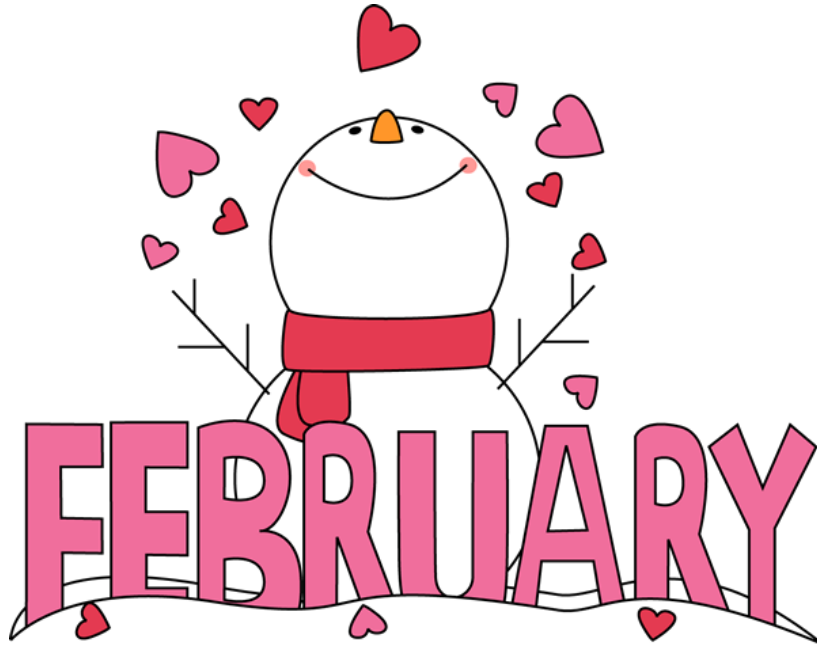


# Preparing children for school



## Focus this month – Sitting and listening

### Sitting and listening focus -

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- Making story and reading times interesting with puppets and other props
- Speaking quietly and gently to children so they have to listen to us
- Teaching children how to sit comfortably, crossing their legs
- Making meal times fun – we always sit down when children are eating and play games and chat with the children so they are engaged and more likely to want to stay at the table and eat
- Playing games together that encourage children to sit and stand eg Simon Says or musical statues so they learn the difference between being still and moving.

**Alphabet** – letters V, W, X, Y and Z

**Maths** –

- Focusing on – addition and subtraction; height
- Songs and rhymes - 5 fat peas; 10 green bottles

## **Dear Parents,**

to prepare children for school we are going to start thinking about how well they sit and listen to instructions / stories etc. it can be very hard for some children to sit quietly and listen

– think about last month when we were talking about children moving and saying that they are not made for sitting still yet!

However, sit and listen them must when they start school so we make sure the floor where we all sit together is comfortable and isn't in a draft and some of the activities we cover include –

- Planning activities to help children learn the rules they will be given at their school about sitting and waiting and keeping hands and feet to themselves
- Letting children move around if and when they need to – extend the length of time we ask them to sit slowly, a little at a time
- Turning off screens and phones and distracting background noise where possible.
- Using visual clues (pictures, drawings, smiley faces, thumbs up) as well as verbal to accommodate children's different learning styles
- Playing board games together so children are motivated to sit and finish the game
- Giving children one thing to do at a time until they are ready to cope with more. If we overwhelm them with too many rules and things to do they are more likely to be disruptive.

Throughout the month you will also be working on –

**Alphabet** – letters V, W, X, Y and Z

**Maths** –

- Focus on – addition and subtraction; height
- Songs and rhymes - 5 fat peas; 10 green bottles

When they get to school, your child will be expected to sit, listen, stand in line etc and will be praised for '**good waiting**' and '**good listening**'. We recognize the importance of helping parents prepare our pre-school children so they are ready to understand how to behave in a busy classroom.

When children are good at waiting and listening they are able to stand quietly in a queue (we have *sticky backs* when we are standing against a wall), listen to a story without shouting out, sit through a song they don't like without wandering away and respond to their friends' comments without having to tell a bigger, taller or louder tale... and they do not always need to be first! Children need to learn that others can speak first... that others have different opinions from their own... that others can do something well and deserve praise... that we have similarities and differences which mean we are all unique and special.

