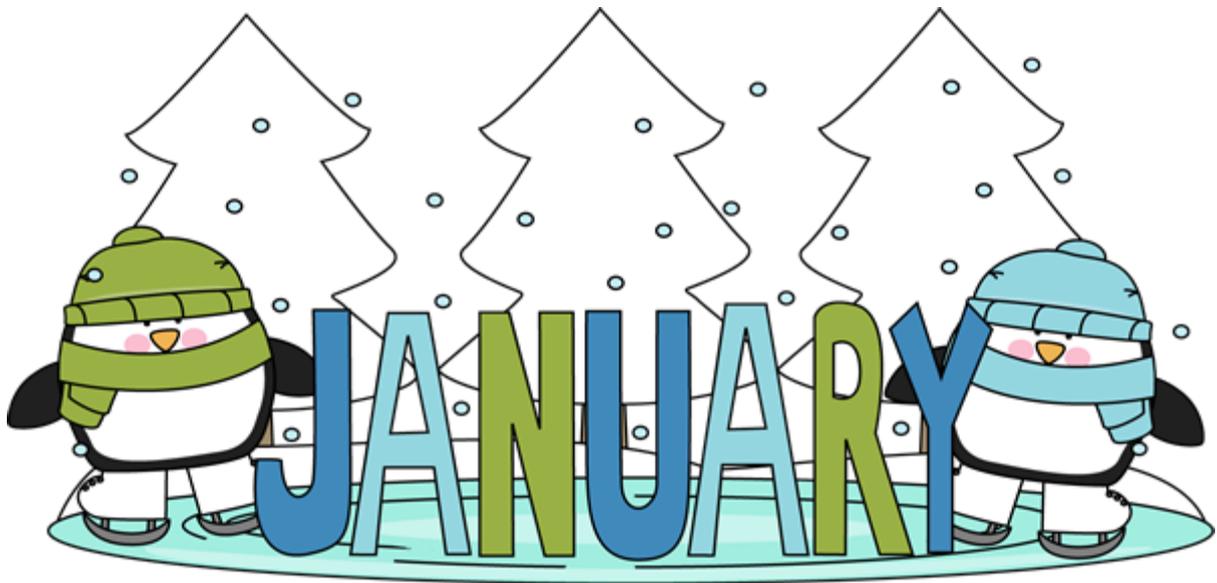


Preparing children for school



Focus this month – Physical development

Physical development focus -

- Giving children little jobs to promote physical development eg pouring water
- Taking children to play at the park or make dens in the woods
- Setting out fiddly fingers / fine motor skills challenges every day
- Doing lots of mark making
- Making food together
- Teaching children about daily routine

Throughout the month we will also work on –

Alphabet – letters R, S, T and U

Maths –

- Pattern and shape; shape counting mat and shape recognition mat
- Illustrated songs – 5 little snowmen and 5 little men in a flying saucer

Dear Parents,

To help you prepare your child for school, this month we will be focusing on **physical development**. There are 3 aspects to physical development in the EYFS and we want to help your child develop well across all 3 so they are ready for school in September. The 3 strands to physical development are –

- Moving - gross motor development
- Handling - fine motor skills
- Teaching children about health and self-care.

When they go to school children need to be able to move confidently in lots of different ways... have the manual dexterity skills and hand / arm strength they need to learn to write... take care of their own toileting needs... put on their shoes... get dressed and undressed for playtime and PE (Velcro really does help!)... manage eating and drinking independently... understand about healthy eating and the importance of brushing teeth... wash their own hands... know that they need to drink plenty of water through the day to stay healthy etc.

We would like to share with parent a few of the ways we are supporting thier child to develop strong hands and arms so they are ready for learning to write at school... because, of course, they can't write until their muscles are well enough developed to be able to hold and control a pencil! Just 5 - 10 minutes focus on fine motor skills every day can help build essential hand and arm movements.

