**Pre-school Play and Learning Newsletter for 6th – 10th January 2020**

**Favourite, similar, same, different, unique, prefer.**

Wonder words to use with your child:

**Play and Learning Highlights:**

 Happy New Year and a very warm welcome to the new little ones and their families who have joined the pre-school crew this week! It has been lovely to see how well they’ve coped with their first sessions and how the establish crew have welcomed them into the setting, showing them the ropes and being friendly and kind to them.

This week has been all about ‘favourites’ – talking about and showing our favourite Christmas presents to our friends (and developing some great explaining and describing skills whilst we did it), talking about our favourite areas to play in at pre-school (interestingly the Creating Area), choosing our favourite colours of paint to create pictures, and creating tally charts of our favourite colours (a definite favourite activity of many children – they love the importance of carrying a clip board around and recording everyone’s choices!). Through all of these activities the focus has been on extending the children’s language skills and developing their confidence to talk within a group, introducing new vocabulary and encouraging the children to attentively listen to their friends.

Our newly acquired den in the Rock Pool area (bought with money allocated to us through a community grant) has been very popular with the Starfish children and is proving a lovely spot for a cosy chat with friends or story sharing session. It is filled with many soft, tactile fabrics which are very inducive to snuggly up and relaxing in – even the adults like spending time in there . It is a great space for encouraging the younger ones to talk to each other and hold conversations, an important social skill, and is known as a ‘communication friendly space’.

. The children never fail to amaze us with their creations using the open-ended resources we put out with the playdough – and this week has been no exception. Christmas tree branches, rosehips and pinecones have been used in all sorts of different ways to create hedgehogs, Ruldoph, Dumbo, cupcakes and bunny rabbits to name but a few. The concentration the children demonstrate whilst in engaged in this sort of creating is always very impressive – its wonderful to observe such deep involvement in the creation process.

**Out & About sessions:**

On Thursday we set off for the beach with the task of counting all the red cars we saw along the way. The children all predicted how many they thought they would see and the task soon become widened to include other types of red vehicles. This is a great game to play to encourage *your child to keep a running total in their heads and begin to understand the concept of one more. On arrival at the beach the heavens opened, and our Out & About adventure became a VERY wet one! We continued the counting fun though and also developed our listening skills through noticing all the different sounds associated with the heavy rain (pitter, patter, splish, splash and gurgling down drains).*

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

*This week the flying fish have focused on the articulation of different sounds – copying and adapting their voices and mouth shapes to create different sounds and effects. This is an important skill to practice as it helps them develop an awareness of how where they put their tongue/change the shape of their mouth affects the sound they achieve – very important for correct pronunciation of sounds. We have also been playing I spy games with the robot Metal Mike and his strange taste in foods.*

 *The Starfish have been talking about their favourite Christmas presents to their friends, voting on which songs and stories they would ‘prefer’, and talking about how our likes are ‘similar’ or ‘different’ to each other.*

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

*\* Try creating a ‘den’ at home using blankets and cushions. Small spaces are great for encouraging communication with children. They will often use the space in their games, e.g. pretending it’s a castle, or a house and love the enclosed nature of them. The acoustics in such a small space works really well for children too and means that it’s easier for them to hear what someone else is saying, plus you hearing what they are saying too.*

*\*Talk about ‘favourite’ things at home. A nice question to ask your child at teatime or on the way home – “What was your favourite part of the day?” or “What was the best thing you did today?”. Use the word ‘prefer’ when you are offering your child a choice – “Which would you prefer – strawberries or grapes?”*