However, we also need to be careful because we want children to develop into strong and independent learners and to be able to take on the responsibility of leadership. We do not want to squash their natural desire to be the first and the best because it's great to see them developing the management skills they will need in future life.

Good waiting and good listening doesn't just mean giving toys to friends or understanding how to take turns during a game – skills our pre-school children have already consolidated very well through being in a group provision. Good waiting and good listening also means sharing the teacher's time, not shouting out during quiet times and not needing to be the first or loudest or one most noticed every time. We want our pre-school children to learn this now, in a supportive and gentle environment rather than a busy classroom where they might be 'told off' for shouting out rather than gently supported to respond in a different way.

### **Activities we are using to support your child include for example...**

- Making story and reading times interesting with puppets and other props
- Speaking quietly and gently to children so they have to listen to us
- Teaching children how to sit comfortably, crossing their legs
- Making meal times fun – we always sit down when children are eating and play games and chat with the children so they are engaged and more likely to want to stay at the table and eat
- Playing games together that encourage children to sit and stand eg Simon Says or musical statues so they learn the difference between being still and moving.

We are looking forward to hearing your feedback about the strategies you are finding useful at home. Thank you!

# Literacy focus - V is for...

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**Silly voices** - reading the children's books and injecting some humour by adding silly voices. Getting the children thinking about how the characters sound and encouraging them to join in.

**Vase** – showing the children different types of vases and making comparisons – tall, short, fat, thin, colourful, plain etc. Which vase is their favourite? Which do they want to make? Giving them some craft resources and tubes and, when their vase is finished, they can make some flowers to go inside.

**Volcano** – there is a great science experiment using baking soda and vinegar to make a volcano. Making our own volcanoes using a V shape and lots of red lava coming out of the top. Have the children been on holiday to one of the Canary Islands? Look at some pictures on YouTube of a volcanic island.

## Focus – V is for vulture

### Example activity ideas] include –

- Watching the clip from 'Jungle Book' where the vultures are sitting on the branch singing – learn some of the words together.
- Looking up some information about Vultures on Wikipedia.
- Making a vulture jigsaw for the children to colour and laminate. Cutting it into pieces and show them how to slide it together again.



## Literacy focus - W is for...

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**Water** – doing some water play with the children. Setting out the water table with different coloured water and experimenting to see what happens when you float boats – do they float in blue water? What about in green or yellow water – is it the same? We need to challenge children’s thinking – we know the answers but they don’t so let them guess first and then experiment to see what happens.

**White** – white paint or crayons work really well with black paper. Making white pictures with the children and going for a walk to spot white in the local area – where can the children see white? Are there any white cars? Is the background of signs usually white? What else can they see?

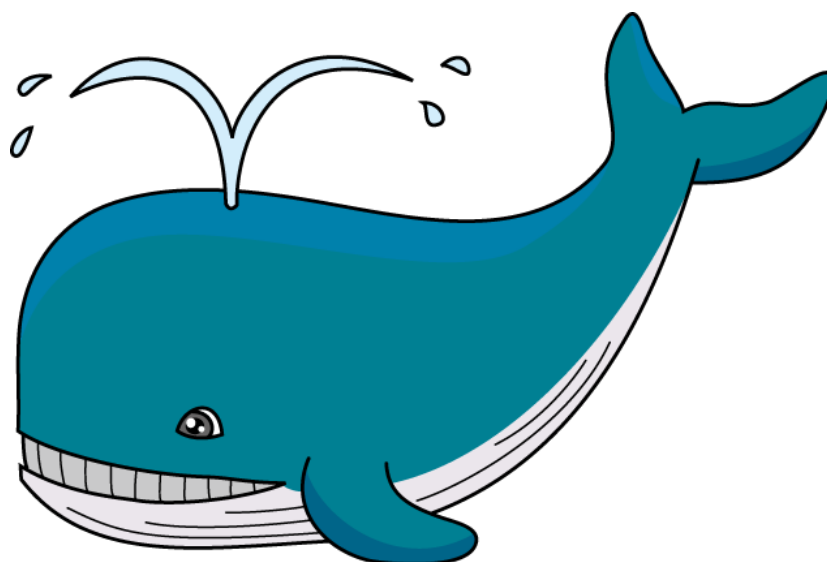
**Witch** – reading ‘Room on the Broom’ by Julia Donaldson with the children and watch the film of the story on YouTube. Talking about witches – what do the children know about them? Where do they live? What do they do? Why do they always have a black cat? Making some witches hats together.

