Play & Learning Newsletter

18th – 22nd January 2021

Gingerbread, oven, catch,

Sly, foolish, trusted, bakery

Wonder words to use with your child:

We have continued with our focus on The Gingerbread Man story, using elements of the story to inspire mathematical ideas and inspire creativity. The children are all demonstrating a great awareness of the language involved in the story and can now retell it with ease. We have also introduced the ‘sequel’ to the story – The Gingerbread Man 2 and this has been as enthusiastically received as the first one!

Mega blocks and the small world characters from the story in the sand tray has encouraged the children to construct different structures for the Gingerbread man including bridges and houses. It has also given the children opportunities for them to use the language of the story in their play which has been lovely to hear.

The children have also been busy playing number games using gingerbread men. Some have involved buttons and dice and thinking about ‘more’ and ‘less’, with the children making comparisons between theirs and friends decorated gingerbread men. We’ve also had a fun game which involves moving closer and closer to the sly fox as the move along a number track. Both games have encouraged careful counting and consideration of how rolling different numbers on the dice will affect what happens to them in the game – the beginnings of strategical thinking!

‘The Gingerbread Man 2’ has been wonderful for providing some ‘awe’ around numbers, as the Fox bakes 100 gingerbread men! On Friday we worked as a team to gather 100 things so that we could ‘see’ and experience how big a number it was. There were lots of ‘wow’s and gasps when we had finished! 100 is such a big number and obviously not one that many pre-schoolers learn to count to, however it is always one that holds a certain mystical quality to it (in little people’s minds!). Talking to children about big numbers is a great way to inspire an interest in maths.

And finally, The Pre-school Bakery, has been busy baking all week long creating all sorts of baked goodies and treats. There has been lots of talk about favourite types of cakes and biscuits – and lots of talk about how much they cost. Let’s just say it may not be the cheapest bakery but definitely the yummiest!

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



Lots of games played this week to help the children tune into distinguish and sorting words that begin with s, m or p sounds. The children have been driving a bus full of animals to different letter houses, making sure they have dropped them off at the correct house. We have also played the game ‘Cross the River’ which involves leaping across a river (in this case it was a river of fire as we couldn’t find the blue scarf!) when they hear the sound that the object they are holding begins with. The aim is to get across the river without falling in.

The Starfish have been playing the games ‘What’s in the bag’ to support language development and talking about the who/what/where of different objects.

Ideas to support your child at home:

On Monday we shared a video that Louise made, showing the children how to play a game with dice and ‘buttons’ for a gingerbread man. The aim of the game is to support your child’s understanding of ‘more’ and ‘less’, plus give them practice of counting carefully. When we played it with the ‘home’ children on zoom sessions we found that it worked particularly well if they could eat the things they would be using for buttons!

A quick and fun alternative to the game would be to let your child count out 10 (or more if they are confident with bigger numbers) raisins/cereal pieces/cut up grapes etc and let them roll a dice. They can eat the number that they roll. Before they roll again, get them to count how many they have left. They can only roll that number on the dice to be able to eat the rest. Great for counting for a purpose!