**Pre-school Play and Learning Newsletter for 1 -5 July 2024**

\*Our wonder words this week have been: **Mini beast, symmetrical, exoskeleton, chrysalis, antennae, pupa, transformation, predict**

**Play and Learning Highlights:**

The children have been hunting for bugs this week, both real and pretend ones. They have been finding out about where different bugs live and the names of some commonly found ones. Children are often fascinated by the antics of ‘bugs’ when they find one, and we have had some great observations from the children about what they can see them doing and where they are going, helping to develop their language of preposition and describing.

Our Creating Area has harnessed the children’s love of climbing to inspire mark making - a paper wall with different sized stools to climb up in order to be able to reach and make marks. Everyone wanted a go at this! When children are young it’s really important to give them lots of opportunities for vertical drawing experiences as this helps them to develop the muscles they need for eventually being able to write letters.

Inside the return of the sand machine in the Rock Pool area was met with excitement, especially with the addition of pretend insects added to it. The Starfish children have been developing their listening skills by following instructions about which tube to put their bug down, and then their speaking skills by explaining to another child/adult which one they want them to put their bug down.

We have also been planting seeds ready for our summer fayre. The children had to choose two seeds which were the same, plant them and then predict what the seeds might grow into. Some very humorous predictions! These will be being sold at our Summer fair.

**Out & About sessions:** We have had two lovely out and abouts at the play park with lots of climbing, swinging and sliding as well as lots of role play and imagination play! Bug hunts have also been the focus of this weeks Out & About sessions. Before we left the pre-school the children chose one type of insect that they wanted to find on the bug hunt. They then had to decide where would be the best place to find them at the location we went on that day. The children demonstrated good thinking skills when considering where to find them, clearly reflecting on what they already know about insects.

 **Sounds and Letters/language focus:**

This week we have been reviewing all the letter sounds we have learnt so far – these are:

**S a t p i n m o c k**

We have played games which practiced us being able to hear and identify them at the beginning of a word, plus visually spot them in books. Although we don’t spend lots of time practising writing them, the children really enjoyed writing them with their finger on their partners backs. This is a really good way of practising letter formation in a relaxed, fun manner as it develops the movements their hands have to make to create the letter without the pressure of holding a pen correctly.

The Starfish have used the book ‘I love Bugs!’ to extend their vocabulary in relation to describing insects, with lots of interesting words such as ‘spiky spiny’, ‘jumpy leapy’.

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

 All the children should have brought home a ‘Minibeast Hunt’ to do over a weekend or when you are out and about.

As your child and you spot them on your hunt encourage your child to tell you where they found the insect and what it was doing. For the older children encourage them to predict what they might find e.g. under a stone, inside a flower, on top of a leaf. Asking them’ why’ they think will extend their thinking even further.