**Wood** – learning the tongue twister – ‘how much wood would a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chop wood?’ Going round the house and garden looking for things made from wood – and metal, plastic etc to help children differentiate and recognise a range of natural and man-made materials.

### Focus – W is for whale

#### Example activity ideas include –

- Making a paper plate whale.
- Telling the story of Jonah and the whale.
- Looking at pictures of whales swimming together in the sea.
- Making an underwater picture with different sea creatures including the biggest of them all – whales.



# Literacy focus - X is in...

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**Box** – using lots of boxes, some glue and tape and making... whatever the children's imagination wants to make! Painting it when the glue is dry and using it for storytelling.

**X is a cross** – what else do we use a cross for?

Drawing a cross man and telling a story about him – he meets a fox of course and they go off together on a journey in a box!

**Focus – X is in fox**

**Example activity**

**ideas include** –

- Making a leaf fox – adding googly eyes to a sycamore leaf.
- Reading 'Fox in Socks' by Dr Seuss
- Making up some more rhymes to go with the word fox...
- Reading 'The Gingerbread Man' or '3 little pigs' (traditional stories)
- Making up a story about a fox who lives in a box.



# Literacy focus - Y is for...

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**Yellow** – making a collection of yellow toys and pictures of things that are yellow. Putting them on a tray and name them, talking about each item and how it can be used. Covering the tray with a sheet and take 1 of the items away ... can the children spot what is missing?

**Yolk** – going to the local farm and buy some eggs. Crack opening some eggs and looking closely at the middles with a magnifying glass – what can you see? What colour is the middle of the eggs?

**Extension idea** - using the eggs to make some buns!

**You** – making pictures of yourself and your friends / family... using a mirror and some skin coloured pencils or crayons. Talking about similarities and differences – reading books which help children to learn that we are all the same and look different.

Reading – 'You choose' by Nick Sharratt and talking about all the different things our friend might like.

## Focus – Y is for yak

### Example activity ideas

#### include –

- Comparing a yak with a cow – are they the same / different?
- Making up a story about a yak called Yogi who lives in a yellow cave and eats yoghurt for tea
- Looking at pictures of yaks on Google Images and see where they live
- Watching 'Sesame Street' – Y is for Yak – on YouTube
- Gluing wool over the yak's body – lots of fine motor skills practice



# Literacy focus - Z is for

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**Dear Zoo** - reading the book 'Dear Zoo' and getting out the zoo animals in a basket. Talking the children through how to gather animals by sound eg

- P = pig, panda, parrot
- B = bear, bat, bison
- L = lion, lizard, leopard
- S = snake, skunk, spider etc...

How many animals can the children recognise? Are they listening carefully to the initial sound?

**Extension idea** – playing a similar game but match farm animals (Spot goes to the farm).

**Zip** – children are fascinated by zips and love trying to open and close them. Buying a selection of zips – different colours and lengths – from the local haberdashery stall on the market and letting the children to experiment.

## Focus - Z is for zebra

### Example activity ideas

**include** –

- Have the children ever seen a zebra at the zoo or in a story? They are a bit like a horse – but their skin is stripy in a pattern – can they make the black and white pattern using pencils
- Reading 'How the zebra got their stripes' (Usborne) and watching the YouTube story.
- Making stripes using other resources such as string or lengths of tape.





# Maths focus - Addition and subtraction

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Teaching children the basics of 'one more' and 'one less' with some focused learning opportunities. Printing some number lines and make our own number lines with the children – they are an easy way to teach the children how to count on and backwards...

**Using counting line to do simple addition...** Can you draw 3 spiders?  
Can you take away 2 spiders?

**Book choices** – reading books that start with 10 and take 1 away each page...

**Songs include –**

10 fat (juicy) sausages



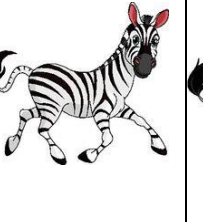
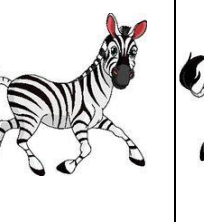
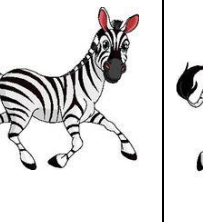
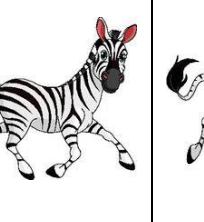
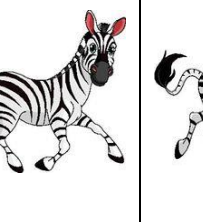
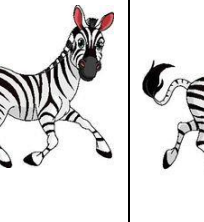
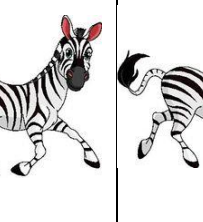

