



AT HOME ACTIVITIES
FOR OUR LITTLE BIRDS



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LETTERS & PICTURES!

Each week the staff will be writing you all a letter! We would love to see and share your letters or pictures too, please ask mummy or daddy to email us your pictures or letters and we can feature them in next week's pack!





HELLO SAM!

Hello Little Birds,

You may have noticed that while you have been at home and not at Little Birds that the sun has come to cheer us all up! The sun is warming us all up, the birds in the garden at nursery are singing really loudly, being very cheeky and are making nests for their baby birds to visit in the roof!

All the teachers have been at home more of the time too, and I have a funny story to tell you! I have four brown chickens who are allowed to play in my garden all day long. I sat outside for my lunch one day, and left my glass of water. When I came back outside – the naughty little chickens had drunk the water from my glass!

All the teachers send their love, and I send you all winging as if by magic, a really big hug – open your window and you might catch it! And every time you see the sun shine, remember that we all are thinking about you and can't wait for the day we can all play together again!

Here are some ideas that may help you to keep Mummy or Daddy busy.

Big squishy hugs!!
Sam xxxx.



HELLO STEPHANIE!

Dear Little Birds,

I have been at nursery this week, playing on the sunny field. It has been a bit strange though, as so many of you are staying at home!

I have painted lots of pictures with the friends who were here- today we painted Mog The Cat! We have also fed the robins, who are enjoying how quiet the field is at the moment....some of them are getting very brave and coming so close to us!

I hope that you are enjoying the videos that we have been sending you. I had lots of fun reading you stories playing hide and seek with Victoria- she was so sneaky!

I'm sure you are all having a lovely time at home with your families but I really can't wait to see you all again.

When I see you I'm going to give you a very big cuddle!!

Lots of love, Stephanie xxxx

HELLO KELLY!



Hi little birds,

I've put together some fun activities you can share with your mummies, daddies, brothers and sisters in your own gardens.

Some of these activities you will recognise from when we have been playing together at nursery!

I will also be sending a list of our favourite songs we sing together, maybe you could teach mummy and daddy!

I miss you all lots already, enjoy the sunshine. Mummies and Daddies please let me know if you get stuck for ideas I have lots!

Your children are all so amazing, resourceful and have great imaginations!

I'm sure they will surprise you with how well they can turn nature into play and learning.

Learning through play is always fun just remember everything can be counted, everything has a colour and you can tell a story about anything!! Please let me know if I can help at all.

Stay well stay safe and I look forward to see you all soon.

Kelly xx

HELLO VICTORIA!



Dear Little Birds,

We are all missing seeing you at forest school and hope you are keeping busy at home! Although things have changed, it is very reassuring to note that the sky is still blue, the moon comes out at night and hugs still feel as cosy and warm as they always have. Perhaps by the time we are back at Forest School, our grass will be green too!

I hope you are all keeping on singing our special songs. I know for one I will continue to go 'around the outside' of my hot hot hot oven when baking biscuits. I wish I could post some to you in envelopes, but I fear the postman may get very cross if his van gets all crumbly.

I imagine you are all becoming experts in how to play forest school style at home. I must caution against climbing banisters in lieu of trees, starting camp-fires out of curtains or creating wriggly worm habitats in the living room. All of the above can have dubious outcomes, especially if someone finds a worm in their cup of tea. Of course, I don't speak from personal experience. As a serious and upstanding grown-up, I would never lark about in such an undignified manner.

Unless one of you scamps tries to pop me in jail again! I look forward to hearing about all your adventures. Think fondly of me chasing my pesky pet rabbits around as usual, looking for pilfered carrots and reading *The Snail and The Whale* to the teddies.

Sending big hugs, from your very proud and loving teacher,
Victoria (Toria) x



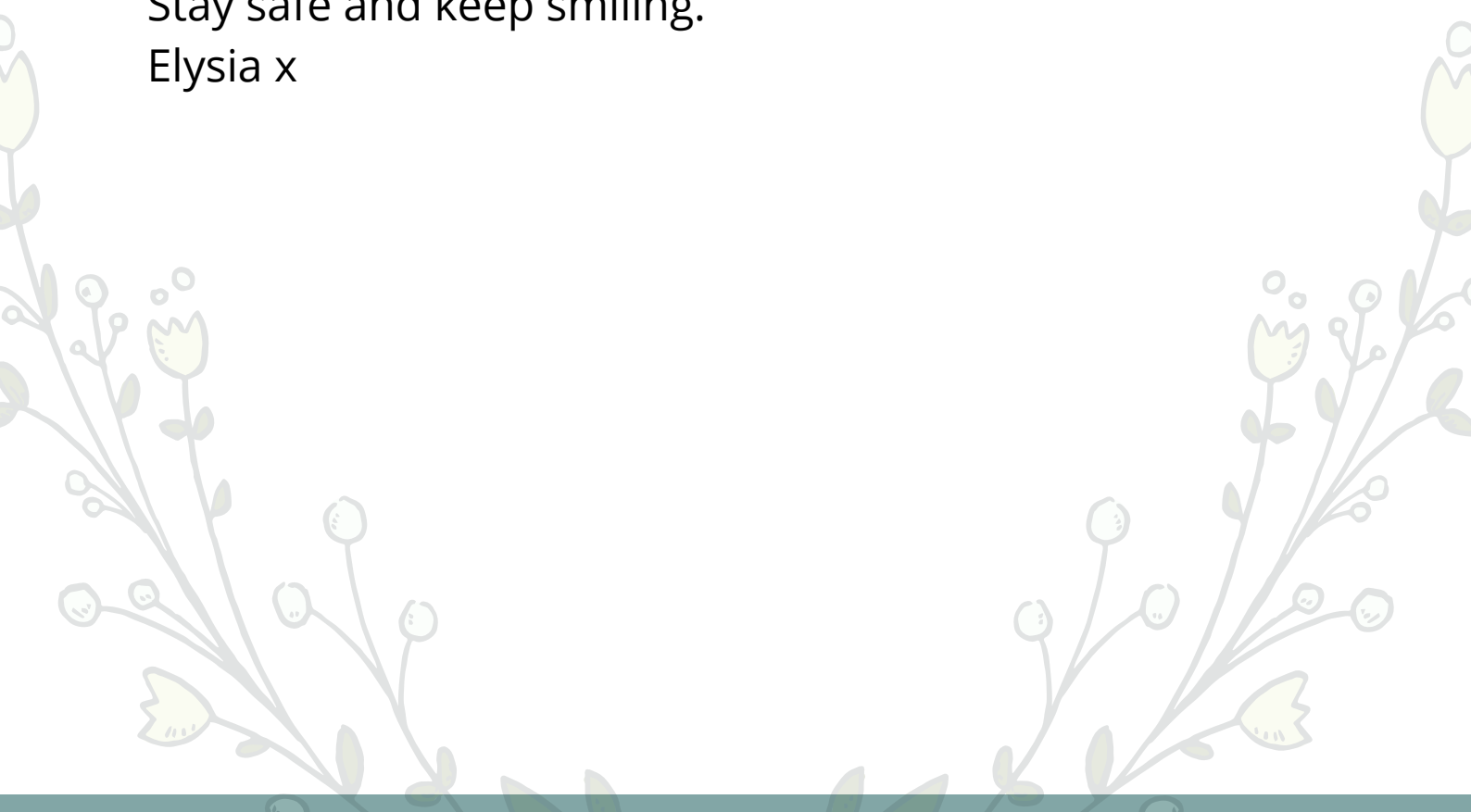
HELLO ELYSIA!

