Play & Learning Newsletter

22nd – 26th March 2021

Hatch, chicks, secure, lined, twigs, beak, tail feathers, weave

Wonder words to use with your child:

Birds, eggs and nests have continued to be a focus this week, with the addition of the book ‘Song Birds’ which incorporates lots of lovely ‘sound’ words and great opportunities for counting and simple calculating. The children have been fine tuning their listening skills to be able to copy the sounds that the birds in the story make, an activity which is good for promoting the skills needed for learning and using phonics.

Group time sessions have been spent going ‘bird spotting’ in the garden (using our binoculars to spot the blue tits, robins and house sparrows hiding in the bushes etc. When the children found one, they had to decide which nest it belonged to by matching it to the correct picture. Tally charts have also been used to record the blackbirds, magpies and woodpigeons that ‘flew’ past the children. Both activities have asked the children to use their observation skills really carefully, thereby encouraging concentration and thinking skills.

The aroma of chocolate has wafted through the pre-school with chocolate playdough in our role play Chocolate Shop. The children have had to make and fill chocolate boxes with specific numbers of chocolates. With the addition of coloured cellophane pieces and foil, we have had some lovely looking chocolates delivered to us throughout the week.

Physical skills have been developed this week with climbing up steps and stools to draw on our paper wall, spinning in the large spinning top and developing core muscles and balance on the balance boards. Our staff training on Sensory Integration on Friday reiterated and reconfirmed for us in the importance of giving children lots of opportunities for large scale physical movements. Now, more than ever, this is so important due to little ones not being able to access soft play areas, playgrounds and other places where they can leap, swing, roll, balance, spin, slide, climb freely. These movements are essential in ensuring that their body is more readily set up for being able to concentrate and pay attention, plus deal with the sensory overload of today’s busy environments.

Other highlights this week have included lots of lovely collaborative construction work with wooden blocks, boxes and planks outside, using magnetic tiles to build bird houses and egg boxes and interesting discussions about real nests prompted by one found in Clara’s driveway and Rebekah’s garden.

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

This week we have focused on the skill of ‘segmenting’ cvc words (e.g. mud, tip, hat) to hear the separate sounds within the word. This is an essential skill for being able to use your phonic knowledge to be able to spell simple words (a big focus in Reception and Year 1). The children have played games with Metal Mike and jumping races to help develop this skill.

The Star fish have enjoyed spending time listening to the story ‘Song Birds’ and copying the sounds that the different birds make.

Ideas to support your child at home:

Try to provide your child with as many opportunities as you can to let them do the large-scale movements that we talked about earlier. Climbing, sliding, rolling, spinning, hanging, bouncing, jumping off things etc are all incredibly important movements that young children need to be doing to ensure that their ability to concentrate, self-regulate and pay attention (all ESSENTIAL skills for learning) are being developed.

So trips to the play park to swing and slide, the woods to climb trees and the beach to jump off rocks and scramble over the rock pools are all really important, as are lots of bike riding, trampoline bouncing, scooting and general large scale movement and challenge - especially given the limited opportunities they have had for soft play experiences (where all these skills are continually practised!).

We have shared a TED Talks video on the closed facebook page which is really worth watching when you have 5 minutes.