Play & Learning Newsletter

6th– 10th October 2025

Straw, sticks, bricks, hay bale, secure, stable, first, second, third.

Wonder words to use with your child:

We have continued our focus on the story of The Three Little Pigs this week with us focusing more on houses and homes. The Flying Fish children have been working on challenges to build homes that can’t be blown down by the wolf (the hairdryer!). This has been great for encouraging problem solving, coming up with ideas and thinking through what they are doing – all essential skills for being a successful learner. Watching the cause and effect of the hairdryer being used on their house has provide opportunities for talking about their observations and making comparisons between the strength of theirs and their friend’s houses.

The children have also been thinking about their own houses and whether they have stairs or no stairs and then recording this on a questionnaire sheet so they could ask their friends and the adults too. This prompts talk between the children and having to listen to their friends and think about what they have said – all things you need to do when you have a conversation – a very important social skill.

We have been practicing our subitising. This is where children instantly recognise small groups of items/objects without having to count them and is a skill which they are actually born with but, with well meaning input, they lose due to adult’s obsession with them having to count everything! It ensures that children have an image of, for example ‘the three-ness of three’ in their minds and enables them to see numbers within numbers which supports all mathematical operations. It is fascinating to see in it in action and also to see how it plays a huge part in children becoming confident and competent future mathematicians, from now and into adulthood. It’s been really interesting to see how the children who were given lots of opportunities to develop it last year are now whizzes with it and are applying it to their number knowledge of all numbers! At the moment we are focusing on getting the children to become confident in instantly recognising 1, 2 and 3 quantities, and seeing pictures of objects and knowing instantly if it is, for example, 3 or not 3. We have spent a lot of time saying “What do you see?” when we are looking at things, instead of “How many are there?” - you may hear your children saying this at home 😊.

Other highlights this week have included:

* Baking buddies, this week some of our children made rock cakes for all the pre-school crew. We used wheat free flour and dairy free milk due to allergies/intolerances and it seemed to work well. They really enjoyed the experience and told their friends what they had to do to make them and it made pre-school smell amazing.
* Some amazing construction building with loose parts – magnets, logs, drain pipes etc. Concrete experience such as construction with loose parts provide meaningful everyday experience and exploration that are child led and occur naturally. It also encourages problem solving and open ended learning.
* Exploring colours in the garden with spray bottle with paint, powdered paint and water, brushes, pipets and rollers was a huge hit and kept all the children engaged all afternoon – see pictures on Tuesdays facebook post.



***Sounds and Letters/language focus:*** This week we have been focusing on developing the children’s awareness of rhythm in songs by either clapping or moving their bodies to it. We have learnt a new song which has proved to be a bit of an ‘ear worm’ called ‘Swing me over the water’. The children have to swing their partners arms in time with the rhythm and (if we are feeling really brave) then swing themselves round to another partner!

The Starfish have also enjoyed singing songs and tuning into the actions that they need to be doing as they sing them thereby developing their listening and coordination skills. They have also acted out the three little pigs story in the garden, joining in with the repeat refrains and actions.

**Out & About sessions:** We managed three out and about to the little beach. Children had to build a home for their little pig out of natural materials and we re-enacted the story using our props. This was very much enjoyed and many went home to tell their parents what they had done. They loved to have the open space to run freely and exert themselves.

Ideas to support your child at home:

**Subitising** is something you can support your child with at home, no matter what their age. If you can be pointing out 1, 2 or 3 things to your child by saying for example, ‘I see 3’ and then NOT counting them this will greatly help their visual image of these amounts. **The aim is for them to instantly recognise the amounts of 1,2 and 3 without having to count them** – and be able to put that many fingers up without having to count. Again, you can do this at home by using your fingers to represent these amounts when asking them to take that many things, e.g. ‘You can have 2 strawberries’ – show them the amount on your fingers rather than getting them to count them out. At the moment we are only doing this with 1, 2 and 3 as it is essential they have these amounts firmly in their heads before moving onto other numbers.

## National Literacy Trust Take 10 to read - About the campaign

Take 10 is a campaign from the National Literacy Trust to promote the mental wellbeing benefits of reading.

We know you know the benefits of reading. The right words can spark a child’s imagination, calm their minds and improve their wellbeing – and the magic happens when they read about what interests them.

You can join in at home, too. Finding time to read together is a great way to build special memories and help you both relax.

Whether it’s a book about unicorns, a superhero comic or an adventure story about a child just like yours, spark their imagination and boost their wellbeing. Try it for 10 minutes today and see where it takes you.

For more information on Take 10 or to get involved head over to: <https://literacytrust.org.uk/take-10/>