



Dear Parents

We hope you and your families are well and making the best you can of the lockdown situation. Nursery staff have been thinking of you and have especially missed being with the children. The recent extension to the lockdown means that unfortunately we will not be starting the new term on Monday.

In the meantime, we thought you might like a few ideas on how to keep your children entertained and learning. Please don't feel that you have to do all or any of the activities, it's just ideas you can use if you need some inspiration.

For the record...

Keep a photo diary each week of something special that you/your child/family have done during their time at home. We can put these memories in their nursery learning journals.

Playdough

At nursery the children love using play dough and can enjoy playing with it for ages. Not only is it great fun but while poking, rolling and squishing the play dough, children develop the small muscles in their fingers, critical areas of physical development for writing, drawing and other purposes.



- Here is an easy recipe made with cornflour which may be easier to obtain.

How to make it?

1. Place hair conditioner into a medium bowl and add a few drops of food colouring.
2. With a spoon, mix the colouring through the conditioner.
3. Add 1 cup of cornflour and stir. Then add the last cup of cornflour to the mixture.
4. Constantly stir the mixture until it begins to form a thick blob.
5. Turn the play dough out onto a clean surface...

Memory Tray Game.

This is a great way to stimulate the memory. It can be played as a group or individually with your child. The Tray Game is a memory game which children really enjoy, especially if you make the objects on the tray interesting.

Preparation:

Find a selection of interesting small objects and arrange them on a tray, which you should keep covered with a tea-towel until you are ready to play the game. Vary the number of objects according to the ages of your children.



Play:

Uncover the tray and place it where all children can see it. Give the children a certain amount of time to memorize the contents of the tray, then cover it up again.

Remove one of the objects. Replace the tea-towel and ask the children which object is missing.

Vary the objects according to the abilities of the children. Older children might be given some tiny objects such as a pin or a paper clip; younger children will remember better if they are given larger, brighter objects.

You can give the children hints on how to remember the objects, such as memorising their position relative to other objects ("the pin is next to a needle and both are found in a sewing basket"), looking at their initial letters ("there are 4 objects on the tray beginning with the letter p and 2 with the letter m") and so on.

Be aware that some children have much more developed memory skills than others, so don't be surprised if you have a clear winner.

Baking

All the children at nursery really enjoy cooking, here's a simple flap jack recipe you could try.

Ingredients

Serves: 10

- 125g butter or margarine
- 100g dark brown soft sugar
- 4 tablespoons golden syrup
- 250g rolled oats
- 40g sultanas or raisins



Continued

Method

Prep:15min > Cook:30min > Ready in:45min

1. Preheat the oven to 180 C / Gas mark 4.
2. In a saucepan over low heat, combine the butter, brown sugar and golden syrup. Cook, stirring occasionally, until butter and sugar have melted. Stir in the oats and sultanas until coated. Pour into an 20cm square baking tin. The mixture should be about 2 to 3cm thick.
3. Bake for 30 minutes in the preheated oven, or until the top is golden. Cut into squares, then leave to cool completely before removing from the tin.

Outdoor Activities

Obstacle Course

Just before we closed all the children took part in an obstacle course. The children enjoy taking part in these and they can be set up in your garden or inside space. You can create exciting obstacles to enhance development in balance, coordination, alertness, body awareness, strength and endurance. At home you could use some of these ideas:

- Crawl under a chair or row of chairs
- Jump in and out of a hula hoop, practise counting
- Walk on a balance board
- Throw and catch a ball
- Throw a ball into a target
- Balance on one foot and count to 10
- Run in and out of cones

Use numbers and ask your child to count steps, jumps etc.

You could then ask your child to make an obstacle course for you!!

Spring Scavenger Hunt

Spring is emerging and a beautiful time to get out and explore. There are many scavenger hunts available online to print off. Take a collection bag with you and a pencil so your child can mark make when they find the items.

Hunt for different textures

This activity gets your child to use their observation skills – it's amazing what you notice when you really look.

How many different natural textures can you spot in your garden or on a walk? Make a list and see what you can find:

- Rough bark-you could make a bark rubbing
- Silky flower petals
- Velvety moss
- Smooth shiny pebbles

- Something prickly or spiny
- Crackly leaves
- A soft bud or catkin

Bluebell craft

Bluebell season is here and for the next few weeks many woods will have gorgeous purple blue carpets. Here is an ideal indoor nature activity for a rainy day.

Simply draw a bright green stem and leaves on some card, then look for scraps of blue paper and card to make the nodding bell-shaped flower heads. Maybe you could make them for relatives or display in your window for others to see.



Encourage independence

Try to create a 'child only' area (a small space or corner) somewhere in the house and put in something different each day such as, paper and glue, some jigsaws, paper and pens/crayons, make a card etc. Make sure the activity will interest your child and encourage them to do it alone. While they are in their space don't engage with them and if they drift out to get your attention guide them back in again. Allow your child time to sort out problem for themselves – mistakes are good for learning and you will be surprised how resourceful they can be if given space and time.

Looking to the future

During lockdown we have cleaned, tidied and prepared the nursery to be ready for opening as soon as we get the go ahead.

Hopefully we will see you all soon.

Love from the Rickmansworth Nursery team.