“Imagination is more important than knowledge.” Albert Einstein

The great scientist Albert Einstein once said, “If you want your children to be brilliant, tell them fairy tales; if you want them to be very brilliant, tell them lots of fairy tales.” Storytelling, one of the oldest and most universal forms of education, imparts information, stimulates the imagination and instills a love of language. Children learn through play and lessons embedded in play are learned and understood in real ways. Ask questions. What happened? What did you notice? What else could we try? Play, play, play & learn as we do. Full STEAM ahead!

Stories, Stories Everywhere!
Where do we find stories? In books, from folklore (398.2 section of your library), from friends, families and storytellers. But don’t discount the ones you already know…and you do! Humpty Dumpty? (Math Lesson – Position Words!) Itsy Bitsy Spider? (Science Lesson - Did you know spiders can determine the size of a bug trapped on the web by the vibrations? Tie a string and pluck it to feel the vibrations!)

Nursery Rhymes and Finger Plays are often the first storytelling we share with our children. Finger Plays are basically Nursery Rhymes with hand gestures. A song can make transitions as easy as one, two, three and teach Steady Beat. Steady beat is an ongoing, steady, repetitive pulse or cadence. Studies have shown that steady beat or rhythm enhances language acquisition, helps children to focus and concentrate, understand space and distance and even better control their actions and improve behavior and correlates to success in math and reading. Repeating patterns in a song is a natural math lesson. Think about how we can connect songs and rhymes to ways of thinking, doing, observing, solving problems, creating and exploring concepts and the world around us.

This-a-way, That-a-way by Ella Jenkins
This-a-way, That-a-way, X3, Dance with me. (Stretch left and right)
Up and down, up and down X3, Dance with me.
In and out, in and out, X3, Dance with me. (stretch in each direction)


Here we go up, up, up. (raise hands high)
Here we go down, down, down. (lower hands)
Here we go forward, (take one step forward)
Here we go backward. (take one step backward)
Here we go side to side! (sway side to side)

Imagine That!
Pretend you have a flower in front of you. Look at it. What kind of flower is it? What color? What size? Reach out and pretend to pick it. Smell it. Mmmm. Point one finger in your other hand up, like a candle. Pretend the candle (finger) is lit. Smell your flower. With a pursed mouth, blow out your candle. Repeat each action 3 times.
Imaginary Journey
Let’s go on an imaginary journey – an adventure trip into the forest! Everyone stand up and follow me. Sing, using a steady beat, pretend that you are all walking in a forest. A drum or other percussion instrument can be used to reinforce the steady beat if you like. We walk & we walk and we STOP! We walk & we walk and we STOP! We walk & we walk & we walk & we walk and we STOP! I see something. (Pretend you see a big elephant.) It’s big and grey and has a long trunk. It’s an …. Elephant! Pause to see if any child can guess it. How does an Elephant walk? It is large and heavy with a long trunk. Let’s walk like and Elephant. You also can sing “Walking through the forest, forest, forest. What do I see?” or “Jim-A-Long-Josie.” Whichever song you choose the steady beat will help keep the children focused and you in control. As you practice, pretend to “see” the animal when you stop. Before long they will be “seeing” them too and suggesting different animals and movements. How about a trip to Outer Space? Or underwater?

Story Box AKA Coffee Can Theatre
Take and an empty box or coffee can or bag. Shake the container. Smell it. Pass it around – without opening it – and ask the children to guess (make predictions) about what might be inside. Then open the container, building excitement as you slowly remove each object. Examine the objects, discussing its attributes, size, color, texture, shape. Then, begin to use the objects to tell the story. As you do, incorporate the children’s ideas. Ask them questions to draw them into the process. It can be a story that you make up together or a familiar story like Goldilocks or from a book you have been reading.

Sample Story: Russian Folk Tale of the Giant Turnip
Once there was a farmer who planted a turnip seed. It grew & grew & GREW!!! He tried to pull it out of the ground but the turnip wouldn’t come out. So his wife held on to him and together they pulled but the turnip wouldn’t budge. Then the daughter and son and animals, from larger to smaller, tried but the turnip wouldn’t come out. At last the mouse offered to help. Everyone, working together and holding on to one another pulled and – Pop! – out came the turnip. There are many published versions of this story. Stories use science as inquiry. Think about process, choices, problem solving. Compare vegetables that grow above the ground and those that grow under the ground. Order by size. How many helpers did it take altogether to pull out the turnip?