Hi little birds!

I hope you are able to enjoy time at home, playing together with your family in the weeks ahead. It has been a very quiet week at nursery without lots of you there and I am already missing you all.

Hopefully these activities will inspire you when you run low on your own fun ideas. I wish I was enjoying the exploring and learning with you and look forward to when we can all be back at nursery together.

Stay safe and keep smiling.
Elysia x





HELLO RHIA!

Hi Little Birds!

Wow, this is different!

I miss seeing your lovely face but I'm sure I'll see you soon! I hope you and everyone are all having lots of fun, whether its in the sun or in the rain!

Please have a look at some of these ideas... maybe even give them a go! Maybe (ask mummy or daddy or another adult to help you) send us a picture or a video of your adventures with the different things you get up to!

I really hope I get to see you soon! It's not the same without you here!

Sending smiles, hugs and laughter!
(And, remember... HAVE FUN!)

Rhiaxxx



HELLO POLLY!

Hello Little Birds,

I have been thinking long and hard about all the things we enjoy at Little Birds everyday and put together some things I hope you and your families will enjoy.

The most important thing to remember about all of these ideas is to have fun! So Little Birds always remember, you are brave, strong and smart you can do anything.

Parents, please remember during this time you do not need to be teachers and educators as that is already a part of the word "Parent." Everyday you react and respond to your children's contextual learning how many cows are in the field? What colour are the leaves? How far can you throw your dinner from your high chair? Where are the car keys? All of your innate natural responses teach and allow your children to grow everyday. So relax and lean in to this new slower pace, enjoy this time and watch the magic of your children unfold.

My Little Birds, how we are missing you so much already as everyday you all would teach us something new. It may be that you taught us the awe and wonder of how well a child can climb a tree, informed us of every aspect of the Titanic, blew us away with your creative art work or put on a mighty Power Ranger dance show. Although we do not get to see this magic everyday for a little while, we are so happy you can share all of this with your Mums, Dads and families.

We will be sharing lots of story and song videos for all of you, so come and listen to the familiar voices, sounds and rhymes as we stay connected until we welcome you back once again.

Fly high Little Birds,
Polly
(Pom-Pom)

HELLO LIZZY!



Hello my lovely, beautiful little birds!

Firstly I hope your enjoying having so much precious time with your mummy's & Daddy's & are making some amazing memories to cherish!! I truly miss all of your faces, I can't wait until we can climb the trees again, see the waves crashing against the rocks at the beach, go to the theatre and see all the magic of the stage, paint our pictures, our hands and our faces!

Who doesn't like a painted face right!? I can't wait to be a banana super hero with my yellow Mac on my head, I can't wait for cuddles and tickles and the magic of our story's coming to life!! I can not wait to hear all about your happy times at home with your loved ones and maybe you can show me some new games to play together, I'm looking forward to so many new adventures when you all come back! Lots of love and plenty of tickles, cuddles and belly laughs,

Love Lizzy
Xxx





SHORT FUN ACTIVITIES FROM OUR STAFF

Each week we will have some quick ideas that you can set up in the garden or indoors, to act as a provocation for play.





BOWLING



Use old tin cans, bottles or toilet rolls as the skittles then a ball or pinecone as the bowling ball.

MARK MAKING



Use chalks to mark make on the floor, draw round objects to create shapes. Make stories and draw pictures to go with the story.

SHADOW PLAY



Find an area to watch your shadow, put on a shadow puppet story show. Using your hands and body to create different shapes and animals.



READING SILLY STORIES

Everyone knows how a story sounds if you read the book from beginning to end but how does it sound if you read it backwards... usually we read a book page 1, 2 and 3 but what happens if you literally read it page 3, 2, 1? Give it a go parents, you might be surprised by the results (and just how much your little ones will laugh and tell you "That's not right!!").

Nearly everyone knows the story of the three little pigs but what happens if the pigs suddenly turn into wolves or cows or elephants? Give it a go!

Have you ever read a story and instead of the normal Elmer in the book an auntie's name appears or a siblings name? For example: Once upon a time there was an elephant called Caroline and he was a rainbow elephant? You could also insert your own child's name and see if they notice... I have done this one many times and the little faces they make when they realise are quite funny!!