We plan a daily 'fiddly fingers' activity such as

- Putting marbles in and out of a jar
- Feeding bottle tops into a tissue box
- Weaving ribbons through a colander
- Writing in sand or lentils
- Colouring in pictures
- Dressing and undressing dolls
- Whisking up and playing with soap flakes
- Building big towers
- Tearing coloured paper
- Moulding with playdough or clay
- Folding paper aeroplanes
- Mark making with different sized brushes
- Cutting with scissors
- Threading beads onto pipe cleaners
- Drawing with chalk
- Moving around glittery glue
- Fastening zips and buttons
- Painting with paint pens or fingers
- Using chopsticks to make a picture
- Tracing letters, numbers or shapes
- Making patterns with buttons
- Pushing craft sticks into playdough
- Singing finger songs and rhymes together
- Weaving round a cardboard shape
- Making colour patterns with Lego

Ideas for supporting children's physical development

We support children's physical development every day, introducing different activity ideas which will hopefully engage the children so they want to join in. For example, we start every day with a 'wake up shake up' routine to get everyone, including adults, moving because we know that movement promotes brain development. Our weekly planning to support physical development includes...

Moving Example – gross motor skills

Monday	Dance mat in the garden –balance and coordination; teaches cause and effect
Tuesday	Hopscotch – promotes balance and different ways of moving; teaches counting
Wednesday	Den making – strengthens muscles; teaches cooperation/promotes conversation
Thursday	Visit to the park – walking, running, climbing, jumping etc – risk taking
Friday	Football in the garden – running, stopping, jumping

Handling example – fine motor skills

Monday	Nature weaving – with grass, flowers, straw etc collected on a nature walk
Tuesday	Using tweezers to put sparkles on glue
Wednesday	Water play with eye droppers
Thursday	Folding origami animals or planes
Friday	Making and using playdough

Health and self-care example

Monday	Jump over a skipping rope and use it as a balance beam
Tuesday	Getting dressed and undressed after water play
Wednesday	Road safety talk during outing to the library
Thursday	Make lunch together
Friday	Push buttons through button holes and zip up zips

Literacy focus - R is for...

Robot – making a robot from junk modelling and play / walking like a robot. Watching the film 'Robots' with the children during a special cinema afternoon, cuddles on the sofa and some special treat popcorn.

Red – making some red flowers – taking the children on a red walk – looking for red toys in the playroom and collecting them in a basket – making a red tower with the Lego – doing some red painting or drawing. Extension idea – reading the story of the 'Little red hen' (traditional tale) and making some bread together.

Rocket – singing '5 little men in a flying saucer, flew round the world one day. They looked left and right but they didn't like the sight so one man flew away... zoom!' with the children. Counting the song down to 0. Making some rockets together using tubes and lots of craft materials and glue.

Focus - R is for Rabbit

- Singing 'hop little rabbits' with the children
- Visiting a pet shop and see the rabbits
- Reading a rabbit book such as 'Guess how much I love you' by Sam McBratney
- Making a paper craft rabbit –instructions online
- Making a paper plate rabbit mask



Literacy focus - S is for...

Simon says – including the physical, maths, literacy etc skills we want children to learn to give this listening game more focus. For example, we can include instructions that teach children how to hop or jump – or we can use the game to help them practice counting, colours and shapes.

Star – making some twinkling stars from card and decorate them with lots of glitter. Singing 'Twinkle twinkle little star' and learning the poem 'star light, star bright'.

Sea shell – saying the rhyme 'she sells sea shells on the sea shore' with the children. Using shells for other learning eg sorting by size and shape, looking at colours and rubbing to notice patterns.

Stuffed socks - filling old socks with different items and playing a listening game. Fillings might include marbles, sand, paper, beads, cereal, rice etc. Working out how to make the sound – do you need to shake or squeeze the sock? Describe the sound...

Focus – S is for snail

Example activity ideas include –

- Going on a snail hunt in the garden – what colours are snail shells?
- Making snails from paper – showing the children how to hold the scissors straight and move the paper round and round to cut the circles.
- Reading a book or tell a story about a snail.
- Snails are very slow – having a snail race – can the children move slowly like a snail?



Literacy focus - T is for...

