**Pre-school Play and Learning Newsletter for 1st – 5th July 2019**

\*Our wonder words this week have been: **register, queue, looking forward, nervous, organise, excited, stir, bake, mix, ripe, worried.**

**Play and Learning Highlights:**

The story ‘The Little Mouse, The Red, Ripe Strawberry and The Big, Hungry Bear’ has been introduced to the children this week. This is a very old book which even some of the staff can remember being read to when they were little (*very old then! 😊).*  We decided to use it with the children as there has been so much excitement about the strawberries growing in our garden. The story has been so well received by the children and has been great for developing vocabulary, encouraging imagination and providing some super problem solving challenges. It just goes to show the old ones are often the best! In the story the mouse tries to find a way of protecting his red, ripe strawberry from the big hungry bear and the children were set the challenge of either building, creating or drawing their ideas for how to protect our strawberries from such a bear. What amazing ideas we witnessed!

Flowers, leaves and herbs were added to our playdough resource trolley this week and the children have spent the week using these additions to create some beautiful models, sculptures and cakes. This has been a great opportunity for develop fine motor skills as they placed tiny flowers and leaves on their creations. Communicating skills have also been used as many children have collaborated with friends whilst creating and so explaining their ideas has been essential.

**Out & About sessions:**

On Wednesday we visited Portreath School’s outdoor area. The children were challenged to create something – it could be anything they wanted! We had a ‘wibbly, wobbly pathway’, ‘a fire blower’, a ‘walk the plank obstacle course’ and ‘chocolate pancakes’ been created with all children making the most of the open ended resources on offer there. Thursday saw us at the little beach for a sandcastle building competition – which eventually became a seaweed discovery session! You never quite know what an Out & About session will involve! On Friday we spent the whole morning at the Little Woods bridge and stream, with snack at the viewing area – a lovely spot for a picnic!

 **Sounds and Letters/language focus:**

The letter sounds **c/k** and **n** have been reinforced this week as we noticed lots of children were unsure of these particular sounds during our overview of skills last week. We also played an old favourite of ‘Cross the River’ (don’t let your toes go into the river or the nabby crabbies will nibble them!) with a rhyming focus.

The older Starfish have focused on the Red, Ripe Strawberry book (mentioned above). They have been thinking about the mouse’s feelings at each stage of the story and about what he might say in response to the authors questions – a really good activity for encouraging empathy. The littlest Starfish have also looked at the book ‘Coming for Tea’ which is largely a picture book with a few words on each page. The intention of this book is to encourage the children to talk about what they can see in the pictures and link it to their own lives which is great for motivating little ones to talk and develop their communication skills.

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

**Playdough Fun!** All the children at pre-school LOVE playdough (and the adults are pretty keen on it too)! It is so versatile and a super resource for developing finger muscle strength and control, plus a lovely sensory experience.

**Easy Peasy Playdough recipe:** *No cooking involved!*

½ cup of salt

1 cups of plain flour

2 tbsp of cream of tartar (can be found in the baking aisle in supermarket)

1 tbsp oil (Olive, veg or sunflower)

½ cup of hot water

Mix all together (add water a bit at a time). Add food colouring or ‘smelly’ essences (e.g. peppermint, lemon, vanilla). Leave to cool for a few mins before letting your child explore it.

Ideas for what to add to their play:

Cupcake cases, blunt knives, bowls, plates, small twigs, leaves, flowers, herbs, baking tins, pebbles, pinecones, pipe cleaners, ear buds (clean ones! 😊) – and any thing else that takes their fancy!