LOOSE PARTS PLAY IDEA OF THE WEEK

*This section will focus on a deeper and longer play idea with
resources you will find at home!*





BOX PLAY

Not everyone will have a box ready to use but you probably have a cereal box and that is a good substitution...

You can provide: sellotape, child-friendly scissors (or just encourage a lot of ripping) ask the children to create a sculpture, ask them to make a hat or a bed, ask them to make a dinosaur or a tree. You will be surprised, or not so surprised, with what your little one will produce!

If you have a big enough box, encourage them to just sit inside it... give them crayons, pencils or pens and they can draw or mark make!

If you have a big enough box, add pillows and blankets and they have a new den or fort! Why not let them eat snack or have a picnic inside it? *caution* the number of giggles that may be produced will make you smile and laugh as well.

You can also just provide a box with pencils and have them stab the box with the pencils, once the holes have been made you can encourage them to post the pencils back through the holes... if the pencils get stuck, treat them like nails and have the children hammer' them through.





INSIGHTS INTO LEARNING & CHILD DEVELOPMENT

This week Polly has written a really useful insight into how schema play is an important part of child development. Each week we will include something we hope will give you an insight into your child.



YOUR CHILD'S SCHEMAS

Schemas are important patterns of repeatable behaviour as children use them to test out ideas and to make sense of the world around them. Schemas are a great way for children to explore, test out ideas and learn about the world they live in everyday. You may see your children repeat certain behaviours such as throwing toys, food and other items or shouting very loudly in large supermarkets or even lining up and ordering their toys. These are all natural schemas that help children learn.

The table on the following pages may help you identify how your child enjoys to explore and learn. Some children may adopt multiple schemas or change schemas frequently, so do not worry if your child does not seem to fit one particular schema.

The table also gives suggestions for items to engage your child and their schema. Families should use their judgement to understand whether suggested resources are age appropriate. The suggestions are also just spring board ideas and you may find or adapt new resources as you support your child's everyday learning!

Child's Interests (Things they may love)	They may be exploring (Schema)	Loose parts they may enjoy	Natural loose parts they may enjoy	Larger scale play (physical)	Recyclable/ Repurposed Materials	Additional tools to develop interests	Commercial toys/Gifts
Train sets, buckles, Lego, harnesses, fridge magnets, stickers, pen caps, shoes	Connecting- Children with connecting schemas enjoy connecting and dismantling objects to see how they come together and apart.	Lolly sticks, matchsticks, golf tees, paper clips, binder rings, felt pieces, tissue paper pieces, elastics, fabric, paper, burlap, balsa wood, sticky notes, labels, pipe cleaners, belts, Velcro hair rollers, corks, pins, box rivets, screws, nails, poppers, bolt snaps	Earth magnets, roots, vines, pine resin (for glue), burdocks, cicada shells, thistle flowers, leather cord, dandelion/daisy stems (for chains), dried bones, wet leaves, sand, snow, ice	Log rounds or stumps for stacking, tyres, boards, wooden spools, netting, webbing, logs, pallets, ropes and carabiners	Containers with lids, bread clips, PVC pipes, tin foil cardboard tubes, nuts and bolts, electrical wires, twist on wire connectors, twist ties, buckles from discarded items (old buggies, car seats and bags), Velcro from old clothes, fruit and vegetable elastic bands, straws	Hammer, tape, glue, twine, rope, yarn, bungee cords, hooks, chains, cable ties, latches and fasteners, tongs, webbing, flannel, stapler, safety pins, contact paper, magnetic surface, corkboard	Magnet builders, Unifix cubes (math cubes), straws and connectors, Kapla planks, stickle bricks, puzzles, duplo, train sets, barrel of monkeys, snap beads
Cutting with scissors, knocking down towers, breaking playdough in to small pieces, tearing pages from books, taking apart electronic devices, destroying objects, removing sofa cushions, cutting hair	Disconnecting/ Deconstructing Children enjoy breaking things, knocking them down and seeing how they change. They then may be interested in constructing items.	String, paper, tissue paper, cardboard, balsa wood, Styrofoam, dominoes, glow sticks, water beads, balloons, dried cornflour and water mix (breaks and cracks), masking tape or coloured tape for peeling and cutting.	Brittle sticks, dead wood, dead branches, peeling bark, leaves, daisies, ice puddles and other ice forms, dry mud, clamshells, cobwebs, dried lavender, catkins, sandstone, pinecones, seedpods, coconuts, lumps of brown sugar, fungus, pampas grass, dried herbs, flowers, food items for cutting and peeling	Giant cardboard boxes, haystacks, sand banks, chalk pits, balloons, stacks of tissue boxes	Catalogues for stacking and knocking over, magazines for cutting, egg boxes, bubble wrap, crushable cans and bottles, corks, used electric equipment (old TV, controllers, monitors, knitted or crocheted items to unravel	Pestle and mortar, safety knives, safety scissors, hammer, clippers, pliers, mallet, saw, screwdrivers, hole punches, fly swatters, potato peelers	Take-Apart sets, toy demolition vehicles, slime, putty, playdough, excavation kits, magnetic builders and toys, Unifix cubes (math cubes), wooden block sets, Kapla planks, scratch art paper

