**Pre-school Play and Learning Newsletter for 25th – 29th November 2019**

**Nocturnal, spikey, prickly, hunting, swoop.**

Wonder words to use with your child:

**Play and Learning Highlights:**

 With it becoming dark so early in the evening at the moment, and due to the children’s interest in animals we decided to explore the concept of ‘nocturnal creatures’ this week, using stories and games fuel the children’s imaginations. The children have enjoyed listening to and acting out the story of ‘Owl Babies’ and ‘Night Monkey, Day Monkey’ plus sharing information books about different nocturnal animals. Owls have inspired us to create our own representations of them using paints and 2D shapes. We have used playdough and different pasta shapes to model hedgehogs and played some fun physical games using our knowledge of the movements of different nocturnal animals. We have played games with torches to spot nocturnal animals hiding in pictures and talked about what we would do if we were nocturnal and were awake all night (am hoping this hasn’t given then any ideas!).

Rebekah attended an Early Years Mathematical conference last week finding out about the latest research in maths and how what we do in the early years impacts on a child’s future mathematical success. She shared this with the rest of the staff on Tuesday evening and we all came to pre-school on Wednesday with a different perspective about children’s mathematical development. This has led us to begin to tweak some of our provision and expectations which has already led to some wonderful mathematical learning and play!

**Out & About sessions:**

We had so many poorly children away from pre-school on Monday morning that we were able to take all of the children out for a session at Greenslade Park. The children had fun developing their physical skills with hoops and balls in the astro-turfed area, utilising the huge amount of space there to see how far they could throw and roll their hoops, plus kick their balls. This encouraged lots of talk about distances and measurements, plus provided the children with challenges to try and beat the distance they had achieved before.

On Tuesday and Friday groups of children went to the little woods at Gwel-an-Mor to search for signs of owl houses in the trees. They were delighted to discover a family of seven squirrels playing in the trees and woodland and watched with fascination as they scampered and climbed about; inspiring lots of great observations, descriptive language and wonderful counting opportunities. On Friday we also got to see the reindeer – lots of excitement and talk about Christmas!

 **Sounds and Letters/language focus:**

The Flying Fish have learnt another letter sound this week – ‘a’ – through using the sound box to identify objects which begin with this sound. They have also played the ‘I spy a nocturnal creature . . .’ game as well to encourage listening to and identifying initial sounds of words.

The Starfish have been focusing on the ‘5 Little Owls’ rhyme with owl props to support and develop their counting and listening skills.

**Ideas to support your child at home:**

\*Just to recap – the letter sounds the Flying Fish children have experienced so far are: **p s a** If you are practising these at home please make sure you are saying the sound not the name of the letter. If you do wish to practice them then pointing them out on signs or on packaging/labels is a perfect way to do this, plus emphasising words which begin with those sounds (not letters, e.g. not shell as this is the ‘sh’ letter sound). Don’t worry if your child finds it hard to hear the sound at the beginning of a word or can’t recall what sound any of the letters make – it really isn’t expected as this age! However, lots of practice and experiences of tuning into the initial sounds of words will help the skill develop.

\* Sing our ‘5 Little Owls’ song with your child using their fingers to represent the number of owls each time. (For some of the very young Starfish we would suggest beginning with just 3 owls).

(Sung to the tune of 5 little ducks)

Five little owls went out to fly

Over the trees, up very high!

When the mother owl sang, "To-whit-to-hoo!"

One little owl went down and flew!

*(Repeat for four, three, and two little owls.)*

One little owl went out to fly

Over the trees, up very high!

When the mother owl sang, "To-whit-to-hoo!"

Down she went and home she flew!