Nursery Parent Workshop

We wanted to give you some information which we hope will be useful for you and your child – both at school and at home. Please ask us any questions and we will try to answer them for you. We also have some leaflets and information for you to download and print off if you would like to.

- We hope that if your child has just started nursery they are enjoying it and have settled well (don't worry if this takes a while, all children are different and it's usually harder for you than it is for them!) – and if they have been at nursery before that they are learning more skills and we will be preparing them to be ready for the move up to Reception next year.

- One of the most important skills for your child to learn is to develop their independence. We can support this in many ways eg: encouraging them to put their own coat on, getting dressed, putting on shoes etc. These things do require patience because of course it is always quicker if we do these things for them. Putting them in easy clothes to take off and put on again – such as tracksuit bottoms and nothing with fiddly fastenings. This builds up children's confidence even when it is encouraging them to just have a go themselves. Shoes and socks are really difficult but it is good for them to practice.

- We also ask you to remember not to send children to nursery in their best clothes as they do get messy and exploring paint and outside activities (– such as the mud kitchen and gardening) – are messy activities and although children wear aprons they spill things and wipe their hands on their clothes. If your child comes home looking dirtier than you sent them to nursery it is usually a good sign that they have been learning loads, exploring and being curious and creative!

- Reading: children bring home a book to share every Friday. Please share this with them. Children love books. They are great for developing language, asking and answering questions and developing imagination. You can always make up stories from the pictures or read the books in your own language. Looking at books is also another way to introduce children to different letter sounds and help them to become familiar with the written word. You could look out for letter sounds that are in your child's name.

  There is a helpful leaflet with some ideas to help you share books and develop reading skills with your child. From January, the children who will be starting Reception in September will also be bringing home reading books – please share these too as they will build up your child's skills in phonics and reading which will really help their move into Reception.

- Writing – children in nursery are always exploring different ways of mark making. Helping children to learn to write their names is a good place to start. Always start with a capital letter and then the rest of the name is lower case letters. Please don't teach your child to write their whole name in capitals – although it might seem easier it is wrong and very demoralising for your child as then then have to learn to write their name again. Let them have opportunities to write too – it might be in their own made up writing, but if you ask them afterwards what they have written they will usually tell you and this means their writing has meaning. Doing activities at home like writing, cooking etc all help to build up muscle strength in your child's hands

giving them better control. Threading beads, manipulating jigsaw puzzles, pegboards, practising writing, finger painting etc.

- Counting is also a good skill to practice at home or when you are out and about – it might make a quick walk take a bit longer but it's amazing how many numbers we can find all around us: on road signs, front doors, number plates on cars – even if you are just pointing them out or looking for the number that is your child's age – 3 or 4 – this will all build up their number skills. Quite often we can forget how much children are taking in in a conversation or when they are looking around and about, or how curious they might be. And this is all vital to building up their knowledge and skills and finding out more about the world around them.

- One of the most important things we find really help your child is for them to be toilet trained either before they start nursery or as soon as possible after they have started. It is another area of children's development that requires a great deal of parental patience and perseverance but once it is done it is a huge hurdle for you to have overcome and it means that your child is well on the way to being really independent – which is really important, especially by the time they start school full time. Children all develop at different rates and you will know when your child is ready to start toilet training but this is usually recommended for before or around the time your child is 3. We have a number of leaflets with advice about potty and toilet training and also a range of stories which you are most welcome to borrow to share with your child. (We never realised there were quite so many stories about learning to use the toilet or a potty!)

  Of course, it is easier for a child to come to nursery in pull ups or a nappy but they are also of an age when they will start to become more aware of what other children are doing and be curious about using the toilet. We would prefer to support you with toilet training your child and endure a few accidents as this is perfectly normal – just send a spare set of clothes in with your child and we also have spare clothes in nursery – but please return them once they have been washed so that we don't run out! Children are more uncomfortable in a nappy or pull up, especially once it is dirty – we will always change them but as we are also trying to support your child developing their independence skills we are asking for your help too in really trying to help your child become toilet trained as soon as possible.

If you have any questions just ask the nursery staff or come to see me (Mrs Budd) or Mrs Pengelly and we will always do our best to help and support you.

If there is anything you would like to find out more about with how you can help your child let us know and we can include this when we have another workshop. Thank you.