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Aeroplanes, helicopters, car crashes, balls, sharks, birds, superman (superheroes who fly and move with speed), throwing toys, throwing food, jumping off things, knocking things down, expressive art, ball games, bubbles, explosions	Trajectory Children enjoy throwing items to experience cause and effect, experiment with space, time and distance. They may also enjoy creating lines in space using their physical bodies and objects.	Paper, pom-poms, rubber bands, balloons, corks, beanbags, spoons, rulers (measuring distance or creating lines), ping pong balls, string, ribbons, cotton balls, felt balls, wool balls, pieces of foam, sponges, pillows, boards and cylinders (catapults), teapot, watering can, home made pipe canon for balls	Helicopter pods, feathers, leaves, flat rocks for skipping, stones for throwing in to water, sticks, pinecones, Y-Shaped branches (slingshots), swinging vines, live insects, willow trees, dandelions, popping closed fuchsia flowers, sticks as fishing rods, palm branches	Planks, cable spools, skate ramp, platforms, ladder, chairs, yoga ball, slide, sled, guttering, willow branches for swinging, pool noodles	Pipes, scarves, plastic bottles (for rockets), paper towel tubes, elastic bands, springs, plastic spoons, buckets for ball toss, boxes for bulls eye or bean bag toss, inner tubes, film canisters, boxes and cartons for knocking down	Hammers, saws, pestle and mortar, targets, hoops, zip lines, fans, baking soda and vinegar for rockets or popping off bottle lids, open field or water for throwing natural loose parts.	Car tracks (especially hot wheels for fast trajectory), catapult kit, marble run, trebuchet kit, construction sets with ramps, rocket building kits, boomerangs, propeller toys, electric aeroplanes/helicopters, Buckaroo game
Forts, hide-and-seek, putting toys to bed, burying items in sand, wrapping boxes or items, eggs and nests, hats, being inside cupboards, painting entire canvases, painting their hands, arms, legs and other body parts, building enclosures with blocks	Enclosing/ Enveloping Children enjoy the act of observing how objects appear and disappear, how covering objects, body parts and other items may change them. Also interested in opening and closing	Scarves, fabric, lace, boxes, paper towels, tissue paper, postal tubes, aluminium foil, plastic Easter eggs, locks and keys, hinges, hair rollers, sponges, nesting baskets, ribbons, wool, cheesecloth, paper mache, mod roc rolls, plaster paris and bandages	Piles of leaves, sand, mud, clay, walnut halves, clamshells, palm branches, geodes, seedpods, flowers, petals, straw, twigs, nests, hollow logs, birch bark, halved coconut shells, pumpkins, gourds, lotus pods, corn husks, giant leaves	Cardboard boxes, stacks of tires, tents, tunnels, long tree limbs (fort building), blankets, tarps, tables, chairs, couch cushions, hay pallets, hay stacks	Old/spare fabric, old hats and scarves, plastic containers, cups, cardboard tubes, egg cartons, egg boxes, envelopes, wrapping paper, newspaper, magazines, bubble wrap, ice trays (hide objects in ice)	Safety pins, rubber bands, string, tape, Velcro tape, cable ties, magnifying glasses, glue, silly putty	Magnetic tiles, Russian nesting dolls, stacking cups, Lego, sleeping bag, moulding kits, mosaic kit, piñata, doll clothes, hollow blocks, post box, excavation kit

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Elevators, balls, towers, dropping objects on purpose, scribbling up and down, building tall towers	Dynamic Vertical Children enjoy the concept of up and down. This can be an interest in watching things from heights, using their own bodies to experiment by jumping, climbing and dropping.	Scarves, beanbags, pom-poms, cushions, string, rope, spools, beads, balls, ping-pong balls, corks, wire, watering can, teapot, slinky, confetti, blocks for stacking, paper clips, dice, dominoes, light switches, chains, springs	Rocks for stacking, pinecones, water, feathers, sticks, helicopter pods, leaves, acorns, crab apples, hanging vines, icicles, palm branches, wooden pieces for stacking	Stacks of tyres, platforms, chairs, ladders, climbing walls, tree trunks, fences, couch cushions, trampoline, bucket and rope in tree (pulley system), deep holes, water pump	PVC pipes, wrapping paper tubes, foil tubes, pringles containers, yoghurt pots, cans, zips (up and down motion), tissue boxes, empty boxes, straws, coiled telephone cords	Plumb bob (plumbet or plumb line), retractable tape measure, pulleys and ropes, small hand winch, potato mashers, pestle and mortar, funnels, turkey basters, hourglass, thermometer (spirit or glass with line), spirit level	Connect 4, stacking toys, hammer and peg sets, bead maze, parachute people, parachutes, rocket kits, trampoline, Ogo Disk, Stomp rockets
Fast cars, traffic, running laps, trains, scribbling left and right, tennis, bowling, clapping, waving flags, hoovers, lawn mowers, tunnels, pushing prams, building roads and tracks, shakers, sword play	Dynamic Horizontal Children enjoy the side-to-side motion of objects and physical movement. Exploring the concept of side to side through movement and observation.	Balls, marbles, level blocks for making roads and tracks, ribbons, wooden rings, rain gutters, clotheslines and clothes pins, clotheslines on pulley system (horizontal), streamers, wires, strings, beads, half pipes, guttering, elastics	Logs, trenches in sand or mud, branches, palm leaves, pliable branches for building tunnels, streams, rivers or flowing water, flat rocks for launching, chestnuts, conkers for rolling	Logs, hula-hoops, culvert pipes, shallow ditches, planks, stepping stones, guttering, balls and bottles for bowling, golf balls and clubs, parachute, skateboard, wheelbarrow	Pipes, wrapping paper tubes, foil tubes, rubber bands, inner tubes, resistance bands, bearings, wheels, corrugated materials	Spirit levels, hardwood floors, long cardboard boxes, fences (moving along side to side), pallets to attach guttering and pipes, attached horizontal cables or lines, zip lines, slack lines, slingshots	Hot wheels, train sets, push along toys, abacus, windup toys, ride on toys, bikes, marble runs, sports equipment (cricket bat and ball, golf clubs, bowling set etc.), air hockey table

