

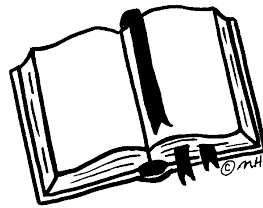


End of Spring Term 2014 Newsletter



“Ah...I remember making mud pies” one parent commented, seeing pictures of the children enjoying our “mud kitchen” in the garden, and that in my mind is what our job is all about: providing children with those everlasting memories that provide the building blocks with which to learn and develop.

So let this newsletter be a celebration of childhood and maybe a reminder how we as adults can embrace and learn from the simplicity of it.



Bookweek

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Thank you to all of those friends and a dfamily who gave up their time to come and share stories with us during book week. It was a welcome opportunity to learn new stories that many of us hadn't heard before.

We also enjoyed learning about your favourite books from home and the creative way in which you bring those tales alive: from art work to pictures of looking for trolls under various bridges.

Here's a little round up of the week's literary fun.



Charlie brings 'Rosie's Walk' to life, using props and makes links with his own hens at home



Sharing books from home., thanks to parents and grandparents of Nicky, Juno and Willian, plus a visit from the witch from 'Room on The Broom'.

Sharing our own favourite books between ourselves.



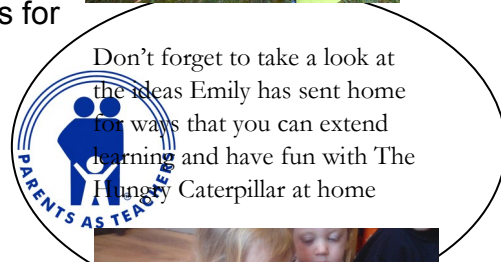
Encourage children to use the stories they hear in their play.

(EYFS: 'Reading' 22-36 months)

What have we been doing?

Emily has been using techniques from the Active Story making with the younger children as they've used story maps of 'The Gruffalo' and now 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' to allow them to read and re tell the story (see more under the story making section).

She has made links in their learning by taking them out on mini beast hunts for their own hungry caterpillars..but concluded it's still too early in the Season. However they have observed what is happening during Spring-time on their trips out



Don't forget to take a look at the ideas Emily has sent home for ways that you can extend learning and have fun with The Hungry Caterpillar at home



Support children's growing ability to express a wide range of feelings orally, and talk about their own experiences.

(EYFS :C&L: Speaking (positive relationships))

Gemma has been helping herself gain a better understanding of how she can support children's language acquisition by attending sessions with professional Speech therapists, and thus fulfil her role as language and communication sub-

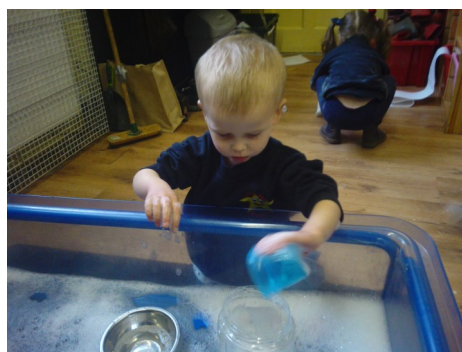
ject lead.

She's also been getting physical out in the woods, park and other walks around the village.



Abbie has been using water play to develop mathematical thinking: adding numbers, filling and emptying.

As joint lead in the Physical Development area of learning she has been challenging even her youngest key children to look at different ways of moving in the Great Outdoors.





Nadine has been using ideas and techniques from her forest school training back at the nursery with the children. They've been thinking about how to keep themselves safe whilst pushing themselves in managing their own risk taking. This training has been part of

Nadine's efforts to help the nursery gain the Department of Health Award (you can read more about this later in the newsletter)

"When planning and providing play opportunities, the goal is not to eliminate risk, but to weigh up the risks and benefit. No child will learn about risk if they are wrapped up in cotton wool"

Health and Safety Executive



Vicki after attending speech sounds training has been playing listening games in a way to help children discriminate sounds (eg loud/ soft).. Language has been extended by using open ended questions to develop conversation.

They've been helping each other in groups, constructing with different materials and creating new ideas.

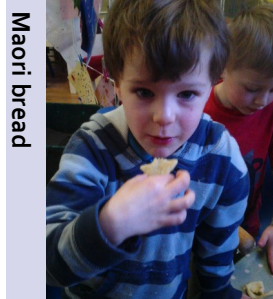


- Use a lot of statements and fewer questions. When you do ask a question, use an open question with many possible answers" (EYFS: 'Speaking' (Positive relationships))

Kate as lead in the area of development 'The World' has been making links between cooking activities and other countries and cultures, as we made biscuits from Australia and New Zealand bread. These then connected to other areas of learning: literacy and creativity as well as ICT as they learnt the story of 'How The Kangaroo got her pouch' through story maps and watching an aboriginal version on the computer and tried our hand at aboriginal style painting. The internet was also used as a source of information as we watched the traditional 'Haka' dance of the maori people. Her training day in using ropes and tree climbing has also made her examine how we support children to take and manage their own risks (see later in Nature School).



