Play & Learning Newsletter

9th – 13th November 2020

Diwali, shadow, transparent, solid, blocks (the light)

Wonder words to use with your child:

This Saturday is the Hindu and Sikh festival of Diwali – a festival that celebrates light over darkness and is centred around a story involving a prince (Rama), a princess (Sita), a wicked monster (Ravana) and a very helpful monkey (Hanuman); all the ingredients of an enticing story for pre-schoolers! We used a shadow puppet show to tell the story – which the children loved. This in turn has led to lots of play and learning opportunities for exploration with shadow and lights, using our shadow board, torches, perspex blocks and various other resources. We have though about what lets light through and what blocks light and how we can create different colours. We have also been able to use an OHP which was kindly donated to us by a parent last year and which we were able to get repaired. The children have been fascinated by it and it has been a great stimulus for developing language and observational skills.

Although none of our children celebrate Diwali it is extremely important that they begin to understand that everyone has different experiences in the world but that there are similarities between our experiences that make us the same as well. Comparing how people celebrate different festivals is a great way of prompting this thinking and the Cbeebies programme ‘Let’s Celebrate’ is a great way to provide examples of how different festivals are celebrated by children when we may not have any first hand examples in the setting. The children have really enjoyed watching the Diwali one this week and it’s well worth watching again with your child, and can be found on the Cbeebies website. There are three short videos to watch – with the last one being a shadow puppet show which tells the story (it was slightly different to the one we performed but is still the same message).

Thank you to everyone who brought in torches for the week. The children have loved using them in our dark den reading tents and for treasure hunts in the playground. They have been great for them to develop their ‘explaining’ skills as well when they have told us how to make them work and how they work.

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



We are continuing with our focus on rhyming and are encouraging the children to create rhyming strings and match rhyming words, using different games as a stimulus for developing these skills. Our favourite game is ‘Magic Box’ at the moment – a special box which ‘unlocks’ when the children say a magic spell. Inside they find objects which rhyme (most of the time!) – a great game for encouraging them to distinguish between rhyming and non-rhyming words.

Ideas to support your child at home:

When it starts to get dark - let them loose with a torch! All children LOVE a torch – especially in a dark room or garden. Encourage your child to find specific things with their torch. You could play a torch treasure hunt where you put a specific toy/object somewhere in a dark room/garden and they have to use their torch to find it. This is a good game for encouraging positional language – e.g. have you shone your torch up high, down low, behind the table, under the bed etc.

Alternatively sing a number song using a light to create shadows of your hand on a wall – encourage your child to count your shadow fingers!