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Putting trucks upside down, turning knobs on appliances, planets, cricket, football and other ball games, circular race tracks, CD's, vinyl records, launching toys that roll, spinning in circles, washing machines	Rotation/ Circularity Children enjoy exploring the world through rotation. They may enjoy spinning and moving their physical bodies as it stimulates the vestibular system. They may also enjoy exploring the movement and rotation of objects.	Plates, pot lids, wood rings, spools, washers, metal rings, rope, string, lasso, sticks, paper towels holders, toilet roll holders, nuts and bolts, screws, cocktail umbrellas, umbrellas, metal bearings, mixing spoons, whisks, hair rollers, serger spools, bobbins, paint rollers, hinges	Helicopter pods, swinging vines, star anise, roly-polies, daises (spinning), tree rounds with a centre hole (spinning), acorns, snail shells, coconut shells, water, stepping stones or stumps arranged in a circle, hills for rolling down	Plastic culvert pipes, swings, cable spools, round hay bales, freestanding poles and trunks for circling, may poles, hula-hoops, pop up hampers, tunnel, roundabout, hose reel, barrel	Cylindrical containers, paper tubes, old microwave trays (wheels included), bottles, motors, cogs, old appliances with knobs, rollerblade wheels and bolts, cups, spinners from board games, turntable, round cardboard from pizzas or cut from boxes, paper plates, bobbins	Large round bowls, steel drum, fans, compasses, winch, pottery wheels, lazy susan, spinners, dowels and sticks, wood cookies, clothes for toy washing machine, drill, screwdrivers, mixer, blender, auger	Train circuit, gear toys, bead maze, spiral ball run, abacus, swing ball, toy cement mixer, propeller toys, skipping rope, water wheel, spirograph, Euler's disk, spinning buzz magnets, bingo game set
Making holes in things, poking with sticks, putting fingers in holes, arrows and bullets, swords, fishing, sewing, earrings, destroying/going through safety gates, putting limbs through bars or railings	Going through a boundary Children explore the world by putting themselves or objects through things. This may be through ripping objects open to create a boundary or using pre-existing objects.	Wool, plastic needles, birthday candles, dowels, sticks, fabric, hessian, mesh, lace, pipe cleaners, cork, golf tees, toothpicks, beads, buttons, chopsticks, keys and locks, bolts and boards with holes, perforated metal, containers, napkin rings, latches, hooks	Feathers, reeds, cattails, stems, sticks in mud, bark and woodpecker holes, clay, mud, old man's beard, tree slices with drilled holes, cracked rocks, ice and tools, wood chips, shark teeth, shells with holes, pumpkins, perforated limestone, lotus pods	Lattice fencing, soil, sand, shovels, hoes, milk augers, crates, posthole diggers, pegboards, loose knit blanket, wine rack, windows, ladders, tunnel	Styrofoam, foam insulation, cardboard boxes, chicken wire, tomato cages, birdcages, paper tubes, straws, old shirt button holes and buttons, bubble wrap, rope, elastics	Hammer, drill, screwdriver, rubber mallet, tent pegs, tweezers, pliers, hole punch, shape punches, hand drills, weeding tools, skewers, nutcrackers, stapler, cookie cutters, garlic press, lemon juicer, tracing wheel	Tumbling monkeys game, Kerplunk, peg stackers, hammer and peg set, weaving loom, weaving sets, Mr Potato Head, lacing toys, rug hooking kit, crochet kit

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Drawing around the edge of paper, walking the perimeter of playground or building, tracing, winding string around objects, tying knots, walking over or around obstacles, bracelets and necklaces, weaving, finger knitting	Going around a boundary Children enjoy exploring the peripheral aspects of objects and enclosing items. They observe how objects change from the outer perspective and creating boundaries and lines.	String, tape, marbles, tubes, spools, ribbons, cups, strings of beads, rope, wire, lolly sticks, pipe cleaners, blocks for building bridges and walls, rocks or fabric for creating moats, chains, chalk, belts, gears, measuring tape, C&C grids, play pens	Twigs, stumps, stepping stones, roots, ivy, vines, creepers, branches, small trees, antlers, hedgerows, cultivated bushes, driftwood, sand/mud and water for moats, seaweed, rivers, ponds	Cable spools, freestanding poles and trunks for circling, hula-hoop, roundabout, barrel, swing ball, bridges, balance beams, banks and boulders for circum-navigating, Bungee cords	Paper towel tubes, chicken wire, rubber bands, tights and balloons cut in to rings (looping and stretching around objects), flexible tubing, dryer vent hose, drying rack, necklace and ring holders	Pegboard or nail board, loom, clusters of trees, poles of columns, winches and pulleys, hat tree, peg racks	Spirograph, stencils, string art sets, circuit sets, maze toys, yo-yo, diabolo, bracelet making kits, weaving kits, snake toys, race car track, slinky
Having hands full of objects, full pockets, emptying and filling, dump trucks, bags, shopping carts, wheelbarrows	Transporting Children move objects frequently and repeatedly from one place to another. The like to store and gather objects in large quantities and often enjoy filling empty containers to move from place to place.	Glass gems, beads, pom-poms, marbles, tiles, clothespins, nuts and bolts, washers, cotton balls, ball bearings, magnets, buckets, bags, baskets, tins, bum bags, containers, rucksacks, plastic counters, lolly sticks, sponges, buttons, dice, chains, figurines	Wood pieces, tree cookies, seeds, acorns, rocks, shells, leaves, pinecones, dried beans, wood chips, driftwood, sand, flowers, gravel, woodchip, cut grass, fruits, rice, feathers, seed pods, sticks, hollowed coconut shells, sticks, branches, natural woven baskets	Wheelbarrow, Pull along trailer, barrel, Shopping trolley, Large rucksack, wagon, sled, pram, baskets, ride on toys, cardboard boxes	Plastic containers, buckets, cardboard boxes, Easter baskets, reusable, shopping bags, milk jugs, milk crates, used purses and bags, drawstring bags, corks, rubber bands, bottle caps	Scoops, tongs, funnel, shovel, spade, tool belt, clips, pulleys, clothesline, bucket and rope, hooks, skateboards, carabiners	Hungry hippos game, toy wagons, diggers and dumper trucks, Trunki, lunch boxes, rucksacks, mini shopping trolley, mini-wheelbarrow, ride on toys with storage, bike baskets, mini figures, toy car park with elevator, toy boats

