**Pre-school Play and Learning Newsletter for 3rd – 7th February 2020**

**Once upon a time, terrified, happily ever after**

Wonder words to use with your child:

**Play and Learning Highlights:**

This week has been National Storytelling Week - a great prompt for encouraging the use of oral storytelling with the children. We have focused our activities and play experiences on an adapted version of a well known story, using the children’s eternal favourite topic of ‘dinosaurs’. The story of ‘The 3 Little dinosaurs and the Big, Bad Tyrannosaurus Rex’ has been told all week long, through oral storytelling and using props to help hold the children’s attention and interest. They have loved it! They have all been chanting, ‘Well I’ll stomp and I’ll roar and I’ll knock your house down!” and have enjoyed the boisterous, physical nature of the story, joining in with the actions and words.

 The older children’s story has had different endings with the children discussing how the Big, Bad T-Rex might be feeling and what he could do instead of knocking the houses down. They have also explored building houses which are strong enough to withstand the T-Rex.

The sand pits have been ‘Dinosaur Worlds’ with plants, sticks, leaves and bricks to provide opportunities for the children to retell the stories themselves, build homes for the dinosaurs and make up their own stories. Small world play is great for encouraging story making and even the very youngest children at pre-school create stories using these sorts of resources, often seen through the action of their play rather than words at this stage.

Dinosaur tea parties with playdough, dinosaur decorating on the Creating Table and lots of roleplay fun outside involving . . . dinosaurs! We can see this interest running for a long time 😊!

**Out & About sessions:**  We had a wild, windy session in Greenfield Gardens on Tuesday – superhero flying with capes and exploring the direction of the wind was part of the fun plus a quick trip to the playpark where the children very sensibly decided that using the climbing frame wasn’t the best idea in the windy weather. It is amazing how sensible 3 and 4 year olds can be when you give them the freedom to make decisions but encourage a moments thought about when they are doing. Great for developing their awareness of how to keep themselves safe.

Sunny sessions midweek found us at the big beach creating ‘Dinosaur Land’ with resources we found on the beach. This then led to story telling and the children deciding with the children coming up with ingenious ideas for how the T-Rex wouldn’t knock their houses down. And a lovely expedition to a place we haven’t visited for a while – the woods. We had lots of fun searching for sign of dinosaurs and discovered 6 which had escaped from pre-school!! It was also great to try out pooh stick games at the new bridge.

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

Dinosaur names have been a brilliant resource for playing listening games and exploring sounds within words. We have clapped out the syllables whilst finding out which dinosaur name is the longest, and hunted for dino cookies which begin with the same sound as the dinosaur’s name.

The Starfish have developed their language skills and vocabulary around the dinosaur story, plus have been singing lots of dinosaur songs with actions; encouraging attentive listening so they know which action to do when.

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

* Practice singing the ‘5 Little Dinosaurs’ song which is on the sheet we have sent home this week. When singing number songs ALWAYS use your fingers to show and model how the amounts change and encourage your child to copy you or do it themselves. Recent research has shown that the part of the brain linked to maths is close to the part of the brain linked to numbers and using your fingers to help workout probs, represent numbers etc, is proven to help strengthen mathematical learning.