Sample Story: Folk Tale of the Noisy, Crowded House
Once upon a time a farmer lived in a house that was very small & very noisy. Man goes to Wise person for help and is told to bring the animals inside, one at a time. It is even noisier. At last the Wise person tells him to put all the animals back outside into the barn. His house still has all the noises it started with but seems so much quieter in comparison. Peace and quiet at last! Adding repeated phrases or dialogue encourages the children to participate in the telling. Assess the children’s listening and observational skills by reviewing and retelling it with them. Math extensions include: Cardinal (1,2,3) or Ordinal numbers (1st, 2nd, etc.) Spatial Relationships (e.g., above, below, next to, beside, on top of, inside, outside) Number & Operations (More, fewer, How many altogether?) The children can become the animals from the story and show positional words in action; next to each other or beside, in front or behind. Use a die to decide how many of each animal was brought in. Visually graph the number of animals. Use blocks to demonstrate another way to visually graph. There are many versions of this folk tale including some wonderful picture books including Too Much Noise by Ann McGovern and A Big Quiet House by Heather Forest. Compare and contrast a book version with the story you told.

What about the story of the Three Little Pigs? Great opportunity to discuss different materials and their strengths. Try building “houses” and blowing them down! Think of stories and songs and rhymes you are already using and how you can connect them to multiple standards in the same lesson.
Full STEAM Ahead with Storytelling
Presented by Carrie Sue Ayvar, Storyteller/Cuentista
www.carriesueayvar.com csayvar@gmail.com

It is easy to connect the Florida Birth to 5 and VPK Standards to these activities. Here are a sampling of FL Birth to 5 standards you can easily connect to these activities!

APPLICABLE FL BIRTH TO 5 STANDARDS CONNECTIONS:

APPROACHES TO LEARNING
Domain: Approaches to Learning
Sub-Domain: Initiative & Curiosity – HS/CFR 1304.21(a)(1)-(a)(6)
Shows curiosity and is eager to learn new things and have new experiences Sustains attention for brief needed periods and finds help when needed
Sustains attention for brief periods and finds help when needed
Approaches daily activities with creativity and inventiveness
Shows initial signs of planning and learning from their experiences

LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION
Domain: Language Development - HS/CFR 1304.21(a)(4)(i)
Sub-Domain: Listening & Understanding
Listens to and understands spoken language
Shows understanding by following simple directions
Sub-Domain: Speaking & Communicating
Shows improving expressive communication skills
Shows increased vocabulary and uses language for many purposes

EARLY READING
Domain: Literacy- HS/CFR 1304.21(a)(4)(iii)
Sub-Domain: Book Knowledge & Appreciation
Shows an appreciation and enjoyment of reading
Sub-Domain: Phonological Awareness
Demonstrates beginning phonological awareness
Sub-Domain: Print Awareness & Concepts, Alphabet Knowledge & Early Writing
Shows awareness of letters and symbols
Sub-Domain: Book Knowledge & Appreciation
Demonstrates comprehension and responds to stories

EARLY WRITING
Domain: Literacy - HS/CFR 1304.21(a)(4)(i-iii)
Sub-Domain: Book Knowledge & Appreciation and Early Writing
Begin to use writing, pictures and play to express ideas

THE ARTS
Domain: Creative Arts- HS/CFR 1304.21(a)(4)(ii)
Sub-Domain: Music
Engages in music experiences
Sub-Domain: Movement & Dramatic Play
Engages in creative movement and dramatic play
PRO- SOCIAL BEHAVIORS & SELF-REGULATION
Domain: Social & Emotional Development - HS/CFR 1304.21(a)(3)i (A)-(E)
Sub-Domain: Cooperation
Joins in group activities experiences within early learning environments
Sub-Domain: Self-Control
Follows simple rules and familiar routines with support
Demonstrates awareness of group rules
Sub-Domain: Self-Control & Cooperation
Adapts to transitions with support
Sub-Domain: Social Relationships
 Begins to independently initiate and direct some experiences

SCIENTIFIC THINKING
Domain: Science - HS/CFR 1304.21(c)(1)(iv and v) and(a)(5)(i)
Sub-Domain: Scientific Knowledge
Demonstrates awareness of the environment around them
Sub-Domain:Scientific Skills and Methods
Uses senses to collect information through observation and exploration

MATHEMATICAL THINKING
Domain: Mathematics- HS/CFR 1304.21(a)(4)(iv)
Sub-Domain: Patterns & Measurement
Demonstrates interest in mathematical problem solving
Sub-Domain: Geometry & Spatial Sense
Sorts objects into groups by one characteristic
Sub-Domain: Number & Operations
Shows knowledge of numbers and counting
Sub-Domain: Geometry & Spatial Sense
Recognizes some geometric shapes
Shows beginning understanding of spatial relationships and position words
Sub-Domain:Patterns & Measurement
Demonstrates beginning ability to compare and contrast

GROSS MOTOR DEVELOPMENT
Domain: Physical Health & Development
Sub-Domain: Gross Motor Development - HS/CFR 1304.21(a)(5)(i); (a)(5)(iii); (b)(3)(i);
Demonstrates increasing control of large muscles
Demonstrates increasing coordination of large muscles

FINE MOTOR DEVELOPMENT
Domain: Physical Health & Development
Sub-Domain: Fine Motor Development - HS/CFR 1304.21(a)(5)(i); (a)(5)(iii); (b)(3)(i);