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Climbing everything, playing peek-a-boo, sitting upside down, swinging upside down, hanging from bars, looking through holes and transparent objects, standing on toys, crawling under tables, rugs and other furniture, optical illusions, magic	Orientation/ Perspective Children enjoy seeing things from different perspectives, looking at different ways that things move, look or appear. Exploring what different physical positions feel and look like	Mirror tiles, convex and concave mirrors, cardboard tubes, boards, stools and chairs, ropes, prisms, glass spheres, marbles, stained glass, small figurines, scale models, empty picture frames, coloured acrylic shapes	Hay bales, reflective pools (ponds etc.), sand, piles of leaves, large rocks, stumps, logs, coconut halves, sand	Plastic culvert pipe, ladders, hills, rope, hammocks, swings, monkey bars, tree house, caves, fallen trees, barrels, tractor tyres, cornstalks and trees to climb	Catalogues, books for stacking/climbing, overturned buckets, PVC pipes, garden furniture for climbing, CD's, sunglasses, transparent bottles, old maps, coffee cans, coloured lenses, everyday objects cut open or turned inside out	Mats for laying on, puppet theatre, magnifying glass, binoculars, compass, torches, shovels, hangers and hooks, overhead projector	Polydron, stilts, microscope, telescope, camera, binoculars, periscope, pop out tunnel, tent, outdoor climbing equipment, kaleidoscope, sky projector, 3-D puzzles, rocking horse, swing set, magic kits, acrylic blocks
Combining multiples of same objects, making finely detailed art, mosaics or collages, making confetti, harvesting, scooping and filling, ball pits, record breaking, unusual weather events, statistics, lists, textiles, layering or polishing, assembly lines, shops, displays, patterns, knitting, crocheting	Aggregating/ Cumulative effect Child enjoys creating whole items by combining separate parts and understanding how this could happen. They may enjoy engineering or problem solving tasks.	Sticky notes, lolly sticks, tiles, beads, wooden cubes, magnets, checker boards, stacks of cups, balloons, gems, coloured string, beach glass, found objects, objects sorted by colour, tissue paper squares, hair rollers, flat marbles, paper mache, Unifix cubes, math counters	Seeds, shells, shark teeth, pebbles, burdocks, chestnuts, berries, dried flowers, tree cookies, wildflowers (for bouquets), rocks, berries, pinecones, acorns, lotus pods, honeycomb, old wasp nests, sand, mud, piles of leaves, sandstone, wool for felting, stick of uniform length, polished stones, straw	Stacks of tyres or logs, planks, fallen branches, tree trunks for forts, facing mirrors, arranging chairs, stacks of milk crates, bricks, pallets	Bottles, caps, bread bag clips, kitchen backsplash tiles, stacking cups, corks, CD's (broken for mosaics), toilet paper tubes, pen caps, cheese wax (babybel), nuts and bolts, twist ties, anything that can be collected in large amounts	Canvas, grout, clay, cement, measuring tools, times, mirrors, camera, mesh, chicken wire, grid paper, resin, glue, pestle and mortar, flower press, containers for collecting	KAPLA planks, stickle bricks, wooden interlocking toys, craft kits (cross stitch, knitting, crocheting etc.), origami paper, paint by numbers, colouring books, rainbow, fuse beads, wool felting kits, Lego, collectable toys

Child's Interests (Things they may love)	They may be exploring (Schema)	Loose parts they may enjoy	Natural loose parts they may enjoy	Larger scale play (physical)	Recyclable/ Repurposed Materials	Additional tools to develop interests	Commercial toys/Gifts
Shaking, banging or tapping objects, musical instruments, crinkly paper, music, rhythm and rhyme, shouting in to open spaces, screaming and listening to sound back, listening to echoes, shouting in to cups and tubes, animal sounds, noisy appliances, cause and effect toys with noise	<p>Sound</p> <p>Children explore the world around them through sound. How does sound change in different space or with different items?</p> <p>How can I make different sounds? What sound will this object make if I shake/throw/hit stomp it?</p>	Straws, tubes, funnels, pipes, balloons, buttons, beads, bells, wind chimes, marbles, tins, PVC pipes, pots and pans, metal utensils, sandpaper blocks, cups, chains, cheese graters, glasses of water, singing bowls, wrenches, wire whisks, paper plates, combs, brushes, empty bottles filled with moveable items (lentils, matchsticks, stones etc.)	<p>Pebbles, small shells, conch shells (hold to ear and hear "sea"), bamboo shoots, bamboo guttering, hollow branches, coconut shells, walnut shells, seedpods, hollow gourds, blade of grass (hold between finger and thumb, blow for whistle effect), driftwood, crickets, cicadas</p>	<p>Hollow logs, metal bins, oil buckets, fence posts and sticks (running along), spaces with an echo, skipping rope, pogo stick, yoga ball, giant xylophone, large bin lids, corrugated metal roofing</p>	<p>Bottle caps, plastic Easter eggs (shakers), rubber bands, pipes, cardboard tubes, corrugated materials, plastic water bottles, mason jar lids, plastic bucket, tennis ball, old fabric (making tops of home made drums), old tins, yoghurt containers, bubble wrap, dried lentils and beans, metal measuring tape</p>	<p>Earmuffs (for others who don't enjoy so much noise), audio recorders, microphone, amplifiers, megaphone, stethoscope, speakers, computer, tablet, smart phone</p>	<p>Giggle sticks or groan tube, jibber jabber groan hammer, musical instruments, metal slinky, rainstick, slide whistle, harmonica, Kazoo, percussion toys, party blowers</p>

Table developed from:
"Inquiry-Based Early Learning Environments. Creating, supporting and collaborating"-Susan Stacey (2019)

Reference of Schematic learning-
 Atherton, F. and Nutbrown, C., 2013. *Understanding Schemas And Young Children*. Los Angeles: SAGE.



WELLBEING

Our approach is centered on child wellbeing and we would like to be able to support both your and your child's wellbeing at home during this time with this section.





