

January 2011 Newsletter

Pre-school news

Fiona explains why we don't do a 'letter of the week' or 'show and tell'.

In keeping with the child centred approach, recommended in the Early Years Foundation Stage, (and supported by many educational theorists), I can tell you more about this, if you ask me, we do not have a 'letter of the week', where children bring things in and then stand up and tell the group about them, for several reasons:-

- We have very young children at pre-school who are not ready to do this, especially with all the children starting primary school in September.
- Children did not want to stand up and 'tell us about' the item they had brought in, however well briefed they had been.
- If you haven't got something to show and it is not your turn, it is very dull.
- However helpful parents are, they often gave a child something with a different sound to the letter, for example a giraffe for G.

Research and evidence has shown that children learn much more effectively if activities and experiences are presented to them that are meaningful and in appropriate context for them. This means something they are genuinely interested in and that the find stimulating.

If you are interested in reading more, please visit the following website:-

<http://www.practicalpreschoolbooks.com/Pages/Item/1303/Free-download-page.aspx>

A copy of these articles is also available in pre-school.

Occasional parent helpers please

Occasionally we need to call upon parents to help out with a session when staff are ill or on courses, so to ease this process we would like to pull together a list possible parent helpers.

This list will provide the staff with parents that are available to help out, possibly at short notice, we know this is not feasible for everyone, but if you think you may be able to do an occasional morning then please let Fiona know and she will add your details to the list.

Aside from emergencies, if any parents would like to spend time at the pre-school seeing what goes on day to day, then parents are always welcome to stay for sessions.

Fiona says....

Please can I remind everyone that pre-school does not start until 9.00.

Staff arrive by 8.45 and need that time to set up and discuss the days events and activities, so please do not come in or knock on the door unless it is an emergency, such as a child urgently needs the toilet.

I am aware that this is particularly difficult if it pouring with rain, but we still need the time.
Thank you

Anna Riggle is kindly coming in to share her musical talents with us on Monday 31st January, 2011, Thank you Anna, look out for a photo in the next edition.

This half term we have been focusing on listening, a key skill if children are going to learn to differentiate letter sounds. And the children have been interested in space, rockets and flying saucers, which we have been creating using straws, shapes, recycled materials and drawing.

We have also made a moon - please see the display above the children's drawers.

Thanks
Fiona



Other News

Parking: We know many of you walk to Pre-school. But if you do drive, could you please make sure that you do not block drive ways or park on or opposite the yellow zig-zag lines. The school have received complaints from local residents and have in turn passed them on to us.
Thank you.

Fund raising ideas anybody?

As you know 2010 was the year for fundraising for the new Pre-school and an excellent job was done by all, but we are not quite there yet and still need to raise about another £5,000 to ensure that we have enough contingency in place, to allow for the unexpected.

So, does anybody have any new fundraising ideas or twists on old ideas that they could share with us, perhaps you have attended something good that you think we could do and that people would enjoy, it does not have to be a big idea, just something that might appeal and in turn, raise some money.

If you do have any thoughts or you fancy helping out at an event or running a fund raising event then please let me, Sam France (sam.france@btinternet.com) or Bev Hanson (bevhanson@line.com) know, as we would be very glad of your help.

Dates for your diary

- **Spring half term** **Monday 21st Feb 2011**
- **Spring term starts** **Monday 28th Feb 2011**
- **Easter Holidays** **Monday 11th April 2011**
- **Summer term starts** **Wednesday 27th April 2011**
- **Hairy Legs Challenge** **Sunday 8th May 2011**
(Please try and keep this date free, as we will be needing volunteers to help out with the BBQ.... A great fundraiser for us!)

And by popular request, another recipe....

Whoopie Pies

Have you heard of these? I hadn't, but was chatting with Bev and she makes them all the time, so, I did a bit of research and found they are the latest thing to come over from America, they have taken over from the iced cupcake and muffins as the cake of choice by anyone who is anyone, so I thought I better share the recipe.



The basic mixture for the Whoopie pie cake recipe is similar to many other cake recipes except that the ratio of flour to fat is higher. The basic mixture consists of

100g/4oz Butter or Margarine
100g/4oz Caster sugar

2 Eggs
4tbsp Cocoa Powder
225g/8oz Self Raising Flour
½teasp salt
1teasp Vanilla extract
120ml/4fl.oz. Milk

Heat your oven to 180C, 350F, Gas Mark 4.

The traditional method is to cream together the butter and sugar, then add the egg, mixing well, before adding the remaining ingredients, but it works just as well placing all the ingredients in the mixing bowl at the same time and mixing in a food mixer or processor.

Place 2 heaped tablespoons, or an ice cream scoop full of cake mixture dropped onto a lightly greased baking sheet is enough to make Whoopie pie halves about 7.5cm/3-inches in diameter once they have been spread out a little with the back of a spoon. Be sure to leave plenty of space between each mound of mixture, as they will spread during cooking.

Cook the pies for 15 mins, slightly longer if they are any bigger, you can check if they are cooked through by pushing a toothpick into them and if it comes out clean they are cooked.

Once baked, they will need to be cooled on a wire rack before they can be filled.

Basic Whoopie Pie Filling Mixture

The traditional Whoopie filling which is light and airy. This version can also be coloured with a few drops of food colouring. Whoopie pies can also be filled with butter icing, ready bought marshmallow fluff or thick freshly whipped cream.

Fills 8 Whoopie Pies (16 halves)

2 Egg Whites
225g/8oz Castor Sugar
80ml/2½fl.oz. Cold water
1 tbsp Honey
1 teaspoon Vanilla Extract

Place all of the ingredients in a large heatproof bowl and mix well. Place the bowl over a saucepan of rapidly boiling water, and then whisk constantly for 5-7 minutes or until the mixture is thick and creamy and stands in peaks. Using an electric whisk is easier.

Remove from heat, whisk for a further minute or so then allow to cool completely before using to fill Whoopie pies, do this by spreading a generous amount of filling on the flat side of one half and place another half, flat side down, on top of the filling then press both halves together lightly. There should be enough filling to form a deep layer which is clearly visible between the two layers.