Play & Learning Newsletter

11th – 15th January 2021

Gingerbread, oven, catch,

Sly, foolish, trusted

Wonder words to use with your child:

Over the next few weeks we are going to be using the story of The Gingerbread Man to inspire our group time activities and some of the play and learning experiences on offer to the children. We have decided to spend more time on ‘themes’ or ‘topics’ from now on as we feel that only spending one week isn’t long enough for the children to really absorb and get to grips with the vocabulary, language and concepts involved in that particular focus. All of the staff team have recently taken part in training from the ‘I CAN’ organisation which is centred around children’s communication and language development. It has been an excellent course and one of the things we learnt was that the vocabulary a child has at the age of 5 is an indicator of their future success at 30. Yet again the message is clear – the experiences they have in their early years education has a huge impact in future life. Our hope is that by focusing on our ‘wonder words’ over several weeks they are more likely to absorb and then use them – and be firmly placed in their vocabulary bank.

The children have loved retelling the story in lots of different ways, orally, physically and through using props and small world characters. They particularly enjoy singing the rhyme ‘Run, run as fast as you can, you can’t catch me, I’m the gingerbread man!’. We have done lots of sequencing of the events of the story which is helping the children to use words like ‘first, then’ to retell the story – really important for helping them be able to explain things and be able to talk about events in the right in order.

Every day we have made fresh playdough – strong infused with the spice of ginger! There have been lots of gingerbread men being made through the week and some of these have been used in the children’s small world play – catching a lift on pirate ships and fire engines has been one of their adventures!

On Thursday afternoon, due to very small numbers of children, we were able to make gingerbread men with the children. Each child had their own baking utensils and separate ingredients so we could be as safe as possible from mixing of germs. They really enjoyed creating a dough to roll out and were keen to eat them before they ran away! It has reminded us of how much children get out of baking and cooking, and how much we miss our baking buddies sessions (where a small group of children cooked for all the children). Oh, hurry up and disappear Covid – you are spoiling so many things we love to do!!

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



This week the Flying Fish children have been introduced to the letter sound ‘m’ and have spent time exploring objects which begin with this sound and playing games which focus them on distinguishing the difference between m and ‘s’ and ‘p’. We have also been playing action games which are linked to movement sounds and have focused the children on moving their mouths and tongues into the correct places to help them make these sounds.

Ideas to support your child at home:

Make some gingerbread men/ladies/animals!

We guarantee your child will love doing this with you – and everyone will enjoy the results!

Ingredients:

100g salted butter

3 tbsp golden syrup

100g dark muscovado sugar

½ tsp bicarbonate of soda

1 tbsp ginger

1 tsp ground cinnamon

225g plain flour

50 icing sugar (to decorate with) – or raisins for eyes, buttons etc.

Method:

Heat oven to 190c/gas mark 5 and line a baking tray with baking paper.

Sieve the flour, bicarb, ginger and cinnamon into a large bowl.

Heat the butter, sugar and syrup until dissolved (we just mixed these together in a bowl without heating and they were fine – we did use margarine though!).

If heated up, leave the sugar mixture to cool slightly. Then mix the dry ingredients in to make a dough. (We kneaded it into our sugar mixture and added a tiny bit more golden syrup to make it stick together).

Once cool, roll out the dough on a lightly floured surface and stamp out the shapes you have cutters of.

Place your biscuits on the lined trays and cook for 10 -15 mins. Remove from the oven and leave to cool.

Enjoy!