I CAN SEE A RAINBOW...

If you have been for a walk around your community or been on social media recently, you may have noticed #rainbowwindows popping up everywhere! This is a lovely initiative to leave a bright and hopeful thank you to all our hard-working and valued key workers as they come to and from home, as well as creating a fun game for children to 'spot the rainbows' as they go for their daily walk.

We have been busy painting rainbows of all shapes, colours and sizes at forest school with our key worker children, and many of the Little Birds staff team now have beautiful rainbow windows painted by themselves and the children!

Have fun painting, collaging, crayoning or drawing rainbows with your children and pop them up in the window for others to spot. You might even see a few teddy bears on your outing... many lovely neighbours are popping them into their windows so that children can have fun going on a bear hunt too!

Look out soon for a rainbow painting video featuring our lovely Stephanie – and in the meantime, here's one I made earlier!





VALIDATION



Validation is a huge part of young children managing their emotions, especially big and difficult ones. Validating emotions and feelings can help children (and grown-up's!) to recognise that there are no bad feelings, only negative actions. A negative action is only negative because it can hurt or upset yourself or others – in effect because you aren't respecting their feelings! The following steps can be helpful in supporting your child to keep calm and to work things out together:

- 1) Keep your voice calm, even and level. If you need to be firm, change your tone, not your volume. This helps to bring calm to the chaos. It also means when you do use a 'big voice', it's likely because something is dangerous and needs to stop now.
- 2) Recognise how your child is feeling. For example, 'I can see you look really cross/upset.'
- 3) Provide reassurance. 'I want to help, but we need to work together!'
- 4) Identify the issue – ask what has made them feel as they do, and what you can do to help.
- 5) Validate their feelings. Remind them that 'it's okay if you're feeling ---. I understand that's really difficult or feels unfair. I want to help because I care about how you feel.'
- 6) Reflect together – when your child is feeling settled again, or a little while later, you can always talk through what happened and help your child to recognise how their feelings changed, and what helped or didn't.

Children can find it difficult to recognise how they are feeling, but when given the tools to do so, such as understanding the words for different feelings, they are just as adept as adults (and sometimes more so!) at addressing their feelings and expressing them to others. Having an open language of talking about emotions in an everyday, matter of fact manner can also help children to develop empathy and self-regulate their own emotions.



5 DEEP BREATHS

Doing this quick breathing exercise together with your children can help them to pause, catch up with how they are feeling emotionally and physically and regulate their breathing. Having a visual guide using your hands means you can literally show your child their breathing as it goes up, and down, in, and out. A nice way to use this throughout the day is to recognise how your breathing changes at different times – for example, laying your hand on your child's heart when you are cuddling and explaining that you can feel that they are calm. Your child may want to find your heartbeat too!

CALM DOWN WITH TAKE 5 BREATHING

How do you feel now?
Are you calm or would you like to take another 5 breaths?

1. Stretch your hand out like a star.
2. Get the pointer finger of your other hand ready to trace your fingers up and down.
3. Slide up each finger slowly ~ slide down the other side.
4. Breathe in through your nose ~ out through your mouth.
5. Put it together and breathe in as you slide up and breathe out as you slide down.

Keep going until you have finished tracing your hand.



BABY BIRDS AT HOME

Our under 2s lead Elysia will provide you with nature play ideas, developmental insights and observations here each week.





HEURISTIC PLAY

Heuristic play, a term coined by Elinor Goldschmeid in the 1980s, is rooted in young children's natural curiosity. As babies grow, they move beyond being content to simply feel and ponder objects, to wanting to find out what can be done with them. Children have an urge to handle things: to gather, fill, dump, stack, knock down, select and manipulate in other ways.

The heuristic play idea simply involves allowing children to play with real-world objects that are present in the home, which is great when that's where we are all expected to be at the moment!

Heuristic play ideas

Different sized and shaped boxes and containers, with and without lids. Such as egg boxes, shoe boxes, mettle coffee tins etc. Perhaps with other items that could fit inside such as corks, pine cones or pebbles

Cds and cardboard tubes

Something that could act as an upright pole such as mug trees or kitchen roll holders with anything circular that could be hung or slid over them, such as curtain rings, hairbands, bracelets, small sections of cardboard tube, napkin rings, tape rolls

Different sized tubes

Treasure baskets are a type of heuristic play and are well suited to children that are a little less mobile. (see the next couple of pages for more about these)

For those children who are a little older and like to move around more, heuristic play is better set up in a cleared space on the floor for a designated period of time.

The Adults Role

The adults sit quietly around the outside of the room so as not to distract the child's natural exploration, they do not direct the play in any way and only support the child if they come to them for help, are distressed or they sense that their child has had enough.

HEURISTIC PLAY



What are they?

Treasure baskets for babies can help them to:

- Explore natural objects, textures and colours, using their senses
- Develop attention and concentration
- Practise and refine their motor control and hand/eye coordination
- Make simple choices and develop preferences
- Explore and develop current schemas or ways of learning

Treasure baskets and schemas

You may already know and have read about Schemas. Often treasure baskets are an opportunity for children to explore schemas further. Parents could support children's learning with relevant collections of objects to support schemas they observe in other play.

Treasure Baskets



Treasure baskets contain collections of objects that are usually natural or made from natural objects. They enable babies to explore the texture, taste, smell and sound of objects, not just the look of them.

The basket itself is usually made from willow, wicker or other natural woven material, but it doesn't have to be of course. It needs to have a broad base and big opening so they can get to the contents easily and not tip the basket over.

Make sure objects are 'washable, wipeable or disposable' and not so small they could swallow them.

What is the role of the adult in these experiences?

Try not to intervene unless they really need you. It is recommended that adults do not participate in the treasure basket sessions even to start off the play, but for the child to explore the contents on their own time. However, especially for younger babies, they need to feel secure that the adult is nearby. So the adult could sit next to the child and watch while they explore independently.

