Whether they are told live, read aloud, listened to on a recording, or watched on a stage, stories are captivating for young children. They can help them learn new words, introduce them to other cultures, teach them lessons, and sometimes help them navigate difficult times.

Our Favorite Theme Books

Circle time is a great time to hear stories that help friends learn more about our theme. This month our favorite books were:

- Abiyoyo, by Pete Seeger
- Abiyoyo Returns by Pete Seeger
- Conejito: A Folktale from Panama, by Margaret Read MacDonald
- The Little Red Hen, by various authors
- Humpty Dumpty, Little Miss Muffet (and other Nursery Rhymes by Mother Goose)

Mango Monkey Says…

Our wise puppet friend visited the friends this month with his friends Shy Squirrel, Andy Alligator, and Sal Snake to talk about giving. We shared the book, Give A Little Love by Lizzie Mack to remind the friends that giving someone a present helps both the giver and receiver to feel good. In the short story, a little girl carefully chooses just the right balloon to give to each of her family members. The friends helped Mango Monkey brainstorm all of the things that a present can be, both things you can see (like a balloon) and things that you feel (like a hug). Then they talked about why people give, such as for a special day like a birthday, or because someone needs something. The conversation wrapped up with looking at some of the beautiful paintings that the children made for their families. We talked about how carefully they worked and how it will feel to them to give the special gift, and how it will feel to their family members to get it. Everyone agreed that it will feel good all around!
Week 1

**Storytelling**

**Humpty Dumpty and Little Miss Muffet**

Mother Goose Nursery Rhymes serve as an introduction to the rhythm, texture and flexibility of language for the young child. The Nursery Rhymes *Humpty Dumpty* and *Little Miss Muffet* were a good start for the children to understand the “beginning/middle/end” of a story because of their simplicity. We made Humpty Dumpty finger puppets, tested different ways of how to let a hard-boiled egg fall off a wall without breaking, and made egg salad for snack. The children built their own spider props for enacting Little Miss Muffet on the stage. Each friend drew their self-portrait on a stage for the December locker tags and practiced sequencing several stories with three parts.

Week 2

**Storytelling**

**Abiyoyo**

Fairytales and Folktales often convey moral and spiritual values that transcend time and cultural boundaries. Joy and goodness rule, and a “happily ever after” ending is usual. The “Once upon a time” beginning of these tales is the cue for the children that the story is pretend. There is a giant and a magic wand in the stories of *Abiyoyo* and *Abiyoyo Returns*, by Pete Seeger. Those do not exist in real life, but it is fun to pretend. All the while, children are learning that teamwork and kindness are what truly work to solve the problems in the story. Pete Seeger added a repetitive musical line to his story that was easy for the children to remember as they enacted the story on the stage. We practiced playing guitars and xylophones to the music, and made puppet props for the shadow screen and stage stories.
The final week of Storytelling was full of creativity as the friends used storytelling cards to create their own tales, and illustrated and dictated an original book. Circle Time stories included *Conejito: A Folktale from Panama*, by Margaret Read MacDonald. Conejito is a rabbit that must make it past a lion, a tiger and a fox to get to his aunt’s house up on the mountain, and then back down again. He tricks them with his clever words, and with the help of his aunt, gets home safely. The many Spanish words, a little song Conejito sings, and the interesting illustrations made this story rich and engaging for the children.
Make Shop Experiences

This month in the Make Shop, we focused on Light and Color. The room darkening curtains were hung and we brought out two old Overhead Projectors. The friends experimented with placing various colorful translucent materials on the projector surface to create colorful designs on a screen. Next, blacklights were set up, and the children painted with florescent paints and played with glow-in-the-dark play dough and slime that the Green Room friends made. We added glow-in-the-dark Jelly Marbles in a small water table for some sensory fun.

Aras explores the shadows and color made from placing objects on an overhead projector in the Make Shop.

Music Experiences with Mrs. Hraber

Mrs. Hraber integrated music into our Storytelling theme this month. The children told the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears through singing, playing instruments and dancing games with the parachute.

Center Spotlight: The Dramatic Play Center

The Dramatic Play Center in the classroom invites the pretend play that is essential for young children. This month the center transformed from: a home setup; to a world of castles, knights, horses and royalty; to a forest of tree houses and small woodland animals. The children made up story after story with the available props. In addition, the nearby Block Center was the Green Room Stage for enacting the Nursery Rhymes of Humpty Dumpty and Little Miss Muffet and Pete Seeger’s tale of Abiyoyo. With minimal costumes and props, children recall the words and actions of the characters to become them on the stage. They practice waiting for their part and being comfortable in front of a group.
Birthday Celebrations and Special Visitors

Moses’ dad reads a story to the Circle Time friends to celebrate Moses’ birthday.

Miss Debbie, the Librarian from the Carnegie Library told the story of The Mitten by Jan Brett.

Emma’s parents visit and share a story for Emma’s birthday.

“Our” Officer Campbell spent many years at CMU helping the Children’s School family stay safe. Each year, he brought police officer friends with him to do a presentation about their job. The friends used his favorite color blue to create a splatter painting for Officer Campbell upon his retirement.
Kieran draws himself on the stage for his Locker Tag.

Marina puts together a story sequence with a beginning, middle, and end.

Jamie Ann cuts out the pages to make a book of Nursery Rhymes.

Poppy mixes the ingredients to make Glow-In-The-Dark Slime for play under the blacklights in the Make Shop.

Mio chops hard-boiled eggs for the Egg Salad snack.
Our Month in Photos