

## The Three Billy Goats Gruff - Learning Through Play

Over the past few months the children at our Centre have engaged in a continued interest of the well-known story titled, *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*. This interest has extended into multiple areas of our classroom environment and provided us with opportunities to support the individual emerging skills of each child during their learning play process. This was an excellent experience to be co-learners with the children and observe our environment while gaining genuine insight into how the children at our Centre view their world and make connections within it. We are so excited to share some of the learning moments we have observed.

We began by reading this story during free play and this became a repeated story many times throughout the day. This was a great opportunity to support the foundations of early literacy as we read the text and observed the pictures together. This story extended into the block centre when a group of children built a long bridge extending from one end of the carpet to the other. This generated a lot of excitement and interest in the classroom and a large number of children came into the area to cross the bridge. A child asked the teacher in the area if they could be the troll and the role play in this area began to emerge. During this time, this interest extended into outdoor play and children could be often heard and seen playing among their peers involving the Billy Goats. To go deeper into this interest, we had an opportunity for the children to role play this story by adding Billy Goat costumes to the block centre where this play seemed to be the most demonstrated. This invitation gave the children the opportunity to explore peer dynamics and social skills while they problem solved with one another. Placing these costumes in the area also supported their self-concept as they were able to see what they are capable of doing as they learned to independently dress themselves in the costumes, helping them to build their sense of self. During this play we has also discussed empathy and how the different characters in the story would feel and how we could change the story to improve the well-being of each character in the story. This supported our ongoing work using the *Tools for Life* program and allowed us to relate our emotional regulation to a situation the children were able to genuinely talk about it.

This story helped us to enhance our math literacy in the Centre by retelling this story, using ordinal numbers and math language such as size variation (big, small, etc.) in our conversations throughout our play. This interest even extended into our creative art exploration as some children began to pain the Billy Goats and the bridge. Children could often be seen and heard in the loose parts area, using small blocks and other materials in that area to explore this story based on their own interests and skill development.

Throughout this time, we learned so much about the power of play and we will continue to close observe in our classroom environment. Thank you for your continued support and we cannot wait to share our next classroom happenings with you.

- Miss Hallford