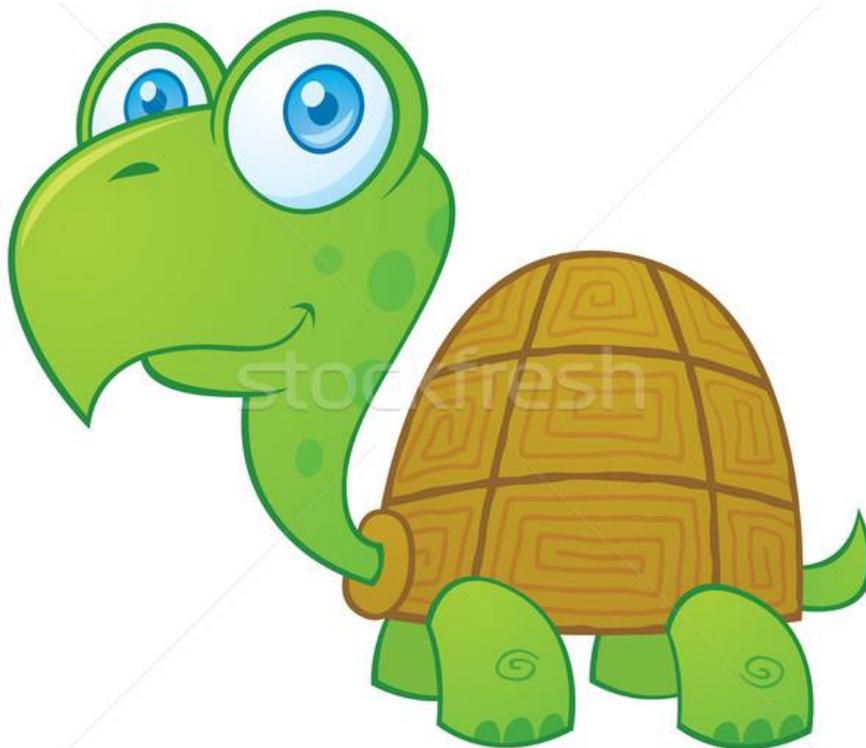
Tap to the beat - using beaters or claps and vary how we do them to include, for example – fast, slow, two together then a third, skip, march etc.

Treasure – setting out a treasure hunt in the garden. We start very simply with 2 or 3 instructions and build up the game as children get better at finding things and following instructions. Hiding some buried treasure in the sand tray – counting how many pieces of treasure each child finds. Older children might like to make treasure maps.

Tiger – making some tiger masks using paper plates – 1 for every child. We will need orange paint to cover the plate – challenging the children to mix orange – and some black strips of sticky tape for the stripes. Can the children draw a nose and tiger mouth? Extension activity – reading 'The tiger who came to tea' by Judith Kerr with the children.

Focus – T is for turtle Example activity ideas include –

- Making up a story about Trevor the Turtle who lives in the sea with his family and friends. What adventures might Trevor get up to? Letting the children add their own thoughts to the story...
- A turtle buries its eggs in the sand – burying some small eggs in the sand tray and finding them.
- Watching a film about turtle conservation together.



Literacy focus - U is for...

Umbrella – We will draw some simple umbrellas and decorate them with the children – they can be any colour you want! Looking at patterned umbrellas – can the children make patterns like zig zags and curves on their umbrellas?

Extension – reading the story of 'Uppy Umbrella' with the children

Underwater – making an underwater scene with the children. Painting the inside of an old shoe box blue and add fish and jellyfish and some seaweed dangling from the top. Using the underwater scene for storytelling – and watching some of the film 'Finding Nemo' to spark children's imaginative play.

Underwear – reading 'the Queen's Knickers' by Nicholas Allan and 'Aliens love Underpants' by Claire Freedman with the children to introduce them to the word 'underwear' which they might not have heard before. Talking about our underwear – what is it like? What colour pants / vest are we wearing today? Drawing our underwear... and making some underwear for a dinosaur!

Focus – U is for unicorn Example activity ideas include –

- Finding out about unicorns – are they real or pretend?
- What do the children think unicorns eat? Where do they live?
- Looking at pictures of narwhals swimming in the sea – are they a little bit like unicorns?
- Drawing your own unicorn – what colour do the children want it to be?
- Unicorns are magical animals (in pretend land) – what magic can the children do?



Pattern

Making our own pattern booklets to encourage children to copy the shapes – this will give them the skills they will need for writing numerals and letters in the future. Pages to include in a home-made shape and pattern book include for example –

- Zig zags
- Straight lines
- Curvy lines
- Triangles
- Squares
- Dots
- Half moons
- Circles

...any combinations of the above.

