place between the eye and the brain called “simultaneous contrast after-image.” In *Hello, Red Fox* it’s little frog’s birthday and Mama Frog gets a big surprise when the guests show up for his party - all the animals are the wrong color! Our activities included: ribbon dancing; finger painting foxes; playing with colored rings; spin art; playing twister; looking at optical illusions; and in the kitchen, preparing ribbon jello.
“My beautiful butterfly” says Sasha.

Andres adds pom poms to his puppet.

Hugo’s very hungry caterpillar.

Min Seo takes much thought when decorating her puppet.

Min Seo holding an art palette.

Can you guess what Eric Carle book this painting comes from?
Art inspired by Eric Carle

Thanks for a great year Parents and Friends! Have a fun and safe summer.