Play & Learning Newsletter

17th – 21st January 2022

**Café, menu, waiter, chef, choose, bill, waiting, tray, customer**

Wonder words to use with your child:

The focus on food has continued this week with the story ‘Happy Harry’s Café’ by Michael Rosen. This story has some fun rhyming names and a song about soup at the end where the characters in the book form a band. The children have had fun creating our own food song, this time about spaghetti and formed their own band to perform the song, beating their instruments in time to the rhythm of it. They have enjoyed performing it to each other on a stage that they built from wooden blocks too. Lots of great opportunities for developing their listening and collaborative skills in these activities plus experiencing the joy of working as a team to create something.

The story naturally lent itself to having a café in the role play area and we have linked our group activities to the vocabulary and experiences of cafes which the children have really taken on board, demonstrated by their own initiated play in this area. There has been lots of mark making with orders being taken, chef’s busy cooking food and waiters carefully balancing plates and cups on trays. The Flying Fish have been counting out pennies to pay for their meals and both groups have developed memory skills in the Café Song where they have had to remember what their customers ordered when finding the correct food to bring to their table. This play has also been replicated outside with a café in our sand kitchen area.

When the children have been particularly engaged in an area or resource we often leave it out for the following week but add another element to it to take their skill/ learning development on to another level. This week saw us doing that to the junk modelling with the addition of wrapping paper, foil and bubble wrap which has led to some interesting creations and LOTS of presents being wrapped (and unwrapped). A treasure chest with gold coins and other shiny items, plus play food was added to the Pirate ship play which led to a pirate café and lots of play around treasure and it being stolen or found!

 ***Sounds and Letters/language focus:*** The letter sound ‘p’ has been introduced to the Flying Fish children this week through our sound box. The children have spent time looking at their mouths in mirrors when saying this sound and noticing the difference in how their mouths look when they say ‘s’.

The Starfish children have developed listening and language skills through singing and taking part in the café song activity where they have to use language to say which cake they would like to choose from the menu (e.g. I would like to have the round one with sprinkles on please.) and listen to what their customer has said so that they bring them the correct cake. This sounds a lot easier than it actually is when you are little. Lots of concentration was needed!

 **Out & About sessions:** This week we managed two trips to the little beach, one on Monday and one on Thursday. We took a bag of different resources with us this week, initially with the idea of creating a beach café. However, as often is the way with young children, our pre-school crew came up with all sorts of other things to use the resources for and became very absorbed in their own ideas and games! We had fire pits, camp fires, frisbee throwing, cake decoration and treasure burying to name but a few – lots of very absorbed and involved children deeply engaged in their play!

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| Ideas to support your child at home: Every single child at pre-school has enjoyed playing in the café, taking on the role of one of the ‘jobs’ and using the ‘language’ of cafes. This is a great game to play to encourage lots of skills that will support your child’s development. Mark making as they take your order (an old notebook or paper on a clipboard is perfect for this) – expect to see lots of ‘pretend writing’ (lots of lines and squiggles but the beginnings of an important concept for children to understand that marks have meaning), careful listening to what others are saying, physically being able to balance their bodies whilst carrying a tray, counting out how many drinks/cakes etc. a customer wants and increasing their vocabulary with specific words and phrases. All whilst playing a game! Set up a café with your child and spend a little time playing it with them. Take it in turns to be a waiter/customer, maybe use their teddies to be customers too. Having an outside café is even more fun! |