Looking at patterns in nature – collecting natural resources such as leaves, stones, bark, photos of cobwebs, fir cones etc and looking closely at the patterns on them.

Patterns on animals / minibeasts – looking at animal fur in books or on the internet. Making a collection of pictures of different types of skin / fur, noting the patterns eg black and white zebras, brown spotty giraffes, stripy wasps or tigers etc.

Bottle top patterns – using coloured bottle tops to set out coloured patterns.

Activity idea example – making our own pattern book, laminating the sheets for longer life. Using the pattern book to inspire children's mark making. Including patterns inspired from nature (leaves, bark, flowers etc) and collecting patterns on, for example, wallpaper samples.

Supporting home learning – suggesting parents to take their children on a pattern walk at the weekend with a camera. Take photos of the patterns and email or WhatsApp them to us so their child can talk about what they have been doing and show them to the group.

Shape

Shapes with blocks - putting out some blocks on a tray – including cubes, cuboids, cylinders, cones etc and a few prompts saying 'what can you make?' When the children make different structures with the blocks we will take photos of them to print.

If the children are short of ideas we could make up some suggestion cards for them...

- Can you make a pyramid?
- Can you make a house / castle?
- Can you make a line with blue and red bricks?
- Can you make a square / triangle / rectangle?
- Can you make a rocket / tractor? Adding cards linked to whatever children are currently interested in playing with in other areas of our continuous provision...
- Can you make a tower with 6 bricks? Etc...

Focus book – 'The Blue Balloon' by Mick Inkpen – Kipper finds a balloon and blows it up. The balloon changes shape as his imagination takes him to the moon.

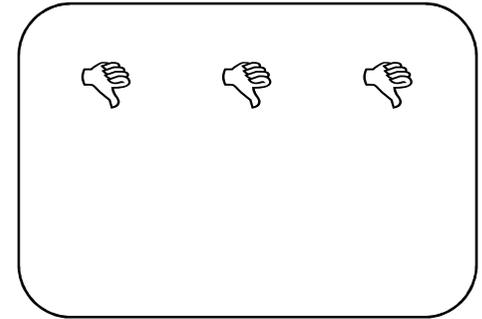
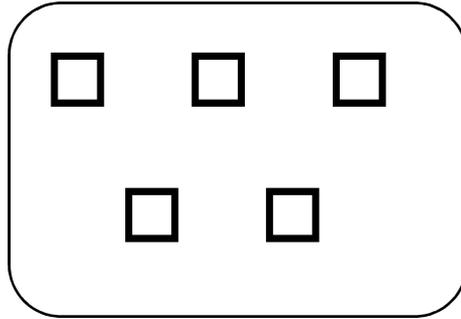
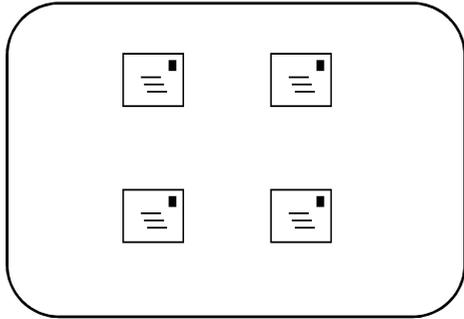
Resources include –

- Lots of blocks – different sizes for inside and outside play
- Shape people – making up stories about them and songs to teach their shapes
- Shape stickers to build pictures of houses or robots
- Arabic pattern boxes
- Shape symmetry challenges
- Sorting and matching games

