**Pre-school Play and Learning Newsletter for 13th – 17th January 2020**

**Teamwork, helpful, proud.**

Wonder words to use with your child:

**Play and Learning Highlights:**

 During the course of our week at pre-school we regularly observe moments of children’s interactions and play where our hearts melt and its clear that their social skills and empathy are developing in bucketful’s. This week has been full of moments such as these! Our focus on teamwork and helping each other has prompted even more of these attributes in the children and we have witnessed some great collaborative work, thinking of others and the pride and sense of achievement and wellbeing that comes from doing things with and for others. During the week we have introduced two mottos/mantras – ‘Teamwork makes us feel great!’ and ‘Helping helps happy feelings’ – which we intend to use throughout the year, emphasising to the children how working with and helping others can create feelings of wellbeing. These are important life lessons which we hope will help towards not only creating good citizens of the future but also install in them two simple habits which are proven to boost one’s wellbeing.

All the children have taken part in team challenges throughout the week – ranging from building towers together to creating posters to remind us of our mottos. A favourite activity has been the challenge of working as a team to fill numicon (a mathematical resource based on children recognising the shape of number quantities) baseboards with different shapes so that no spaces were left – a great way of encouraging spatial awareness as well. What has been lovely to observe is the way the children are beginning to encourage each other with praise and ‘we can do it’ remarks – they also love high fiving each other at the end!

Other highlights have been the addition of rice in the home corner – a highly popular roleplay resource which has been imaginatively used by the children, from tomato soup and milkshakes to magic cream that needed to be rubbed onto poorly knees! The Rock Pool area has had lots of opportunities for physical skills being developed with rockers and wobble boards, and a special mark making area just for them to explore.

**Out & About sessions:**

On Wednesday we visited the Outdoor Learning Area at Portreath School, plus explored the playground and what it had to offer to. The children spent ages playing on the number tracks and hopscotches and practiced lots of counting skills, both forwards and backwards. The theme of teamwork and helping each other was also focused on with the group supporting one of the children who decided to build a tractor from the open-ended resources which were available. The whole group also challenged themselves to jump from the large tractor tyres without any adult support. This was easier for some than others and greatly depended on the level of caution each child instinctively has. What was a joy to watch was how the other children encouraged and supported the children who were nervous of doing this – phrases like “You can do it!”, “Don’t give up” , “It will be ok” and offers to hold their hands or support the plank they were standing on. It was also wonderful to see the sense of pride that children felt when they built up the confidence and determination to do it – and succeeded!

 ***Sounds and Letters/language focus:***

We have introduced the skills of segmenting and blending cvc words (consonant – vowel – consonant words, e.g. c-a-t, s-i-t, h-o-p) with the children, through physical games where listening and tuning into what they can hear is emphasised. Our resident robot Metal Mike would say a word by breaking into the three separate sounds and the children had to ‘blend’ the sounds together in order to hear what the word was. This is a tricky but essential skill to master as it ensures that the phonic knowledge they learn at pre-school and school, will be able to be used successfully by them when they start the reading process.

The Starfish have played lots of fun games which have encourage them to work as a team and develop the tricky skill of waiting – even when you really, really want something! The older, established children have also been teaching our new members of pre-school our Golden Rules song, also with the help of a cheeky puppet who doesn’t always follow them!

***Ideas to support your child at home:***

*\** ***Teamwork makes us feel great!***

***Helping helps happy feelings!***

*Try using these at home with your child to reinforce these habits. Draw their attention to when someone else in the home has done one of these and encourage them to recognise the feelings they have when they’ve helped or worked as a team. With the very little Starfish encourage them to help yourself or others in the family – teaching and modelling to them what ‘helping’ means. Lots of specific praise for ‘being so helpful’ and ‘making others happy because you helped’ will support their understanding about this.*