HEURISTIC PLAY



The 'rolling along' basket

- Pebbles
- Role of tape
- Road tins
- Tennis ball
- Golf ball
- Small and large cardboard rolls
- Marble or wooden egg
- Curtain rings
- Pom pom ball
- Coaster
- Tyres from toy cars
- Wooden wheels

The 'sounds of metal' basket

- A garlic press
- Small baking tins
- Mirror with metal frame
- Bulldog clips
- Small whisk
- Spoons
- Tin lids
- Keys
- Metal utensils
- Metal musical instruments such as bells, a triangle, wind chimes
- Small saucepan
- Metal toy car
- Curtain rings

The touch basket

- Fir cones of various sizes
- Shells
- Feathers
- Pumice stone
- Loofah
- Natural sponge
- Pebbles
- Drift wood
- Corks
- Rope
- Nail brush
- A small teddy
- A shaving brush
- Disposables:
- A lemon, an orange, cardboard tubes, paper, tinfoil, an apple

The 'sense of smell' basket

Some of these items may need putting in jars with holes in the lids or in bags. Perhaps little fabric bags or gauze fastened with elastic if available.

- Lavender bags
- Nutmeg
- Soaps
- Lemons and oranges
- Bags of spices
- Cinnamon sticks
- Coffee beans
- Bay leaves
- Basil
- Essential oils (on tissue in jars)

Other ideas

Some of these may also work well with older children.

- Float or sink, colours, sparkle and shine, sound of instruments, magnetic, light and heavy brushes, bathroom

HEURISTIC PLAY





EYFS LINKED ACTIVITIES

Whilst our delivery of the Early Years Foundation Stage is through play and educator centred 'scaffolding', for those families that may have an interest or would like to help their child develop within the EYFS, we will offer some learning objective linked, play based ideas here each week, and will show which area of the EYFS is being met.

A really good idea would be to put pictures and comments on your child's Tapestry account so our educators can see the lovely things you are doing!

TREMENDOUS TREES



EYFS Link – Understanding the world and Expressive Arts and Design

Just a few weeks ago the trees in your street or park were totally bare but now there is an explosion of new life and colour. This is a perfect time to start noticing and exploring trees. The Woodland Trust provide great tick sheets to help you identify some of the tree twigs, leaves and blossom in your local area.

Bark Rubbing

The bark of a tree is to protect it from all sorts of insects, fungi and diseases. It also helps the tree breath! You will need: a piece of paper and wax crayons. Choose a tree with interesting textured bark. Place your paper flat against the tree trunk and rub the side of your crayon all over your paper. Try a different type of tree, has it got a different pattern?



Shake a tree

Trees provide homes for hundreds of different insects, spiders and other animals. You will need: a piece of white material (a white t-shirt or pillow case will do). Lay your material under a tree or bush. Shake the branches of the tree. See what falls out! You might find tiny spiders, an early ladybird coming out of hibernation or even a shield bug!





TREMENDOUS TREES

Mirror Walk

The leaves of a tree make food for the tree from the sun, the veins in the leaf supply the leaf with water and take the food to the rest of the tree. You will need: card, scissors, a paperclip and a leaf. Cut a piece of card into a rectangle, fold to make a square. Cut a small square (approx. 5cm by 5cm) in the centre of the card through both pieces of card to make a square shaped window. Find a tree leaf and place it between the two squares of card, so that you can see it in the window. Close the leaf viewer with a paperclip. Hold your viewer up to the light and look closely at the veins and colour. Swap leaves with someone else, can you see any differences? Shuffle the viewers and see if you can remember which is your leaf. See the branches of the tree in your mirror. Get a grown up to hold your arm so that you don't trip up, then slowly walk around under the tree looking down into the mirror. Pretend you are a squirrel looking for somewhere to make your nest!

Mirror Walk

You will need: a small mirror. Find a large tree with branches spreading out. Place the mirror under your nose and look down into it. You should be able to see the branches of the tree in your mirror.

Get a grown up to hold your arm so that you don't trip up, then slowly walk around under the tree looking down into the mirror. Pretend you are a squirrel looking for somewhere to make your nest!

Hug a tree

Trees give us our oxygen to breath and help to take pollution out of our air. They even give us shade from the sun and shelter from a rain shower in the summer. Say thank you by giving your local tree a big hug!



STICK MAN!



EYFS Link – Literacy and Personal Social and Emotional Development-

Personal, social and emotional development: self-confidence and self-awareness : Children are confident to speak about ideas for a story and the resources needed.

Literacy – writing and recounting familiar stories

Resources

Some small sticks and natural materials, PVA glue, wiggly eyes or pen, paper and pencil, and tarp or old sheet.

Introduction

Read the story 'Stick Man' by Julia Donaldson to the group. Take the children outside in to a natural area that will have some sticks on the ground, and allow them to choose a small stick (tip – keep them smaller than the child's forearm so they can be brought back in to the indoor space!)

Activity

Set up an area where they can stick some wiggly eyes on their chosen stick, or draw the eyes on if you don't have wiggly eyes! While the glue dries, the children have time to hunt for some additional natural items in the garden that might feature in their storytelling. Allow them to take the lead, they may want an additional stick, leaves for a blanket, pinecones to be a tree or an animal. Think Forky from Toy Story 4 but with natural materials! Lay out a tarp or sheet for them to place their treasures on and support them if necessary to create their stick man. Ask the children to tell the story of their stick man, allowing them time and space to act it out. Sit with the child and write out the story, as they say it, in their own words. When each child has finished, ask the child next to them if there is anything else they would like to know about their friends Stick Man?

Extension Ideas

Take pictures of the items the children found and take your scribed story to make a small story book for each child. Make a display or a provocation in a tray from their items, and allow them time to play imaginatively with them.





PRINTABLE OF THE WEEK

*Look out for some fun things to either colour, collect, draw
or more in this section.*



CAN YOU COLOUR IN OUR OWN LITTLE BIRD?