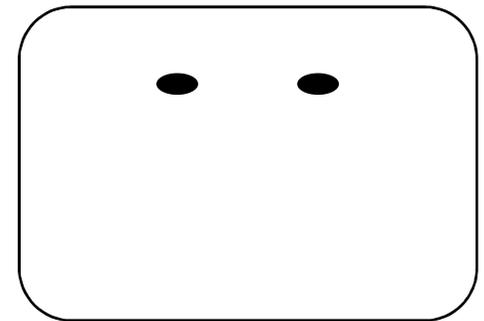
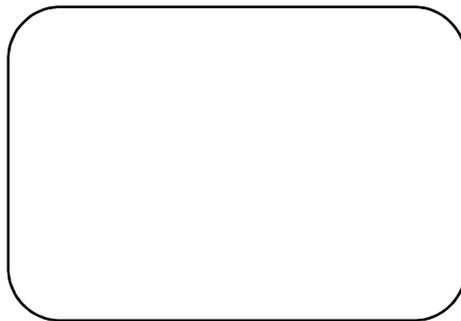
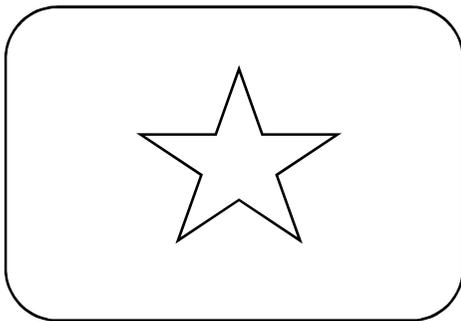
Activity idea example – making a shape puzzle with craft sticks – 3 for a triangle, 4 for a square, 6 for a rectangle etc. For younger children we might find it helpful to use coloured craft sticks to help them find the correct number before they start making their shape.

Supporting home learning – sharing some shape activity ideas with parents that they can easily use at home eg colouring an Arabic pattern together.

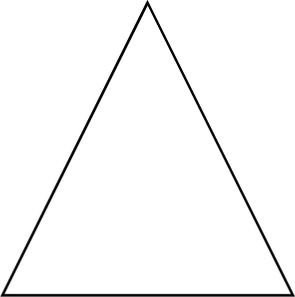
Shape counting mat



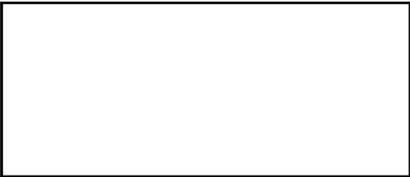
How many shapes can you count?



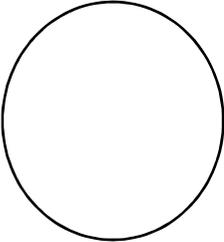
Shape recognition mat



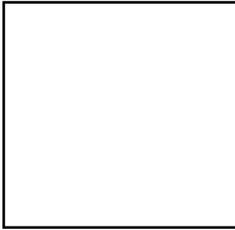
triangle



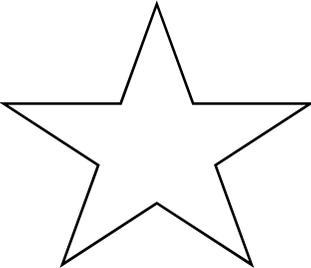
rectangle



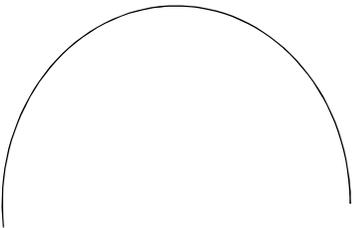
circle



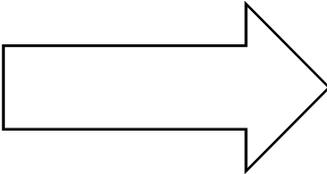
square



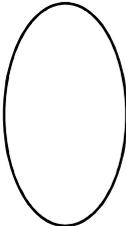
star



curve



arrow



oval

5 little snowmen

5 little snowmen round and fat
Each with a scarf and a little bobble hat
Out came the sun and melted one
And four little snowmen stood in the sun.
...continue counting down to 0



