



PRESCHOOL AND CHILDCARE CLUBS NEWSLETTER

February already!.. Although I am sure it feels like this year is going very slowly, at least the snow was a welcome distraction! If anyone has any photos of things you have been up to in the snow, or just at home, please feel free to share them with us! I know if you are at home with your children you are probably doing lots of things to keep everyone entertained, and we really do appreciate how tough this is for all of you.

Term dates... We will break up for half term on Friday 12th February at 3.00 or 2.45 depending which session times you are on. We will re-open on 22nd February.

Lock Down... I don't need to tell you that this continues and I can imagine you will be thinking, following Boris announcing Schools will not be re-opening before 8th March, (and as we all know this date could change), I wonder if I should/ could send my child back to Preschool, if you are not attending. This question was asked at a managers meeting with Oxfordshire County Council last week "Should we be encouraging families to send their children to Preschool?" The answer was " We are open to ALL children, however families should keep their children home if they can!" So this is about as contradictory as possible.

Currently we have around 2 thirds of our families attending but on reduced hours. This is allowing us to mitigate the risk to staff and families by having small groups of children and consistent staffing attending which is hopefully enabling us to stay open, especially for Key workers but also other families that are working from home whilst supporting older siblings that are home. We are also able to use flexible furlough which supports our sustainability for coming generations of families within our community. Without testing or vaccinations for staff, we are doing the best we can. We are trying to get testing for staff the same as Schools and Maintained Nurseries have, but to no avail as yet!

We also asked families that were due to start to hold off starting with us, a while longer, to further also reduce risk.

I would hate anyone to feel deserted, and we are very conscious we have not seen some of you for a long time now. If we can help or support you in any way please let me know. I have avoided sending you endless activities to do as there is so much out there however I do attach some resources at the bottom of this letter. We are also using Facebook and Instagram to share ideas of things we are doing in Preschool which you could also do at home and anything we see that may be of interest to you.

General Activity ideas and web links-

This might be useful if you can access YouTube;

<https://abcdoes.com/home-learning/> lots of easy ideas here, also has some blogs regarding boys writing etc.....

<https://abcdoes.com/abc-does-a-blog/2020/03/31/abc-does-a-story-silly-billy-by-anthonybrowne/> sweet little story about a worried little boy who made some worry dolls

Fine motor activities- This is the stage our Preschool children will be in terms of writing- Often parents worry their child is not writing or holding a pencil correctly but there is so much more children must master before this! Much of it is physical too, so anything that develops muscles will support fine motor skills. We have been doing “Dough Gym” at preschool:-

[Dough Disco clips](#)

Below are some ideas for how to strengthen hands while playing with homemade playdough (you will need to make your playdough first), it includes lots of songs that children already know and love -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DrBsNhwxyzgc> If You're Happy and You Know It

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KSBO8N4ctJg&t=3s> Itsy Bitsy Spider

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1JaF0mjG4e8> Twinkle Twinkle Little Star

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=re8AJ-Kd5P4> I Know An Old Woman That Swallowed A Fly

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cO56n89izQs> Hickory Dickory Dock

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ocFu_ZFgQi4 The Ants Go Marching

<http://mamaot.com/fine-motor-activities-using-household-items/> This is a link if you want to know more about fine motor skills and how to support them.

Draw simple shapes, numbers, letters of name, and patterns on paper

You can also tear small pieces of paper and roll into small balls between thumb and fore finger which is also good for strengthening the finger muscles in prep for writing.

Take some photos of finished sheets to share or glue pieces on.



This helps hand and eye co-ordination...

Use string, ribbon, wool, sticks, and pipe cleaners. Thread with beads, cheerio's, pasta tubes of different sizes or make shapes from card and make a hole in the middle. You can also cut out a large shape and use a hole punch to make holes around the or

card. Use buttons, beads, small pasta, rice grains. Cover the lines, using thumb and fore finger (like a pinch grip) to pick up individual items. edge to thread through string, wool

Cut out or find pictures of favourite characters to thread etc....



Your child may be interested in Numbers and Number recognition.. when you're out walking look for numbers and just talk about what you

see!

Speech and language web links and activities

These are some simple fun games which help develop language, build confidence and raise self-esteem and are FUN!!

Describing and guessing games

There are lots of games that involve describing and guessing but here are a couple of specific ideas: 1) choose some objects with the children, put them in a bag and get the children to take turns feeling and describing them while the others guess what they are; 2) play 'What am I?', in which you describe something and the children work out what it is (eg "I'm red and made of metal, I stand on the pavement and you put letters in me"). Also games of "Eye spy" and emphasise the letter it begins with. You can add a little description clues to help if needed.

Memory game/Kim's game

Place a few different objects on a tray, some beginning with letters that your child may struggle to say/pronounce. Talk about each object, use language to describe it, heavy/light, rough/smooth etc..... say the name of the object, emphasising the correct pronunciation. Cover the objects with a cloth and ask child to close eyes, remove an object and see if child can recall which one is missing and describe it. Replace and repeat with a different object on the tray. Add more objects to increase challenge if needed and take turns with child.

Role-play and pretending games

This can be as elaborate or simple as you like; you could get the children to dress up as characters and act out a play (using a made-up plot, or perhaps one from a book), or you could encourage them to use puppets to tell a story, or just stimulate some straightforward role-play by introducing a few props.

Read books using props ie; 3 bears, bowls, spoons etc... go on a Bear Hunt.....

Use props to go with well known songs and rhymes

Early Phonics

This is a document that is really useful for introducing early phonics, it covers listening and attention etc... It's big but you only really concentrate on the first couple of aspects and the games are quite easy and fun. I've put the link to the whole document just so you can see what it's about. We use it at preschool but start at phase 1 and slowly build up the aspects

as appropriate. Aspect 7 is really more reception so don't worry about that, just do a few of the games to support listening and attention, taking turns, describing etc to further support language development.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/190599/Letters and Sounds - DFES-00281-2007.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/190599/Letters_and_Sounds_-_DFES-00281-2007.pdf)

Finally...

It would be really, really lovely if some or all of you would like to send us any drawings, children's comments, letters to their friends and perhaps they'll get a reply from someone in our setting.

You are not alone, we will keep in touch when we know/ hear some more and in the mean time, don't put pressure on yourselves, try to enjoy some positive family time, there is light at the end of the tunnel and please, get in touch if you want.

Take care

Ruth and the team x

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