5 green and speckled frogs


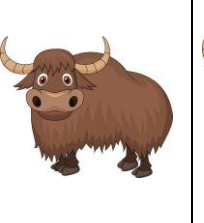
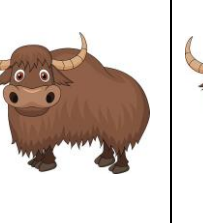
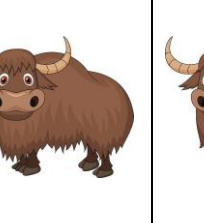
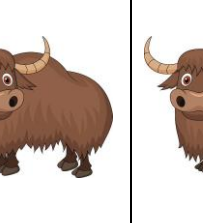

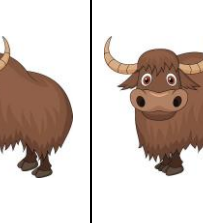



5 little monkeys jumping on the bed etc...


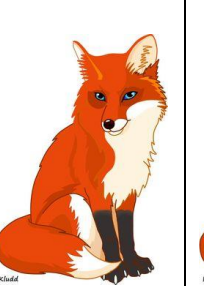
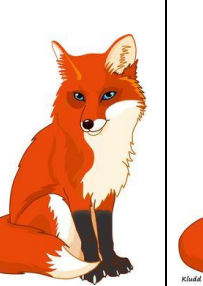
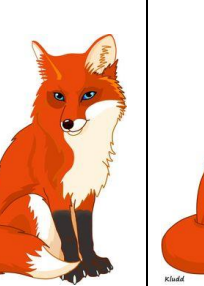
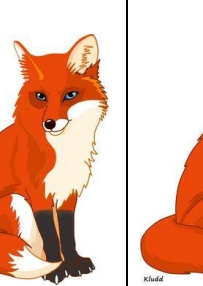
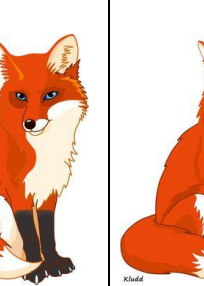

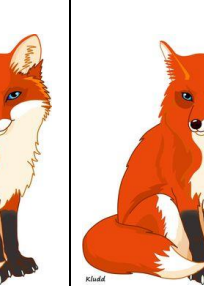


**Example activity idea** – singing the song '5 little men in a flying saucer' with the children. Making some little men to go on their fingers and draw a big flying saucer for the little men to sit in.

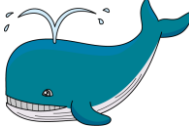
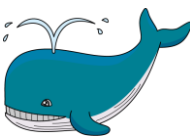
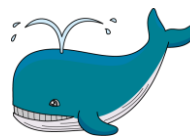

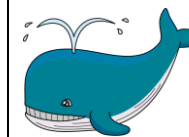
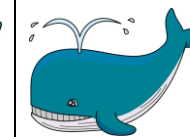

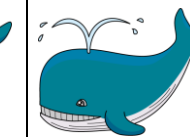
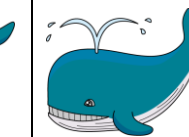
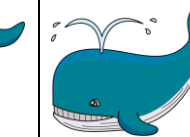
**Supporting home learning** – Talking to parents about the ways they can teach their child 'one more' and 'one less' at home. Share songs they can sing together and let the children borrow maths books to take home and read with their family.




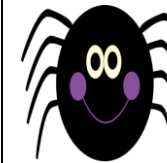
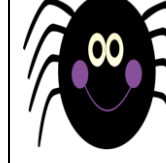
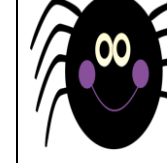
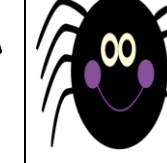
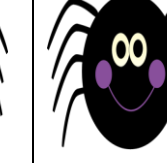
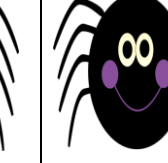
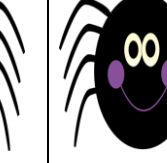
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# Maths focus - Height

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## How tall are you?

