



February Newsletter 2015

Dear Parents/ Carers

Welcome to the February newsletter bringing you up to date with what has been happening here at Toy Box during the month of January as well as our plans for the month ahead.

Baby Unit

Throughout January in the baby room staff spent a lot of time encouraging the babies to develop their large physical skills.

Staff encouraged all the children to move around the room, accessing all the areas and equipment through standing, walking, crawling and where necessary by using the baby walker.

The babies also spent lots of time doing different creative activities using several different resources. The results of their efforts are now proudly displayed on the walls for all to see.

In the Rabbits room the bigger babies thoroughly enjoyed playing in the home corner. In order to extend the activity further staff gave the children mugs and tea pots to make cups of tea for everyone, which they thoroughly enjoyed.

The Rabbits also enjoyed mark making over the last month with their favourite being playing with shaving foam. All the children enjoy the way they can manipulate the foam, squashing and clapping their hands together as it squeezes through their fingers. They also enjoy dipping their fingers in the shaving foam to draw different shapes on the table tops.

Staff have also been working hard with the Rabbits in order to help them gain an understanding of boundaries. As they develop and gain more confidence they also often decide that they wish to do what they want, when they want. This is all very normal and something we witness regularly. Staff are very patient and work hard to get the children used to nursery routines and boundaries. As you can appreciate, this is an ongoing project!

Early Years Unit

The Piglets have spent lots of time playing games and partaking in activities which help them with colour recognition and names.

Staff also spent time with the children looking at opposites, introducing new language and meanings to the Piglets such as empty, full, big and little, loud and quiet. This particular activity takes place continuously across the nursery through the use of sand and water play, musical instruments and building blocks. They all enjoy filling and emptying different sized

containers, using musical instruments loudly and then quietly and building big towers and then little towers.

We have also had some new starters in the Piglet room and as usual the children are encouraged to help the new starters to settle in by befriending them and making sure they know where the toilets are. This makes the children feel very grown up and they take their roles very seriously.

The Tiggers have continued their work on phonics, learning and recognising written letters. Some of the children are still practising forming letters to write the initial letter of their name and in some instances their full name. The children have then been able to extend this activity by accessing computer software we now have. The programme encourages the children to identify the missing letters in words by sounding out words in order to identify the missing letter.

Another favourite activity this month has been den building in the conservatory using the camouflage equipment. The children spent ages creating whole new worlds where they each took on a role as they hid away in their den, planning the next adventure. Imagination at its best!

Birthdays

We have four birthdays this month here at Toy Box and I'm sure you will join with us as we wish them all a very Happy Birthday.

Rabbits	– Miley 2
Piglet	– Laine 3, Sam 3
Tiggers	– Jayden 4.

Staff member of the month

This month the award goes to Louise Carr, Senior Nursery nurse for the baby unit. Louise was nominated for always being pleasant and happy and showing genuine care for the children she looks after. Well done Louise!

Please continue to nominate staff for this award as it means a lot to know they are appreciated for all the hard work they do on a daily basis.

Staff Changes

During the month of January we have had a couple of staff changes.

Our general assistant, Lisa Gregory, has left us as she has decided to become a full time stay at home Mum. We are all very sad to see Lisa go and understand fully the reason for her decision. We wish her well and thank her for all her hard work and dedication during her time here at Toy Box.

Our new general assistant, Jolanta Wojnicz, has taken over her role. I'm sure parent/ carers will have already met Jolanta as she goes about her daily routines.

Jolanta has had a lot of previous experience in carrying out this role and we extend Jolanta a warm welcome to our staff team here at Toy Box.

We have also been joined by Nursery Nurse Emma Leese. Emma has been qualified for over a year and her role here at Toy Box will be to support staff across the nursery where needed.

We extend a very warm welcome to both new members of staff and hope they will be very happy with us here at Toy Box.

Mud Kitchen!

For some time now staff have been working hard to develop a "mud kitchen" in our outdoor play area which will be freely accessible to all the children. This facility is now up and running and even though we call it a "mud kitchen" we don't actually have to use mud all the time, especially not during these wet winter months.

Currently the "mud kitchen" is filled with sand which will be alternated with bark chippings, leaves etc. anything the children can pour, mix, stir and generally pretend to cook with.

A whole range of resources including acorns, twigs, water and lots of natural materials will be made available so the children are encouraged to mix the materials together to create lots of different textures.

The aim of the mud kitchen is to encourage children to explore their environment. The kitchen also provides a lovely familiar link to children's own 'home' setting, offering several opportunities for co-operative and interactive play.

The great thing about a mud kitchen is that it will develop with the children, providing many different learning experiences throughout the year.

Nursery Restructure

As a nursery we are constantly updating our knowledge and working practices through training, reading and attending various forums.

As a result of discussions and looking at how other settings structure their groups of children within the nursery we have decided to do a bit of restructuring ourselves, particularly around how we separate the different age groups of children.

Currently when our babies turn two years old they leave the small gentle environment of the rabbits room and come down stairs to the hustle and bustle of the downstairs environment. Similarly when a two year old starts nursery they too go straight into the downstairs rooms. For those two year olds who are nearly three that is fine but for those children who have just turned two it can be a bit of an ordeal.

In order to combat this problem and to make nursery less daunting and more enjoyable for all the children we have decided on a little restructuring according to age along the following lines

Baby Unit, currently known as Pooh Bears room will accommodate children from three months to eighteen months.

Rabbits room will become one of two Early Years rooms and will accommodate children from eighteen months to two and a half years old.

The second Early Years room is downstairs and currently known as Piglets room. This room will accommodate children between the ages of two and a half and three and a half years old.

Pre-school Unit, currently known as Tiggers room, will accommodate children between three and a half and five years old.

So the nursery room structure will be as follows:

Baby Unit,	1 room (upstairs) 3 months to 18 months
Early Years Unit ,	2 rooms – room 1 (upstairs), 18 months to 2 ½ years.
	room 2 (downstairs), 2 ½ years to 3 ½ years
Pre-school Unit –	1 room (downstairs) 3 ½ years to 5 years

As part of the restructuring process we will also be renaming each of the rooms, moving equipment around, introducing new equipment and changing routines. This will ensure that all the equipment, curriculum and play space is age appropriate and fully meets the needs of all the children in each room.

We feel that these changes will benefit all the children and will also bring us in line with how other nurseries structure their age groups. Staff meetings have already taken place and all the staff are fully on board with the proposed changes.

These changes are not going to happen overnight as we need to make sure that all changes are implemented slowly and gradually, with minimum disruption to everyday life at nursery.

Staff are currently looking at and sourcing new resources. If all goes to plan we should have everything in place and up and running for when all the children return after the Easter break. This allows us enough time to identify any issues, gather any other additional resources we may need and plan and implement the routines. It also allows parent/ carers plenty of time to express any concerns they may have regarding our plans.

If any parent/ carer is in any way worried about these plans please do not hesitate to come and talk to me. I will be more than happy to answer any questions you may have.

Dates to remember

Friday 13th February – last day of term for grant only children.

Monday 23rd February – first day back after half term for grant only children.

February Menu

Sue has planned a lovely menu for February which you will find attached to this newsletter. Any feedback on the menu as well as ideas for any future menus are always welcome.

And finally.....

As usual we thank all parents/ carers for your continuing support. Please remember that all your comments, concerns and suggestions are welcome, taken seriously and acted upon if necessary.

Joanne and all the Staff at Toy Box Day Nursery