Our minds and our bodies work together to help us function, so it is our job to keep them healthy. Each week, we focused on a component of the mind and body, how they work together, and different ways we can keep that element of ourselves healthy. We started with the 5 senses and asked how those senses help us encounter the world around us and influence the way we feel. Next, we learned about the brain, its major functions, and mindfulness habits to help take care of our brains. We then moved to the body, focusing on the organs and the bones, their individual roles and how they work together inside our bodies. Lastly, we explored some of the healthy habits that contribute to our overall well-being, including sleep, nutrition, exercise, and dental hygiene.

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:

- *Touch, Smell, Taste, Hearing, and Sight*, The Five Senses Series by Maria Rius
- *Super Simple Body: Inside the Brain* by Karin Halvorson
- *See Inside Your Body* by Katie Daynes and Colin King

Mango Monkey Says…

Our wise puppet friend visited the friends this month to talk about our feelings within the framework of mindfulness. We shared the book *Visiting Feelings*, by Lauren Rubenstein. The story encourages friends to reflect on their feelings in the present moment, to befriend each feeling, and to welcome them all in. In doing so, Mango Monkey helped the friends learn about empathy towards their peers by recognizing the different visiting feelings a friend might be experiencing and demonstrating how to help a friend through their feelings.
The Five Senses

We isolated each sense and explored how that sense helps us encounter the world. We isolated the body parts on our face, identified which senses they correspond to, and pieced them together to make our faces for our locker tags. As the week progressed, we paired the senses, demonstrating how our senses work together to give us a more complete and thoughtful understanding of our surroundings. Mrs. Myers visited, introducing the friends to ASL, demonstrating what communication is like when the sense of hearing is lost.

The Brain

After learning that our body sends signals from our senses to our brain, we started to learn about how the brain translates the messages it receives so we can understand what it is we are experiencing. We discovered that the cerebrum receives sensory messages and helps us remember, think, and feel while the cerebellum controls our coordination and balance. We practiced exercising our brains by playing memory games and navigating through mazes. We explored a pig’s brain to help us understand what our brains look and feel like. Mrs. Yetter shared stories about our changing feelings. She helped us learn different breathing and mindfulness exercises to help take care of our brains in the midst of our feelings.
Week 3, we focused on our organs, namely our heart, lungs, and intestines. We used basters, pipettes, and tubes in the water table to mimic the way our heart pumps blood. We used paper bags and straws to demonstrate how our lungs inflate and deflate when we breathe in and out. A demonstration with crackers and water communicated how our small and large intestines sort through the food so it can keep the nutrients our bodies need while getting rid of everything it does not want anymore.

Week 4, we learned about two main functions of our bones: to help protect our organs and to give our bodies shape. We contrasted the rigid structure that bones give our bodies with the limpness that worms experience because of their lack of bones. We examined skeletons and pieced together puzzles of skeletons to gain a better understanding of all the different bones in our bodies and how they all come together. The Dramatic Play Center was turned into a Doctor’s Office, giving the friends an opportunity to care for the patients’ bodies and own the responsibility of keeping our bodies safe and healthy.
To conclude the unit, we explored different ways to be healthy. We practiced yoga poses in dramatic play to stretch and strengthen our bodies. While we moved our bodies, we practiced different kinds of breathing. Some of the animal breaths helped our bodies cool down, while others gave our bodies energy. We sorted healthy foods into the different categories of My Plate: grains, dairy, protein, fruits, and vegetables. Lastly, we learned that even if we exercise our bodies and eat healthily, we still need to have healthy sleep habits. We wrote and illustrated stories about the dreams we have had and made dream catchers.

Mrs. Hraber brought lots of different instruments this month so we could use our sense of hearing to explore the different sounds that instruments can make. We moved our bodies to fast beats and to slow beats, timing our movements to the different paces of the various songs.

The purpose of the Make Shop is to challenge and nurture creativity and inquiry by offering experiences with real materials and real tools. We started this month by using our sense of touch to mold clay sculptures and paint them. We also spent time making our own paper, starting with the pulp, adding different materials like glitter and lavender to pique our senses of sight and smell. The Make Shop was then taken over by large boxes that the friends used tools to manipulate into all sorts of imaginative play spaces, including airplanes, houses, and swimming pools.
Special Visitors and Birthday Celebrations

For Poppy May’s 5th birthday, her family read a story to Mrs. Bird’s circle time friends.

We celebrated Jamie Ann’s 5th birthday with a special popsicle snack.

Nicolas’ mom and dad helped us celebrate Nicolas’ half birthday with a circle time story and birthday snack.

Ms. Debbie from the Carnegie Library visited to share stories about our senses.

Miss Shannon from Yoga Monsters came to visit the Green Room friends. She taught the friends different ways to move our bones, strengthen our muscles, and listen to our bodies.
100 Day!