Play & Learning Newsletter

4th – 7th May 2021

Happiness, sadness, fear, calm, peaceful, angry, scared, confused, loving, relaxed, tranquil

Wonder words to use with your child:

This has been our last week of our focus on ‘feelings’ and we have spent time thinking about things that make us feel happy, calm and loved. The colour monster has also needed our help to become yellow (happy) or pink (loved) again after turning black (fear), blue (sad) or red (angry). Every time the children came up with an idea for how to help him turn back to yellow or pink, a bit more of that colour would appear on his body. There were some really lovely ideas being given by the children, demonstrating their developing awareness of how they can help themselves regulate their emotions.

We have also been sharing the story ‘Dogger’ by Shirley Hughes to talk about how/why of different characters feelings and their emotions. This is a really old story (written in 1977!) but is such a lovely one and perfect for talking about emotions and the consequences of actions. Highly recommended.

Music is something that evocates so many emotions and this week the children have been painting to lively, ‘happy’ music. There was lots of hip swaying and jiggling to beats from some of our World Music tracks. A very enjoyable activity!

Other highlights this week have included rice – and lots of it! (Although I’m not sure our lovely cleaner will agree with that 😊). It is such a great sensory resource and extremely versatile – and one that never fails to draw children into playing with it. The Rock Pool Area has seen scooping, bulldozering and shovelling with some of our Starfish children’s favourite construction vehicles. This sort of play experience is wonderful encouraging talk among friends as they work to create mounds of rice together and there has been some lovely language being used over the builders tray. There has also been lots of cooking in the home corner with the children using the rice to make recipes from the cookery books available in this area. We always notice that this area of the pre-school gets used so much more when we add a sensory material in it!

 **Out & About sessions:** This week we went exploring in the ‘Big Woods’ (Illogan Woods) and found a natural play area (which lots of the children called ‘the woods play park’) with logs, fallen tree trunks and a perfect wall to use for jumping and climbing. This provided the ideal environment for the children to practice their confidence and independence whilst developing their physical skills. It was lovely to watch their confidence grow as they became braver about jumping off the wall. There were lots of high fives for getting over nerves and giving it a go.

We also went along ‘the high path’ and spent time admiring the view below, the pattern of the leaves above and listening to the natural sounds. We sat with our eyes closed and breathed in the smells, gaining that sense of tranquillity and calmness that being among trees can give us.

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

This week the Flying Fish have learnt the letter sounds o and u, identifying it at the beginning of words and having a go a t writing them in the air and on each others backs (always a fun way to gently encourage the beginnings of writing these letters).

The Starfish have been sharing stories where ‘feelings’ are a prominent part of the narrative. The children have been recognising how the characters in the story are feeling and why they feel that way. They have also helped some of our puppets to solve problems where they have felt angry or scared about something.

Ideas to support your child at home:

The next time you are in the woods for a walk encourage your child to look out for things they can use to climb up, balance on and jump from. Stop for a while and let them explore these natural resources. We know it’s hard but try really hard to stop yourself from saying ‘be careful’ and instead say things like ‘think about how you can keep yourself safe’ or ‘watch where you are putting your feet’. Praise them for using their ‘balancing’ skills and when they have had a go at something they weren’t too sure about. These are all skills which today’s children are sadly less competent in compared to previous generations. Our little ones are so lucky to live in an environment where they can have these important experiences!