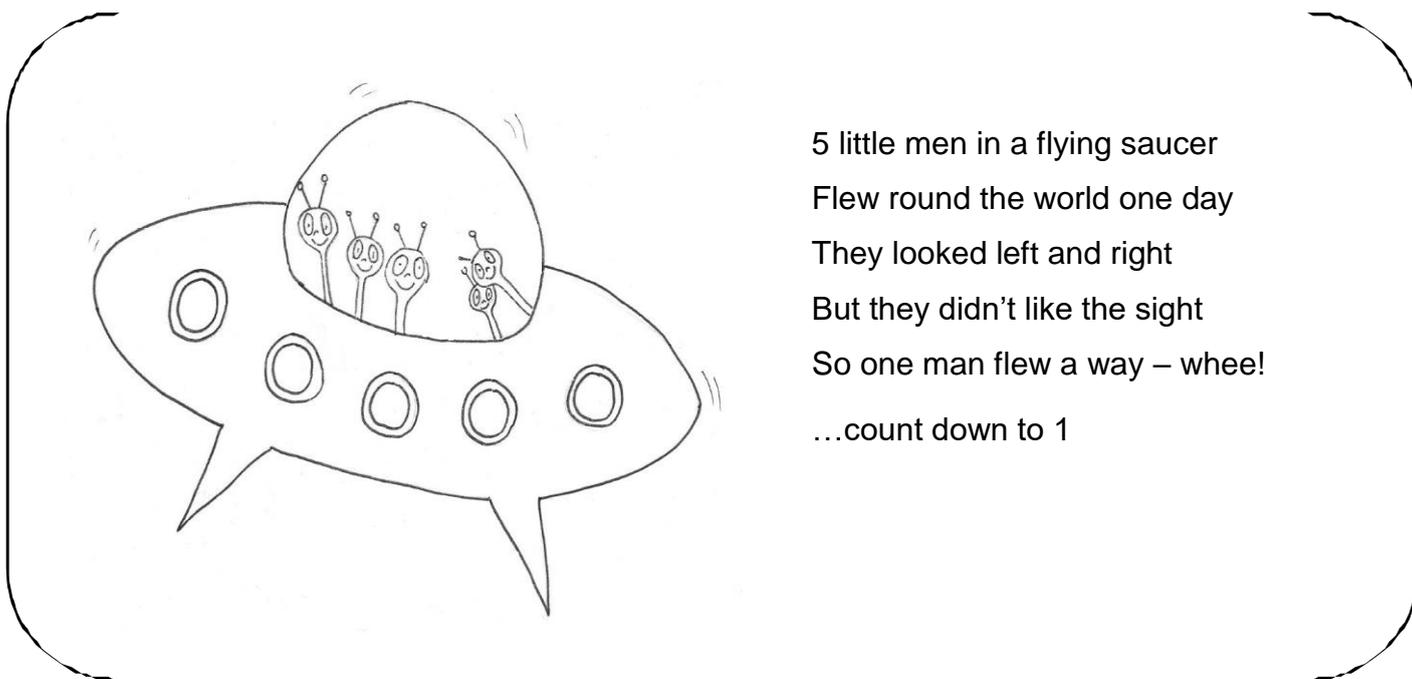
Activity ideas example – 5 little snowmen

This song is great for singing in winter or during the first snow...

- Making snowmen from paper plates – giving them individual faces and scarves / hats
- Playing with pretend snow in the messy tray – adding snowy world animals to bring the role play alive
- Making some white playdough together
- Making white hand prints and draw snowmen features
- Talking about hot and cold – doing some experiments with ice on the radiator – what do the children think will happen?
- Making ice pops – yum!
- Reading a snowy world book with the children eg 'Say hello to the winter animals' by Ian Whybrow or 'Winter' by Gerda Muller

Observing – can the children make comparisons between hot and cold?

Support home learning – sharing our playdough recipe with parents



5 little men in a flying saucer
Flew round the world one day
They looked left and right
But they didn't like the sight
So one man flew a way – whee!
...count down to 1

Activity ideas example – 5 little men in a flying saucer

- What do the children think a flying saucer is? Making a flying saucer with the children using junk modelling materials and lots of sticky tape.
- What do the children think aliens look like?
- Reading a book about aliens, for example 'Aliens love underpants' by Claire Freedman, 'The Blue Balloon' by Mick Inkpen or 'Space Race' by Malorie Blackman.
- Learn more about the planets and stars with older children - where might the little men in the flying saucer have travelled from – where will they go?
- What do aliens eat? Where do they sleep? What toys do they play with?
- Turning left and right – talking about writing with your left / right hand. We can use left and right in other songs such as 'the wipers on the bus swish left and right' to help children make links in their learning.

Observing – have the children decided which hand they are going to use for writing yet?

Support home learning – share the YouTube link with parents so they can sing the song at home