Play & Learning Newsletter

30th October – 3rd November 2023

**Pumpkin, pulp, seeds, carve, lights up, stalk, leaf skeleton, decompose/decay**

Wonder words to use with your child:

A lovely first week back after the week off and the children have enjoyed talking about their Half term and Halloween experiences with their friends and the staff. We made great use of the many different types of pumpkins which were available to buy last week with different skills being developed through their use in their children’s play and learning experiences. We have explored 5 very different shaped and coloured pumpkins (actually gourds) whilst practising our number and counting skills in our ‘Five little Pumpkins’ song with pennies to spend in the pumpkin shop. However, the most favourite experience of all was the freedom to drill and hammer, using real tools, into the pumpkins. This required excellent concentration skills and enabled the children to develop their fine motor skills in a very focused and motivated manner. The perseverance and determination that was observed by every child who engaged in this experience was truly awe inspiring to see and demonstrated that children will often rise to the challenge that is set before them if they have the inner motivation to do so. All of them understood the need to wear safety googles and not one child hurt their fingers in the process, despite all of them doing this independently. Wonderful to observe!

All of the lovely autumn treasures that the children brought in have also been put to good use, a big thank you to everyone who collected them for us. We have used the beautiful book ‘Leaf Man’ by Lois Ehlert to inspire further talk about ‘What do you see?’ and encourage the children’s eyes to look deeper than first glances.

 ***Sounds and Letters/language focus:*** The Flying Fish have been developing their rhyming skills this week with the activities ‘Silly Soup’ and ‘The Magic Box’. Both of these activities enable the children’s ears to tune into what ‘rhyming’ means and practice the skill of being able to recognise when words rhyme. This is such an important early phonic skill as it helps children recognise similarities and differences between words and the sounds within them – essential for later reading and spelling skills.

The Starfish have spent time extending and developing their vocabulary with words and language around pumpkins and autumn treasures whilst exploring and investigating them. They joined in with the 5 little pumpkin songs using 5 real little pumpkins as props and a visual aid as one more got taken away each time.

**Out & About sessions:** This week the Flying Fish have had climbing adventures in Feadon woods whilst spotting autumn leaves and treasures. The children used leaf identification boards to work out which leaves they were picking up and then which trees they had fallen from. This has been great encouraging careful observation skills – matching fallen leaves to ones still on the tree is not as easy as it sounds! They have also visited the astro turf to practice large motor skills and had fun with the large parachute with Hannah and Mel.

Ideas to support your child at home:

What do you see?

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This is a question that we are using with the children instead of ‘How many are there?’ or ‘What’s that?’ – it is a question that encourages the children to look and explain what they see, developing their vocabulary and explaining skills. It is also a great way of support the children’s natural skill of instantly recognising 1, 2 or 3 objects, without counting – which is something that we are working on with all of the children as recent research has now shown that this is a very important skill needed to support children to have a much greater understanding of number and concepts in mathematics. Try using it at home with your children and see how they answer differently. We are encouraging the children to instantly spot 1,2 or 3 instead of counting, if you child still counts then model saying, “Oh we don’t need to count, I can see 2 without counting”. This will help them begin to be more confident in their instant recognition.