"Again! Again!"



Maori bread



Learning about melting



Aboriginal art

The glories of mud

The rainy Winter has certainly changed the shape of our garden: turning some areas into mud baths. So rather than trying to remedy it, we thought we should embrace the play potentials of mud in using the area positively.

Hence, as well as mud pies, cooked in our mud kitchen, pirates have been digging for treasure, bridges built over the

puddles, worms hunted for, experiments carried out into sinking or floating, as well of course as some good old digging work.

Why don't you see if there's a muddy corner in your garden that fills your child with such glorious fun!?

Do you have any old or unwanted kitchen utensils...spoons, saucepans, tins etc? Any donations for our mud kitchen welcomed



Har Har me hearties...William and Albi create themselves a pirate boat to navigate the treasure strewn muddy waters while Jess cooks up a treat.



"Arrange flexible indoor and outdoor space and resources where children can explore, build, move and role play."

(EYFS: characteristics of effective learning: playing and exploring)



CHATTER
MATTERS

Top Tip for Talking!

Puzzles and games can provide another everyday situation to maximise the use of language.

Make sure this time is quiet to help them focus on your words, undisturbed, and is not being masked by the television or phone. Jigsaws help to focus the mind and to talk about pictures or images. Playing any game with your child gives opportunity for conversation and talking.



“Play games which involve listening for a signal, such as ‘Simon Says’, and use ‘ready, steady...go!’

(EYFS: Communication and Language: Listening and attention)

Nature School

We started the term by designing our nature notebooks in which we can record what we find and see on our Nature School sessions. So far we have documented observing the frogspawn in the pond and other signs of Spring: from catkins to flower identification.

Following Nadine's forest school training and Kate's ropes and tree climbing session, we have been evaluating how we can challenge and stretch the children, and in turn increasing their confidence, independence and of course fun! We saw immediate effect this week as they helped themselves and each other. In this was the children become "active learners" rather than "helpless" ones.



What will YOU do this Easter?

We want to set you all a challenge to just try and do these 5 things outdoors this Easter. How many can you tick off? Do share your stories and pictures with us through your learning journals (and what's more each is free!)



1. Climb a tree
2. Find some tadpoles
3. Go on a Spring nature hunt (pick up a leaflet from above your trays)
4. Make a mud pie
5. Take a walk in the woods

(check out www.woodlandtrust.org.uk for places to explore and www.naturedetectives.org.uk)



Active Story making

As mentioned earlier, the Rising Stars have been using some of the techniques from the Active Story making project as they followed story maps of 'The Gruffalo' and 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar.'

The shooting stars have branched out in using actions and maps to tell the story of How the Kangaroo got its pouch as well as 'The Gingerbread

Man'. Sorry, there's been no performance this term but the older children are hoping to focus on 'The Enormous Turnip' after Easter so will schedule in an opportunity for friends and family to share what they have been doing.



Polly's fabulous snakes from 'The Gruffalo'

Thanks to those who donated for Sports Relief. The children did an amazing job walking the mile walk to the bottom of the lane and back, refuelling half way with a well earned drink and snack.



We have always been committed to providing yummy, healthy food for your children at Little Stars, so are now seeking to renew our Healthy Early Years status by entering our nursery for the DPH award (Department of Public Health).

Nadine has reviewed the menus to make them even more interesting and diverse and we are seeking to widen the amount of cooking the children do and the variety of recipes (not merely fairy cakes!). The purchase of a table top oven means they can become more involved in this process.

Nadine's forest school training will contribute towards the physical activity element and the funding that the award offers will be put towards new waterproofs (as ours are looking rather tired!) and resources for Forest School sessions.

Dates for your diary

Wednesday 2nd April: 2-3pm: Experiments afternoon. All welcome

Friday 4th April: Last day of school
Spring term.

Friday 18th, Monday 21st: Good Friday/
Easter Monday: NURSERY CLOSED

Tuesday 22nd April: School Summer term starts

DON'T FORGET: we will not be closing in the Summer this year

Festivals calendar

15th April: 1st day of
Passover (Jewish)

20th April: Easter
Sunday (Pagan and
Christian)



23rd April: St George's Day



Information sharing is really important to us as we want you to feel knowledgeable about what your children do at Little Star Nursery and why. We currently use learning journals and the "shining" stars, as well as newsletters and also updates on our Facebook page. However I appreciate that FB is not

used by everyone and also termly newsletters I feel do not do justice to the amount of great stuff going on each week. So it is my hope that over the Easter holidays the Little Star website will be re vamped to provide regular information, not only about what is happening at Little Star but also links to further information and websites that you may find interesting and useful, so watch this space.....



g	o	u	i	f	b



Returning after Easter, the Shooting Stars will be looking at set 3 of the jolly phonic sounds, weekly in the order shown.

Calling out for cuttings:

Next term we will be making our garden grow once again so if you have any donations of cuttings: either vegetables or flowers then we will put them to good use.

There is a garden in every childhood, an enchanted place where colors are brighter, the air softer, and the morning more fragrant than ever again. ~Elizabeth Lawrence