Lie down on the patio – drawing round each other – comparing sizes of bodies – adding clothes and shoes. Looking at pictures of babies, children, teenagers, adults – noticing differences in height. Making comparisons... who is the tallest / shortest?

## How tall is the flower?

Measuring flowers at the garden. – how tall are they? Making more comparisons – which flower is taller – shorter?

Recording our observations of the flowers – recording children's heights on a chart so they have a visual representation to share with their parents.

**What can we measure?** Anything – toys, pencils, small world animals, sea creatures...

**Books** to teach children about height include...

- 'The bad tempered ladybird' by Eric Carle
- 'Big' by Tim Hopwood
- 'Just Teenie' by Susan Meddaugh

**Songs** might include -

- Mary had a little lamb
- An elephant walks like this and that, he's terribly tall and terribly fat. He has no fingers and he has no toes but goodness gracious what a long nose!

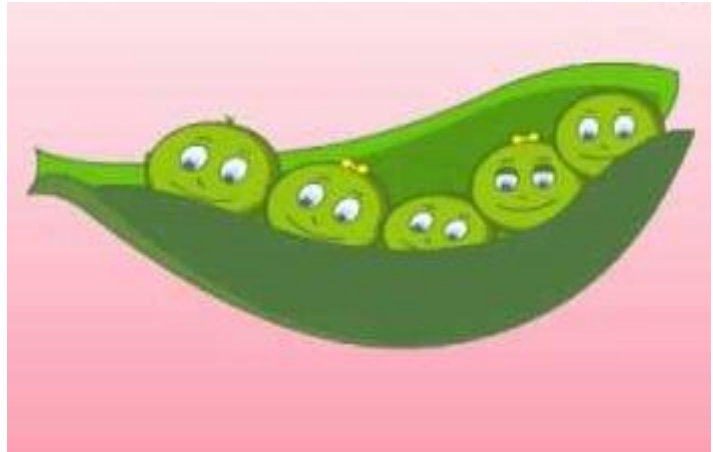
**Example activity idea** – making a playdough worms measuring mat –using height language to compare how long / tall / short the worms are...

Challenging the children to make shorter / longer worms – do they know that they can make them longer or shorter by adding / taking away playdough? Or do they make them longer / shorter by re- rolling them?

**Supporting home learning** – showing to parents our charts of children's height comparisons and suggesting they do something similar with their child and their family at home.

## 5 fat peas

5 fat peas in a pea pod pressed  
One grew, two grew  
And so did all the rest.  
They grew and grew  
And they did not stop,  
Until one day  
The pod went POP!



### Example activity ideas – 5 fat peas

- Buying some peas and showing the children how to pod them
- Using body percussion to make a popping sound
- Changing the ending from 'pop' to 'bang' – do the children notice?
- Making rhymes with 'pop' and 'stop'
- Trying different types of peas – tinned, fresh, mushy etc
- It is quite a revelation when children realise that there are 5 on each hand – they can start to learn counting on to 6, 7, 8 etc and always show us 5... practice songs with 5 regularly to support understanding
- Doing some green finger painting with the children – counting 5 fingers like the 5 peas – label the fingers with numerals

**Support home learning** – do the children grow vegetables at home? Do they have access to an allotment? Finding out more about home interests...



10 green bottles  
Hanging on the wall  
Ten green bottles  
Hanging on the wall  
And if one green bottle  
Should accidentally fall  
There'll be nine green bottles  
Hanging on the wall  
...count down to 0

### **Example activity ideas – 10 green bottles**

- Making a skittles game with numbered bottles 1 – 10
- Practicing pencil control with the older children - drawing round bottle shapes
- Showing the children how to roll a ball and count how many skittles they have knocked over
- Encouraging the children to praise each other trying hard as well as succeeding
- Looking at shades of green during a nature walk
- Making a simple bottle number line with the children
- Going on an outing to the local bottle bank and look at the different coloured bottles
- There are some lovely bottle walls on Google images (check suitability of pictures before showing them to children)

**Support home learning** – Sharing the game to parents over the coming weeks so they can have fun playing skittles with their child.