The Kindergarten began the new year with an in-depth exploration into FOOD. The children brainstormed the question “What is Food?”. We all agreed that people and animals need food in order to grow and live. Food gives us the energy, nutrients and vitamins necessary to play and work. We then listed and drew our personal favorite foods. Mrs. Blizman helped the children illustrate a classroom book and describe these foods.

Of course, we cannot just talk about food, we have to taste it! Combining our study of food with practicing beginning letter sounds, we decided to eat our way through the alphabet. One rule that we decided on as a group was that everyone had to try a taste. We created a classroom graph to record our preference after each taste. During our first week we tried Apple Butter and Cauliflower working our way to Udon noodles. The children surprised themselves by trying a variety of foods and actually liking some of them!

Important Notes

- Mark your calendar for the Family Festival, March 8, 2018.
- Please remember to send shoes or slippers with your children if they wear boots to school.
- Tennis shoes are required for your child's gym day.
THE GROCERY STORE
The children worked together to turn the Make Shop space into a grocery store. The children sorted the empty food packages into groups such as dry goods, frozen foods, and dairy products. They decided how to organize these groups onto shelves. The children made signs so the customers would be able to locate the items in the shop. Price tags were made on sticker paper and added to each food item. Shopping carts, baskets and shopping bags were added for the customers’ convenience. Using a working cash register, play money and credit cards allowed the children to have a “real” shopping experience.
The children did a great job taking turns being the cashier, shelf stockers, and customers. The Make Shop Grocery Store was enjoyed by the whole school for 2 weeks.

Avi, Yerick, Emilia, Josie, Sydnee, Dean, Siobhan, Evren, Alia, Emery, Eli and Yuval working or shopping at the grocery store.
THE FIVE FOOD GROUPS

We spent the next week learning about the five food groups: fruits, vegetables, proteins, grains and dairy. The children sorted foods into these groups. During lunch, we looked at our own lunches and identified the food groups that we had packed.

Once we were able to identify the five food groups, we introduced MyPlate to the children. MyPlate comes from the U.S. Government as a way to visualize what to put onto your plate in order to eat healthy. Eating the MYPlate way means filling half your plate with fruits and vegetables. Going for a colorful mix will give you plenty of nutrients. Fill the other half with protein and grains, using slightly more grains than protein. Whole grains should make up at least half of your grains, e.g., brown rice instead of white. The MyPlate icon also shows a glass of milk near the plate to remind us to include low-fat dairy into your diet.

Throughout the month, we had many opportunities to make and taste foods from all of the food groups.

Emery creating MyPlate.

Avi juicing lemons for lemonade. Adrian cracking eggs for scrambled eggs. Amelie eating the “whole plant”: roots, stem, leaves, flower and seeds. Max mixing bread dough. Leo and Josie shaking cream to make butter.
COOKING IS A SCIENCE

Once we learned all about the Five Food Groups and how to eat healthy, we began to play with our food!
The kitchen is filled with science...the children learned that the yeast used in making bread is actually alive. Yeast converts sugar into carbon dioxide. We observed this when we added sugar to active yeast and placed a balloon over the jar. The balloon inflated! We watched the yeast help our bread dough to rise.

We used heat to pop popcorn...Inside each kernel of popcorn is a tiny droplet of water surrounded by a hard shell called a hull. As the popcorn is heated, the water turns into steam, which builds pressure inside the kernel. When the hull can no longer contain the pressure — POP! — the kernel explodes and a fluffy new piece of popcorn is born.

We observed what happens when a marshmallow is placed in the microwave for 30 seconds. Marshmallows are mostly sugar and water wrapped around a bunch of air bubbles. The microwave makes the water molecules vibrate very quickly—which makes the water heat up. The hot water warms the sugar, which softens. The hot water also warms the air bubbles. Since the sugar walls are warm and soft, the bubbles expand, and the marshmallow puffs up.

We used the dehydrator to turn applesauce into fruit leather. The dehydrator reduces the amount of moisture in foods using a fan and super low heat. Once the liquid was removed from the applesauce, a chewy, fruit snack was left!

We also learned the parts of the plant, what plants need to grow, how plants absorb water (osmosis) and the life cycle of plants. We tried to sprout potatoes; FAIL. We planted peas, tomatoes, onions and carrots, which are growing on the windowsill.
THE KINDER CAFÉ

During the third week of our unit, the block area was turned into the Kinder Café, a full service restaurant. The children worked as chefs preparing food and filling orders. The wait staff took the customers’ orders and made sure that the service was fast and friendly. Our hosts and hostesses seated the guests, took reservations and accepted payment at the end of the meal. It was fun to watch the children work together to take on these roles.

Julia taking Dash’s order.  
Tyrease, Dean and Eli working in the kitchen.  
Alia waiting on Dean. Chudi reading the menu.

WORD FAMILIES

This month in language arts, we have focused on identifying beginning word sounds and building word families. Not only did we eat our way through the alphabet, but we added photos of food to the correct beginning letter on our classroom word wall. Once we understood the letter sounds for each letter in the alphabet, we began building words in a specific word family. We started with the “AT” family, building the words cat, bat, hat, fat, mat, sat, rat, pat, and vat. We then moved on to the “IG” family.

Siobhan adding words to the word wall.  Avi finding “AT“ words.  Evren picking out “IG” words.
PAPER MACHÉ

Mrs. Blizman undertook a big project with the children to create paper maché food. The children chose a food item and then fashioned a form out of newspaper. These forms were covered in a glue-newspaper mix and set to dry over the weekend. On Monday, the children painted the forms and added embellishments to their food items. The food looks delicious and is on display in the library.

THANK YOU!

We had the pleasure of hosting Hyun Tae Kim, a practicum student from Duksung Women's University in Korea, this month. Mr. Kim has spent time in the Philippines where he observed that the children there were not able to attend because of the poverty level. He decided to help raise money and build a kindergarten (preschool). The kindergarten is now running through regular sponsorship.

Mr. Kim was very impressed with the level of independence that the children displayed in the classroom and with their vocabulary usage.

During his visit, Mr. Kim facilitated activities that we had set up in the classroom, as well as bringing his own. One project that he shared with us was the creating of a Korean lantern. The children painted lanterns of their own to take home.

ANOTHER BIG THANK YOU!

A HUGE thank you to Mrs. McGillen for spending two weeks with us while Mrs. Perovich was away. It was nice for the friends to reconnect with Mrs. McGillen. We really enjoyed learning and playing with her.